

50 Surefire Business Card Tips

By Mario Sanchez

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Business cards are one of the most powerful and inexpensive marketing tools you can use. Here are 50 surefire tips to make the most out of your business cards:

- Your business card must communicate more than just your contact information. Make sure that your card includes a tag line that explains what you or your company do.
- Even if you can produce your business cards at home using an inkjet printer, have your business cards professionally made by a printing company. Your business card will be the first impression your prospects receive of your business, so let them convey the best possible one.
- Order them in large numbers. By ordering 1000 your cost per card will be significantly lower than if you ordered 500.
- Avoid using standard clip art as your business logo. A logo brings credibility and brand awareness, so before you invest in business cards have a logo professionally made for your business. Nowadays, there are online companies that can produce a professional logo for as little as \$25, so there is no excuse for not having one made.
- Put up a website and use the URL in your business cards. If you don't have a website, people will notice the absence of a web address in your business card and, depending on the business you are in, it may make you lose credibility.
- Keep all the information in your business card current. If you changed address or phone number, don't scratch the old number and write down the new one by hand; get new business cards.
- Keep your business card simple. Don't use too many fonts or try to cram too much information in it. Try to use a pleasant layout and make sure that your main message (your tagline or your unique selling proposition) doesn't get lost.
- If you live in the US, limit your business card size to 3.5" x 2". Anything bigger will not fit in standard card holders and your card may end up in the trash. Business cards in Europe tend to be larger, but so are the wallets and card holders.
- Make sure that your business card reflects your image. If you are an artist or a graphic designer, it is OK to use trendy colors and fonts. If you are an investment banker, a sober layout and colors such as blue or gray work better.

- Your business card is an integral part of your brand or corporate identity strategy. It should follow the same graphics standards as the rest of your communications material (stationary, brochures, letterheads, etc.).
- Find a way to make your business cards stand out. I've seen business cards with one of its corners cut in an angle, or with an interesting texture, all of which makes your business card stand out of the crowd. The best one I've seen is from an interior designer, who used a hologram to show a room before and after a redesign.
- Make your business card easy to read: use high contrast between the background and the type. Light background with dark type works better.
- After your logo, your name should be the largest piece of information on your card.
- Make sure that all the information on your card is printed in a large enough typeface to be easily readable.
- Run your business card copy through a spell checker and double-check your contact information.
- Keep your business cards with you at all times. Keep a stack in your car, in your house, in your office, and in your wallet.
- Leave your business cards in billboards at supermarkets, schools, stores, libraries, etc.
- When giving away your card, give two or three at a time, so that your contacts can in turn distribute them to other people. This will not only help you distribute them faster, but will generate a beneficial "endorsing effect".
- Include a business card with all your correspondence. People may throw away the letter, but will usually keep the business card.
- Make your business card go the extra mile: use the back of the card to print more information: special offers, checklists, schedules, etc.
- Throw in a business card with every product you ship.
- Send a business card with any gift you send, instead of just a card with your name.
- Scan your card and use it as an attachment to emails.
- Use your business cards as name tags. Get a transparent plastic cover with a pin, and attach it to your lapel. Wearing it on your right side tends to make it more noticeable.
- Use your business card as a name tag on your briefcase. Make sure that your company logo and tagline are visible. This way, your business card will turn into a "conversation piece" during plane rides, which may help you meet interesting people and good business contacts.
- Use your business card as an ad: many publications offer "business card size" classified ads. If you design your business card properly, it can double up as an ad in those publications.
- Don't give your business card too quickly. It may be perceived as pushy. Try to establish a conversation with your prospect first. For example, ask them what do they do. That will usually

prompt them to give you their card. That is the perfect moment to give them yours.

- Don't try to give your card in situations where many people are giving them to your prospect. Wait for a moment when you can capture your prospect's attention span.
- Another tactic you can try when your prospect is overwhelmed and can't pay you enough attention is to send your card by mail. Pretend you ran out of business cards and ask for theirs. Then, mail them your card and take the opportunity to drop a follow up note.
- If you have a mobile phone number or a direct phone number that is not listed in your business card, write it at the back of your card before handing it out, and tell your prospects that you are giving them your direct number. This will make your card more important, and less likely to be lost or thrown out.
- Another way of increasing the chances that your prospects will keep your card is by printing valuable information on the back, for example important phone numbers (local police, hospitals, etc), a calendar, or a football schedule.
- Offer to hand out cards of complementary (non-competitive) business people in exchange for them distributing yours. An example of non-competitive businesses is real estate brokers and mortgage brokers.
- If somebody gives you their business card, you should give them yours in return.
- Always give your business card face up.
- Take a cue from Far East business people, who hand out business cards with both hands. It helps give the impression that your business card is something very important.
- If you conduct business internationally, use the back of your card to print a translated version of your business card in your customers' language. Even if they have no problem reading English, it will be a classy touch and they will appreciate it.
- If you sell different product brands and want to put their logos on your business card, print them in only one color. Using each logo's brand colors could make your business card look chaotic and busy.
- Create a business card in magnet form. Magnets are widely used, to hold important papers on the refrigerator door at home and on file cabinets at work. They are always visible and always get read.
- When receiving somebody else's business card, don't put it away immediately. Instead, keep it in your hand for a while you talk to your prospect, or place it neatly over the table, and try to develop a conversation based on the information on the card.
- Use the back of the cards you receive to write down important facts about the persons who handed them to you. It will help you enormously when you follow up with them.
- If you are in a profession where relationship selling is important, it may be a good idea to include your picture on your business card (i.e. real estate brokers).
- Even if your business is a sole proprietorship, you can still use "account manager" as your title instead of "owner" or "president". If you do sales (and we all do) "account manager" is a perfectly appropriate title, and it will give the impression that you work for a larger company.

- Use logos of organizations that you or your business belong to in your business cards. They are an easy way to provide instant credibility to your business. For example, if you operate a repair shop you can display the logo of the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) or the Triple A (AAA). (Check with them first about the terms of use).
- If you participate in affiliate programs online, you can still use business cards to promote your affiliate links. Use the name of the affiliate company as the company name, use 'partner' or 'associate' as your title, and the URL of the directory or web page where you have placed your affiliate links, as your web address. Just because affiliate programs are online doesn't mean that you can't use off-line marketing methods to promote them.
- If you need to give cards to different kinds of prospects (for example if you are a student looking for work), make business cards with just your name and contact information, and attach custom made self-adhesive labels at the back with information of interest to each specific prospect.
- Include an information email address (for example: info@yourdomain.com) that is set in autoresponder mode, that automatically triggers an email message with full information about your product, service or company. This will increase the effectiveness of your business card since you will give your prospects much more information that you can fit in a card.
- Take good care of your business cards. Keep them clean and crisp in a cardholder. Don't give away cards that are bent or damaged.
- Try to get a cardholder with two pockets. That way, you can use one for your business cards and the other one for the business cards you receive.
- Keep all the business cards you receive neatly organized in a rolodex. It will save you time and will provide you with a database of contacts with whom to build positive business relationships.
- Collect all the business cards you can find, even if you don't need them. Together, they will act as an "idea file" that will provide you with valuable tips that you can use to design your business cards.

For more business card tips, visit Free Business Cards:

<http://www.accordmarketing.com/businesscards/>

Mario Sanchez publishes The Internet Digest (<http://www.theinternetdigest.net>) an online collection of tips and resources on Internet Marketing and Web Design. You can also visit his Business Card Tips page at: <http://www.accordmarketing.com/businesscards/> .

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