

POSTCARDS

DON'T OVERLOOK THE LITTLE THINGS



A WHITE PAPER

**Postcards:
Don't Overlook the Little Things**



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Little Things Make a Big Impact

Small gestures mean a lot: a thank-you card, a hand-written note of encouragement, a postcard from a travelling friend... well, you get the idea. All of these things make us feel good, and they help us take notice of the person (or business) who sent them.

The same is true in marketing. A well-timed postcard in the mailbox would be a welcome surprise to your customers...especially when it contains a great tip, a coupon, a sale announcement, or something that the general public isn't privy to.

In a day when people are used to being bombarded by email blasts, it's great to take advantage of the mail again—and gain a “new” captive audience. But there are other “little things” you can do to help give your business an advantage over your competitors, so take a look at what you can do with a little help from your postcards.

The Postcard Punch

Okay, so we know that just sending something in the mail will set you apart from most businesses, but how can you make sure it does more than that? How can you make your postcard stand out? What can you do to give it that extra punch?

People want to see something unexpected, such as a picture that really has nothing to do with your business. It's kind of a teaser ad. Then you can tie it in with the headline or copy.

Another idea is to give a hint about what you're offering and an incentive for coming in to find out more. In your bold text, you would say something like, "An Exciting New Product Just Popped Up in our Store..." The image could be a bag of popcorn, and you could offer free popcorn the day of the sale, as well.

You might also try using an out of season picture. If it's winter, you might feature a summer picture or something that evokes a tropical feel. People like to think about pleasant things, and this might be just what grabs their eye that day in the mail. Then you can continue to tell them about how doing business with you is like taking a well needed vacation from the way they had been doing business.

No matter what your idea is, make sure the graphics and design are strong. You need a power-packed, professional, attention-grabbing design that makes your readers want to take it to the next level and actually read the copy (which tells them why they should do business with you). Without that, your postcard won't do its job.

Since it's a visual competition for attention, let's take a look at what good and bad postcard design might look like.

There is not enough visual interaction between the background elements. The audience will lose interest quickly.



This color combination does not draw the viewer in. It looks unfinished and raw.

The text is condensed and looks too close together. It becomes harder to read and, because of that, the reader is less interested in the text.

Above is an example of "bad" postcard design.

The popcorn bag adds visual interest by creating a sense excitement for the viewer.



The vivid background colors and dimension grab the viewers attention!

The hierarchy of text draws the viewer in and helps the flow of reading.

Above is an example of "good" postcard design.

Color is Your Best Friend

Color will cost you a little more, but the impact is always worth it. It's a wise investment because your postcard will jump out among the bills and other mail, plus it looks exciting and lures your readers in. Your postcard will be one of the first things in the shuffle of white envelopes and manila packages that your customers pull out to read. The picture or graphic will be much more powerful when it's printed in color.

Pictures alone will help ensure your customers take note of your mailing, but when those photos are in color, your postcard will become a welcome site in the sea of ordinary mail. Color pictures are a great addition, but don't forget about adding color to your text, too. Titles and headlines, or even contact information, has much more impact when it's printed in color. Tie it in to the picture's colors to add continuity, or contrast it to add some drama.

Titles That Tantalize

After you've grabbed their attention with some hard-hitting graphics, the next step is to wow them with words. Be clever. Be creative. Be strange. Be anything but ordinary.

For example, if your ads are normally traditional and corporate, try adding a sense of humor to your ad copy. The point is to get their attention and encourage them to read on. Here are some examples for you to ponder.

Typical Ad:

20% Off Sale

Try This Instead:

Extra 20% off? You could buy yourself a new pair of shoes...and your husband would never know. (Picture a woman shopping for shoes, etc.)

Typical Ad #2:

Come In and See Our Remodeled Store!

Try This Instead:

The drilling may be done. But the BANG! WOW! KAPOW! has just begun! Check us out!

So, the next step is to have something worthwhile to say. And, of course, you want them to notice your logo and contact information.

Think—What are You Trying to Do?

What do you want them to take away from your postcard?

Are you going for just name recognition? Create a clever, fun, bold statement involving your logo. Make it something they'll remember, even if it seems a bit corny and strange. Try to think "outside the box."

Are you thanking them for their patronage? If so, then thank them by offering a discount or gift certificate. Who doesn't love "free money"? Or a free gift? Or a sale announcement that the public doesn't know about?

But there are other ways postcards can be used besides traditional marketing.

Tell Them About a New Product

If your goal is to announce a new product, then find a fun way to announce it. But remember that your graphic doesn't have to be the new product. It can be a teaser that makes your readers interested in your new product. In fact, you don't even need to tell them what the new product is. You can tease them into wanting to know what's coming.

Here's an example of what you could do: Show someone opening a gift, a person with a surprised look on their face, or a picture of how your service benefits them.

Announce a New Team Member

Use a postcard to announce a new member of your team. Show the new employee smiling and helping someone at your place of business. Help create a friendly vibe, so your customers feel like they already know this person. Bullet point their special abilities and expertise. But always remember it's about your customers and how it relates to helping them, rather than just about how great your new employee is.

Here are some examples of how to highlight an employee, while showing your customers how it will benefit them. You could show their strong work ethic by emphasizing how their punctuality will help your customers get their products on time. Or, if they have strong communication skills, demonstrate how that will help your customers know how far along their project is coming. Or, if they are strong in accounting and math, explain how your customers can be confident they're getting the right (and best) price.

Everyone Likes Quick & Easy Tips

Send your customers one set of quick and easy tips per month on a postcard, sprinkled with lots of colorful fonts and graphics...and, of course, your contact information.

Depending on what business you're in, you could provide tips on how to prevent rust on their car during the winter, how to keep their dog's hair looking nice between professional groomings, or how to care for their skin during the hot summer months. Other ideas might include recipes for healthful snacks or helpful information relevant to your industry.

Conclusion – Keep it Going Strong

Once you start sending postcards, it's great to get on a schedule and keep sending them. This is a powerful way of developing top-of-mind awareness, which is your ultimate goal. You want your readers to always think of you first when your industry is mentioned.

With postcards, you have a better chance of standing out in the crowd. You won't be competing for people's attention in a newspaper filled with other text and graphics. You won't be competing against noisy beeps and alarms going off on their electronics. And, if your information is powerful enough, it may end up taped to someone's refrigerator, the ultimate point of attention in the home.