

# Pack Your Business Cards, Too!

By Diana Ratliff

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Business Card Secrets <http://www.businesscarddesign.com>

You don't always meet your best business prospects at business functions or trade shows or Chamber of Commerce breakfasts. Anytime, anywhere (yes, even on vacation, even in another country) you may meet someone you'd like to do business with. A savvy businessperson is prepared.

Your business card is probably the most portable, most versatile, and most readily accepted marketing weapon in your arsenal. The next time you're planning a vacation in another country, plan for the eventuality of giving someone your business card, too. Who knows? You may open up a whole new international market for your company!

- Do your cards fit in with foreign conventions? Is the size appropriate for the standard filing systems? Is your card too formal, too casual, or too unusual? Does your logo make sense to someone from another country?
- Are there language barriers? Does the language translate appropriately? A word-for-word translation of your slogan or product benefit statement may not turn out the way you planned. Hire a local translator, who can understand your message, not just your words. Does your company name convey an important message about your product or service? If so, be sure it's translated on your card, too. Add the English version of the name in smaller print.

This is true even when traveling from one English-speaking country (the US) to another (the UK). When I lived in Scotland, I saw a road sign that read "Heavy Plant Crossing." I immediately pictured a huge stalk of celery lumbering across the road, NOT a bulldozer!

- Do you know the customs when presenting business cards? Japanese people usually give and receive cards with both hands. The left hand is considered "unclean" in Muslim countries and Malaysia, so present your card with your right hand. In Asia, never run out of cards, or give a Japanese card to a Korean or Chinese businessman. When unsure, do as other cultures do.
- Do you visit the country often? It might be worth your while to print two-sided business cards. Put English on one side and the primary language of the other country on the opposite. Use the same logo and colors; they're an important part of your business identity, too.

Finally, remember that a smile and simple courtesy go a long way. Treat the cards you're given with respect, and put them away carefully. Jot notes on the back so you'll remember where you met, what you have in common, or what information you've promised to send. Follow up promptly when you return to work.

Taking the time to assess your business cards before your trip will not only help ensure that you can relax on your vacation ... but that you can possibly PAY for it, as well. Don't leave home without them!

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Business card expert Diana Ratliff specializes in helping you be favorably remembered by important prospects. Shouldn't your business card work as hard as YOU do? Get her ebook and subscribe to her FREE ezine at <http://www.businesscarddesign.com>

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