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Make Your Business Cards Work

By Robin Henry

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What's the cheapest, most under-used marketing tool you have?

The answer's no secret ... it's your business cards.

By the time you have read this article, you'll know several ways in which you can increase your profits by making better use of the advertising power of business cards.

Business card content

Everyone knows what a business card contains, so I'll keep this brief and focus on what some people don't have on their cards.

Every possible way to contact you. Don't just give your address and telephone number – give it all; fax, phone, mobile, email, street address, postal address and if you're keen, an after hours contact.

Your Internet site URL. If you have one, put it on EVERYTHING.

In Australia your Australian Business Number or Australian Company Number. People may not deal with you if they think you are not equipped to handle Goods and Services Tax or are too small to have an ABN or ACN

Use the back to advertise. This can change each time you print or you can summarise – in dot point, the services you offer which are not always obvious from your name.

A byline. If you don't want to advertise on the back, think of using a byline, a short statement about what you do, 'Producers of the best hamburgers in Australia'

Colour and professional design. People like colour. They like attractive design. Make sure your cards have both.

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Cost effective advertising. The last supply of business cards I bought cost me 0.07 cents Australian per card; the last classified advertisement I lodged cost me \$72. While the newspaper advertisement will get much more coverage, I have no control over who reads it. Among those who do, thousands will have no personal interest in my offer and still others might never get to the classified advertisements pages. Many will throw out the paper in a day or so and my three line ad will be gone forever from their houses and minds.

With my business cards, however, I can target where and when I leave them or to which individuals I hand them in order to get the greatest advantage. Of course, there is never a guarantee that where I leave them will result in sales. The idea is to increase probability ... the probability that the recipient will want my goods or services. Here's an example.

Target marketing

Recently I attended a workshop about Email Marketing which was also attended by about 50 others. As my product range includes two high capacity email management software systems, this was an opportunity I couldn't miss. I left a card at every place mat on every table.

If the target audience was interested in email marketing, wasn't there a probability they might also be interested in email software? Sure enough, I received 11 enquiries within a few days of the workshop and sold five copies of the software.

Had the workshop been about 'The Metallurgical Use of Sodium Cyanide' how successful do you think I would have been?

When you use target marketing, you may have to offer a financial incentive for someone to distribute – or allow you to distribute – your card. If someone asks for a commission to distribute my business card, I'm happy to oblige, but I also expect to be allowed to leave a brochure. The incentive I offer is this: If you agree for me to leave my sales brochure, I'll use a code within the brochure that lets me identify a sale as coming from your workshop, shop, seminar or whatever. For every sale I'll give you a percentage commission.

If you do this often, you can set up an affiliate program through Clickbank, Sharesale or someone else who provides affiliate management programs. But I don't create affiliates for short-term ventures that may last only a few weeks, it's too much work.

Depending on the goods or services you sell, you can leave your business cards at business offices. For example, when I visit a real estate office I see business cards for insurance brokers. When I go to the insurance brokers, I see cards from real estate businesses. This can be a mutually beneficial arrangement that costs nobody. If you do it though, you must ensure you don't neglect your business card holder ... keep it stocked.

When you get a chance, identify those businesses whose customers may also want your complementary products or services. Talk with the owners/proprietors and see if you can arrange to

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leave your cards there. Remember, nothing ventured, nothing gained.

Even your friendly Chinese Cafe may be a good place to get some exposure. A cafe I visit every couple of months has a cork wall board bristling with business cards. Every time I go there I leave three or four of mine. They always need replacing, so someone is taking them. And let's face it, they aren't good for much else but reading.

Ask your friends to pass your cards to people they know –their sphere of influence – referral is an excellent method of marketing. Hand them out to people you meet at work – at play – anywhere if you feel they are prospective clients.

At the end of the day, you need to use every conceivable method you have to keep your firm's name in front of as many people as possible. After all, if they don't know you exist, why will they call you when next they want a new batch of widgets?

The cheap, humble business card can be a very effective marketing tool if you use it wisely

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How To Design Business Cards

By Jon Blake

The love of my life is a graphic designer and there is never a day that goes by that he does not appear to be designing business cards for people. He is a really creative kind of guy and I could not believe how good his work was recently. Basically, there is a local builder called Jack. He does building but also a lot of other stuff like plumbing, welding and other practical trades. Anyway, I am sure you get the picture. Basically, he wanted business cards and his little slogan is "Jack-Of-All-Trades". So my husband designed him cards that looked like playing cards and got them printed in a way that made them look like this as well.

My husband also made business cards for a friend of mine who really needed them for networking. She is always busy out meeting people and said that she was quite embarrassed because her current cards were just not up to scratch. She went for a hot pink and purple diva from the choices my husband presented her with. She is in the music industry so it just seemed really appropriate.

Another cool design that my husband done were actually for another musician. His remit was to design something contemporary and abstract. He really got to work on this job, and he used a really nice lavender color that had to tell him to use in future because it just looked so good!

What my husband does is run a small part-time graphic design business. And yes, he has his own cards that he used the grain of a tambourine for a photograph. I like his the best, and keep one in my purse because I am so proud of him!

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Another thing that I have to tell you is how stupid it is to just go out their and do a DIY job with business cards. It really is very silly indeed. What you have to do is think about what you would think of as business that handed out business cards they had just made at home. Would you think they would be ultra professional when they would not even invest in business cards? That is why you have to go out their and get some really good cards which will reflect well on your business.

Jon is the editor of a top

website, and he also runs a site about



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