

# Top tips to make your business card work for you

Our business cards are seen as a vital tool in winning new business. None of us would introduce ourselves to a potentially valuable new client without one. We pass them on in the hope that the person will keep it, remember us and contact us.

But collect 100 business cards and you'll be lucky to find one that goes anywhere near doing the job it should.

The majority of cards are designed without real thought of their purpose. They simply look and feel like everyone else's - people who had also not thought about the real purpose.

*So what happens to those 100 cards? I suggest it goes something like this.*

*76 are thrown away within 24 hours.  
14 are kept only to be thrown away next week or next month  
4 are kept for future reference but never used  
2 are used to write notes on  
And 3 are used to market to you!*

*One may result in an enquiry - if you convert 1 in 7 enquiries into a sale that means only 1 in 700 is effective.*

That's the downside, now how can you improve those statistics dramatically?

Ask yourself this question:

## What is my purpose for having business cards?

I can tell you that many people have a card just because they think they should; it may flatter their ego; they have something to give away; and they use it when they should be asking for an order or at least getting their prospect to commit to the next step.

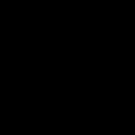
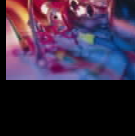
So before covering your card with multiple telephone numbers, inflated job titles and numerous qualifications, ask yourself these three questions:

*So what?  
Who cares?  
What's in it for them?*

**GEOFF  
BUNCE**

*Creative Ltd*

WWW.geoffbuncecreative.com  
E geoff@geoffbuncecreative.com  
T 01454 774271



What does the recipient really need to know about you?

It could be:

- You sell mortgages*
- You sell office furniture*
- You are an accountant*

Say that on the card and you will have highlighted what you can do for your prospect.

But so what? There are hundreds of other mortgage brokers, furniture firms and accountants out there. Why should someone beat a path to your door simply because he has your card?

This is where the business card needs to start working harder. It needs to set out the **main benefit of doing business with you**. In "ad-speak", your sales proposition.

In summary, you need to let that person know what you do, and why they should choose you as their supplier of goods or services.

Ideally, you should strike a real chord with their business needs - not just supplying the products or services they need, but in a way that satisfies other core business requirements.

So use your business cards to get across a message he will respond to.

Here are some examples I've used for my clients.

**'Your waste in safe hands'** - *for a waste management and recycling company*

The main benefit we incorporated here was reassurance - the company didn't just take waste away, but did it in a responsible way. Their customers need to know that.

**'Uptime without the downtime'** - *for a vehicle jacking beam manufacturer*

The main benefit here was time saving. For garage owners, time is money. We reassured them that this brand of jacks was ultra-reliable and would not break down.

**'Quality conservatories at affordable prices'** - *for self-build conservatory manufacturer*

Conservatory buyers are torn between going for the best price and wanting something they can rely on - so we built in the two key characteristics they are looking for.

**'A source of better margins'** - *trade supplier of bottled spring water.*

Main benefit - profitability to the purchaser.

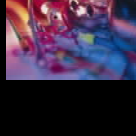
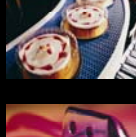
Do not confuse your main benefit with secondary selling points.

The typical size of a business card will concentrate your thoughts, there's just not room for everything.

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It may be that you want to promote more than one benefit. Then have more than one card, you can select which card to offer in different circumstances, selecting the most effective as you gather more about your prospect's needs.

### What is the most wanted outcome of your card?

You cannot be effective unless you know what you want to achieve from the very beginning.

For example

*Do you want your prospect to keep your card for future reference?*

If so you had better give them good reason and a strong benefit to do so.

Or

*Do you want them to take an immediate action, maybe to opt in to your mail list or join some organisation?*

If so make a time or volume limited offer.

### Now let us give some consideration to the design and layout

Have you noticed what a lot of people do when they receive a business card?

They look on the back.

A blank back suggests you have nothing to say.

If the design isn't saying the right things about you, it's saying the wrong things

### The most prominent thing should be the most important

So establish a hierarchy of information and focus on the most MWO (most wanted outcome)

### Consider the typography

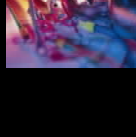
We are all fussy about choosing fonts. A serif font looks traditional, a sans serif looks modern.

But it goes much deeper than that. Look at magazines and leaflets, try and identify the fonts that reflect your message and the sort of company you are. Consider the size, spacing, layout and colour; all will affect the way the recipient will perceive you.

The actual card material speaks volumes too.



WWW.geoffbuncecreative.com  
E geoff@geoffbuncecreative.com  
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### Consider using

- A coloured card*
- A recycled or textured card*
- An unusual material - plastic, even wood*

### Consider the size of card

Standard size is 55 x 85, the same as a credit card. An odd size will stand out, a triangular card will have a lot of up-front impact but probably won't be retained.

### Should you have your picture on your card?

I can give you three good reasons why you should.

- Eye contact*
- Putting a face to a name*
- The more familiar your features the better you will be remembered.*

### Should you include your phone number?

Not if for instance your purpose is to direct prospects to a web site.

And not if it is not compatible with the way you work. Will it distract you, is it necessary for them to call you?

### Proof reading

When you have finalised the content and layout and handed your artwork over to a printer, make sure you see a proof. Check the proof carefully, particularly the most familiar things like your telephone number.

Better still, get someone else to check your contact details by using them to confirm they are accurate.

Remember this responsibility is ultimately yours. You can't blame the printer.

### How many should you print?

Go for small runs. Even if you are completely satisfied now, you will want to change your card in the not-too distant future. It should evolve and improve.

Digital printing will allow you to print just a few dozen if you wish, but use a professional High Street printer. Everyone can recognise a home printed card or one produced in a one of the machines now found on railway platforms.

What will that say about you?

### Final thoughts

Find out what works for you, test different ideas, create and develop strong reasons for your cards to be kept and better still, acted upon.

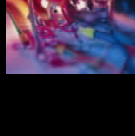
Unused cards don't bring business so give lots away



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Have small runs printed; how many cards have you binned in the past because they have gone out of date?

### So what should you do now?

If you feel confident and want to do it all yourself, I am delighted to have had the chance to help a little.

If you would like some help in creating your business cards, leaflets, brochures or advertisements, please call Geoff Bunce on 01454 774271



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