Business Card Design: 7 Essentials To Consider

By **Hongkiat.com**. Filed in **Graphics**

Within the first 10 seconds, your potential client is building up a lasting opinion about you. It sounds harsh but it's a fact that people often **do** judge a book by its cover, and you only get one shot to make a great first impression. Fortunately there are a few tricks you can pull off, such as diverting their attention from the fact that you forgot to iron your shirt by pushing a unique and beautifully designed business card under their nose.

It's always a great idea to carry some self-promotional material in your pocket, whether you're attending a conference where networking is key, or for instances when you bump into an old friend who is now a possible business partner. Having said that, your business card should also be designed well enough to leave a good impression. Below is a list of essential tips to keep in mind when designing the perfect business card.

Recommended Reading: Case Study: Designing Business Card that Rocks!

1. The Issue Of Size And Colour

Decide on a business card printer before you begin the design process. You can find out the size of their cards (and whether it is what you are looking for) and their supported file types. The most common card size is 84 mm x 55 mm, so the best document size to work on is 1039 x 697 pixels; remember that you need to take Bleed (more on this after the break) into account. Ensure any images you use are at least 300dpi for a high quality result.

It's a good idea to work in CMYK colour mode as opposed to RGB. CMYK stands for **C**yan, **M**agenta,**Y**ellow and Blac**k** (Black is known as **K**ey), and is used in colour printing. CMYK is a subtractive colour model,

which works by masking colours on a light or white background, reducing the amount and colour of the light that is reflected by the paper.
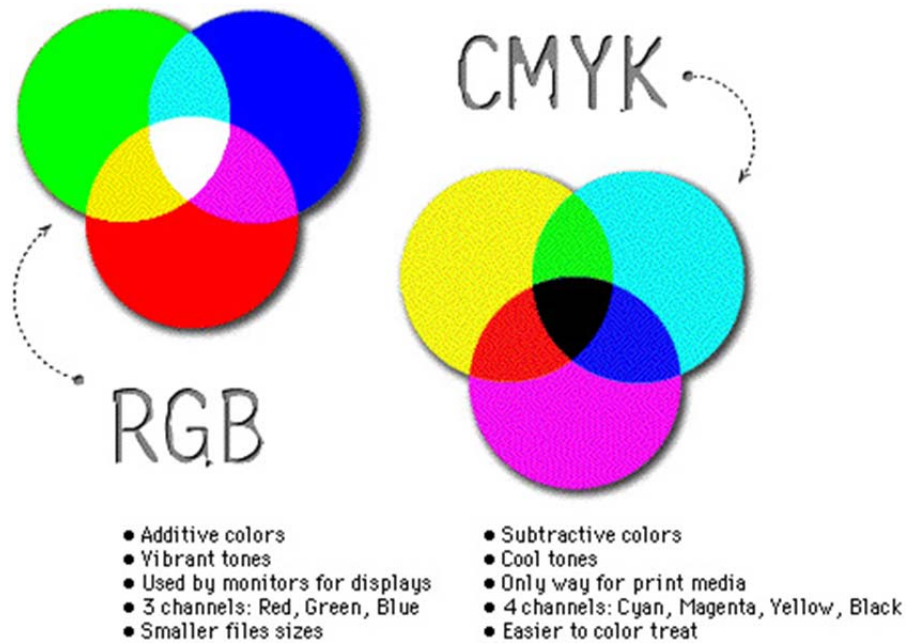
The display you are using to read this article adopts an RGB or additive colour model, mixing Red, Green and Blue to create the majority of the visible spectrum, and combining all three to create white. While some designers prefer to design in RGB, be sure to preview it in CMYK as some of your chosen colours may appear fine on screen, but 'muddy' when printed.

2. Prepare The Bleed Area

Unless your design background colour is white you need to prepare the Bleed area for your card design. Preparing the Bleed (yes, it sounds like a heavy metal band) involves highlighting an area surrounding the document, usually 3 mm thick (this may vary depending on the printing company) with the same colour as the background colour of your card design. This prevents any ugly border strips from turning up on the edge of the cards.

3. Avoid Using Borders

In fact, it's best to try to avoid using borders on your business card designs at all. They may look good, but when the cards are cut, you will most likely have some 'lop-sided' edges. All printers have a margin of error for cutting your cards, which can be as much as a few millimetres, so expect some variance in the area where the blade falls.

What you see on screen:

What you may receive:

Notice how the the borders disappear when the blades do not cut at the right places? A few millimetres can make all the difference to your card design.

4. Use Complimentary Colours

Choose colours that are aesthetically pleasing. A mish-mash of bright and bold colours may make your card stand out in a stack of 50, but it could be for the wrong reasons. It's also worthwhile to think beyond your business cards: try to keep your colour scheme consistent throughout your media (website, twitter, email signature) to develop a professional image of yourself.

(Image Source: colourlovers.com)

There are plenty of tools available on the Web to help you create the perfect scheme.COLOURlovers is a community-driven website where people can create colour palettes and allow others to vote and comment on them. It's a great source of inspiration, with some impressive tools to boot.

5. Ensure Your Text Is Readable

This is a pretty vital (nd sometimes overlooked) element in business card design. You wouldn't want your clients to have to strain their eyes to read your website address or email. Make sure your text is at least 8 pt, in a clear readable font and in bold colour. Anything smaller than 8 pt may look fine on your monitor, but may be printed as a fuzzy, smudged-out line. You could also try to accentuate your name or important contact information by making it slightly bigger or bolder than the rest of your information.

6. Include Important Information

Make sure you include all the information on the back of your card that you think the client would find useful. We've provided a quick checklist, but you may have other things you want to throw in as well.

- **Your name** – Put the name your contacts know you by.

- **What you do** – Remember to include what you do or what defines your job scope. Include the organization you are currently attached to if you wish.

- **Contact information** – Phone number, e-mail, work address, social media profiles etc.

- **QR Code** – QR codes are a great way to visually present web addresses, phone numbers or vCards. There are plenty of free QR code generators on the Web to help you with this.

7. Saving Your Design

This is also an important part of the process, as you want to make sure all your hard work shows in the final product.

- Make sure all text is embedded or outlined

- Don't forget to remove any guidelines or colour scheme blocks

- For best results, save your design as a vector based PDF, to ensure crisp lines and high print quality
- Saving them in JPEG or PNG may result in fuzziness around edges and text

And there you have it, tips to help you design your first business card. What other tips do you have for designing the perfect business card?

Editor's note

This post was written by **Simon Goble** on behalf of **moo.com**. MOO love to print, offering custom double sided business cards, unique MiniCards, Postcards, StickerBooks, greeting cards and more. You can visit their site or follow them on Twitter @overheardatmoo.

How to create a QR Code that connects to your LinkedIn Profile

First, create your LinkedIn Profile. Look at your profile for the Private Profile link like I have circled on my profile. You will need to copy that link to the next step on the next page where I have the RED circle.

Second, I used www.qrstuff.com and created my QR Code. That picture is below. Just follow the instructions and you can then **download** (see download button in **red** circle) your QR code and save it to your computer. You can then add it to documents like your business card. There are other free QR Code generators. This happens to be the one I used and I was able to connect to my LinkedIn Profile in the column at the left which is what you want.

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- SMS Message
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- Event (VCALENDAR)
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- Paypal Buy Now Link

2 CONTENT

Select your LinkedIn QR code type:

- LinkedIn Profile
- LinkedIn Share

LinkedIn Profile

Log into LinkedIn, go to your Profile, copy the link shown as "Public Profile" and paste it into the box below.

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Subscribers get analytics and dynamic QR code editing when using our URL shortener.

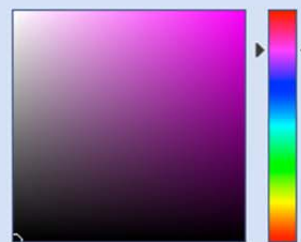**4 OUTPUT TYPE**

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Foreground Colour (Hex):
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QR CODE PREVIEW

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10 Things to Quit Putting on Your Resume
by Andrea Venezio, Executive Recruiter

"An 'ability to smell fear' is a quality I've never seen listed on a resume before."

Cartoonist: Dave Carpenter

1. References Upon Request:

"References Upon Request," at the bottom of a resume is completely unnecessary! I get that you want to be as upfront and honest with your prospective employer, but that is an understood statement and it is not necessary to write on the bottom.

2. Hobbies or Community Activities:

Please, for the love of all people, quit putting things on your resume that could discredit you before you get the chance to interview. If you like to fish, don't put it on your resume! You have no way of knowing if the hiring authority you are sending this to is the state PETA president. Putting hobbies or community activities on your resume could get you thrown to the "No" pile, before you get your foot in the door. Stick with business and leave any personal information!

3. The dreaded "Summary" or "Objective":

It's like Nancy Reagan said...JUST SAY NO! I understand you want to give a "summary" or "objective" of what you're looking for, but unless it is imperative or extremely well written, it is unlikely an overwhelmed HR person or an executive recruiter, like myself will actually read it.

4. PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

All resume headings should be in capital letters and be underlined. When listing your work history it should say "Professional Experience," not recent experience or work history. This creates a more tactful way of listing your months and years you were employed for each company.

5. Be wise with Education:

Unless you have a bachelor's degree or higher, move your education to the bottom. If you have NO education, DO NOT put education or some education. Leave the entire

section out. If you have certifications put that as your header, not education, and keep it on the bottom of the resume, AFTER your professional experience.

6. Your College:

Employers don't want to know the college, before the degree. Quit putting the college on top! The most common mistake I see on a resume is bolding the College, instead of the degree. For example if you have an **MBA – bold that**, on a separate line (preferably beneath the bolded degree) list your college

7. Education from 1978?:

Why on earth are you going to put the degree you obtained 20 years ago before the degree you obtained 2 years ago. I don't want to know that you graduated in 1978 with an Associates degree if you have graduated with another degree in 2004. Always put your most recent degree on top. Employers want to see that you have continued education, if applicable. If you have an MBA and graduated in 2004 it should like this:

- **Masters in Business Administration, 2004**
- **Bachelor in Business, 2000**

8. The 1 Page Resume Restriction:

Oh dear...why? Unless you have worked at only one place throughout your career, the old adage that your resume should fit on one page is NOT accurate. And please for the love of all things, anything under 11 font is ridiculous! I don't want to have to use a magnifying glass to read what you have written. Think easy to scan, quick to obtain the information, and easy enough to read to GET YOU AN INTERVIEW.

9. Your Name and Address:

Your name should be in a larger font than the address, email address, and contact phone. It should stand out and grab the attention of the hiring authority. On that note, if you have an MBA, your resume should read like this:

John Smith, MBA
Your address here
City, ST Zip
email@email.com
Phone

10. Spelling or Grammatical Errors:

The goal of sending the resume to a hiring authority is to **get an interview**. Make sure it is easy to read, there are no spelling errors, or grammatical errors. This is the door that needs to be open to get the job of your dream. Make sure it is the best representation of what you can bring to a new company!