

Not So Stationary Stationery

By Beth Brodovsky

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The elements and functionality of the basic stationery system is changing. With the advent of email, fax, web and cell phones, stationery systems must be adjusted to meet the needs of today's business.

Business Cards

The biggest change by far in business cards is the amount of information they contain. Current cards often juggle multiple phone numbers, email, and web addresses as well as one or more street addresses. Companies are adopting logos with taglines and sometimes sub-taglines. We have even seen mission statements and bullet lists of services and product lines printed on cards. To corral the potential chaos, think carefully about the purpose of the card and how the end viewer will use it.

Secondary information such as alternate addresses can be positioned away from the key content on the back of the card. Web and email addresses are now easily identified and no longer need "http://," "web" and "email." Alternatively, try a mini CD — a business card sized disk that can contain an interactive presentation.

Letterhead

It is not what letterhead says, but how it is used – and not used that is changing. Many businesses now use email for their primary correspondence. Sending invoices, thank you notes and proposals electronically drastically reduces the reliance on printed stationery.

While situations remain where professional communication requires a printed letter, the quantity of letterhead ordered can be reduced for many businesses. Corporate address, main phone and fax numbers and website should be still be included. Reserve personal information, such as email and cell phone numbers for individual business cards, even if there is only one person in the business.

Envelopes

The standard #10 business envelope is still around. Known as the "bill" or "invoice" size, we like to create distinctive designs that stand out and beg to be opened. Invest in having your logo printed in your corporate colors on paper that matches your cards and stationery. Mismatched mailings look unprofessional and derail your brand-building efforts.

Whether professionally done or output on your desktop printer, affixing a label that coordinates with your other stationery instantly turns plain 9x12 and other envelopes into pieces of your branded system without having to invest in printing envelopes in sizes you only use occasionally.

Some things never go out of style

When developing a stationery system, don't just think about what you "should" have, think about how you work and plan a system that helps you get the job done from both a practical and a marketing perspective.

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