

When it Comes to Business Cards, Vive la France!

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By Shannon Cherry, APR

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Don't let the small size fool you. A business card is one of the least expensive and most powerful forms of advertising you possess. Your business card is your introduction to potential clients. It's your opportunity to make an impression with every person you come in contact with.

You will most likely need to order 500 or 1000 cards (1000 is much cheaper per card). But what are you supposed to do with 1000 cards?

Business cards don't have to sit on a shelf collecting dust. I suggest taking a page from the French. When I was in Paris, every business had - and used - business cards. Even the restaurants and bars used them effectively: wait staff presented a business card either with the check or directly to the diners after the check was paid. It's a simple, effective technique that works because everyone takes them.

Use the same idea for yourself. Think of your business card as a mini billboard for your company; you need it to be seen to make an impact. Depending on the type of business, there are several ways to showcase your card. You never know who is going to pick it up and call you, or give it to a friend. Widely-used services can distribute their cards in everyday places. For example, my sister, who runs a manicure business, often puts business cards in places where the general public might easily see and pick up her card. She hands out her cards like confetti. She places them on bulletin boards in stores and fast food shops, inside magazines at doctors' offices and on the sink in restrooms. She also has a bulletin board in her salon and encourages customers to post their cards, in return for passing out her cards to others.

This last idea can be used, with a variation, for any business. When handing out business cards to an individual, give out three at a time, asking them to distribute them to others they may think might be interested in your business. Do the same in return.

Keep business cards within hands reach. You should place some in your briefcase, purse, pocket, and on the front desk or reception area of your business. With cards readily available, you'll always be able to introduce yourself with them.

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Hand your card to the receptionist at the doctor's office, the hostess at the restaurant, or the technician at the auto repair shop. Include your card with all correspondence, including letters and thank you notes to customers, potential customers and business associates. And don't forget including one in all your bills. Someone is opening your bills, and you never know who that someone may be.

When you hand out your card, it's important that you make it memorable. Write a brief message on it before handing it to someone: your extension number or direct phone line, "Ask for me personally," "Best wishes!" or "Thanks!" all work well.

Make your business card do double duty - and point it out to the person you're giving it to. Print a coupon or special offer on the backs of your cards. Also include these special cards with invoices to current customers. If you offer a referral incentive, print it on the card.

It's all in thinking outside the box when it comes to the box of cards sitting in a desk drawer. The French don't use the hard-sell like Americans do, but they realize 'Le Card' is the quickest way to turn a brief encounter into a long-term customer.

Shannon Cherry, APR helps businesses and nonprofit organizations to be heard. She's a marketing communications and public relations expert with more than 15 years experience and the owner of Cherry Communications. For more tips and tricks - or information about her services, visit www.cherrycommunications.com. Contact her at shannon@cherrycommunications.com.

The Beautiful Country Of France, A Place Worth Visiting

By Josiah William

France is a beautiful, romantic country that is full of art and architecture. When in France the street life, wonderful fields of Aquitaine, McDonald's and the neighborhood bakery all prove that France is an unhomogenized country. Once you set foot in France, you will really feel that as if you are embarking on a new and exciting love affair with France!

Paris is a great country for walking and gawking. There are beautiful parks, cafes, squares, shop windows, the Seine and open markets that all beckon you. Wherever you go, you find beautiful buildings and tempting pastry to eat while watching the world go by. There are many places worth visiting while in France; the Picasso Museum, the Louvre, the Notre Dame and the Rodin Museum. Restaurants too are varied with infinite choices of dishes to choose from. You can eat in fast food joints, small bistros and three star restaurants serving the food of France. The sorbet found here is the best in the world, along with cheeses, wine, fruits, sausages and breads.

The hotels here are found in various ranges, which you can choose according to your budget. However, the hotels usually hold less space, with more charm. Of course, you can take part in any one of the many activities that these hotels and country offer you. you can go hiking, cycling, dancing, eating and just enjoying yourself on this wonderful trip to France. Transportation here is convenient with a good train system to travel around and out of France. Airplanes, buses and cars too help you get

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in and around France.

The Provence is a beautiful place you are sure to fall in love with. St. Remy, Orange, Arles and Aix provide beautiful sights worth taking photos of. Then there are the less famous places in France worth visiting; filled with medieval churches, Roman remnants, the glorious Aquitaine and cave paintings. Pay a visit to Burgundy or Bordeaux to taste its wines; without which your trip to France would never be complete.

For your communication needs, you find telecartes in Tabac shops all over France. You can then buy phone cards and calling cards for all your phone needs. Since most of the public phones here don't accept coins, it is always better to use phone cards and calling cards. All you have to do is to buy cheap mobile phones for use with these phone cards and calling cards. Several prepaid calling card and phone card companies are available to call both to and from France.

France is also a beautiful country to hold a destination wedding. There are many places to hold a wedding; it is up to you to choose according to your budget and dreams. All you have to do is to contact a hotel or resort where you intend to hold your destination wedding with a single phone call. And all your wedding arrangements will be taken care of by them. Considering all these points, you can tell that France is indeed a country worth making a visit for your next visit!

Josiah William works in marketing for Cheap Phone Cards,

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and

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