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## **What makes a good corporate identity design?**

Have you ever formed an opinion about a company just by looking at their business card, envelope or letterhead? We receive many pieces of mail each day in our mailbox. Some we notice and other we don't. Some we recognize as familiar companies and others as junk mail. As you look at each letter, postcard or piece of mail, consciously or subconsciously, you are forming an impression about that company. Some give the impression of a professional operation, while others look like low budget operations. Some look classy, while others look crude. No matter what you are looking at, you are forming an impression about it. That impression affects your decision about doing business with that company. Everything your potential customer sees, your logo, business cards, letterhead, brochure, website or any marketing material, contributes to the image your potential customer forms about your company. That is your corporate identity. What impression are you making on your potential customer?

A precise logo, an outstanding business card, professional letter head and an elegant envelope with a professional look and feel are the building blocks for creating a good Corporate Identity. These materials help project your company's professional image effectively. Thought and creativity needs to be put into the creation of an enticing corporate identity design. Colors should be used to create a pleasing design.

A few key points to help you create a professional and effective corporate identity design for your business are listed below:

### ***Logo:***

In order to design a logo that is striking and memorable, it is essential to follow a few simple guidelines.

- The logo needs to be as simple as possible. Having minute details designed into the logo would make it difficult to reproduce well, especially when shrinking the size to fit on a business card.
- The logo designed should be scalable which can be used anywhere irrespective of size. This would ensure that you do not confront any problem



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in the future when you plan to enlarge the logo to be used in banners and billboards.

- Appropriate colors should be selected for the logo. It should not change the structure and appearance of the logo when it is converted as a black and white image.
- As colors look very bright on the PC monitor, review a printed copy of the logo before finalizing the color(s) for the logo.
- Bold font is always appreciated for logos as it increases the visibility of the text even from longer distances.
- Avoid using clip arts as part of the logo, as this would look unprofessional.

### ***Business Card:***

The goal here is to make your business card stand out from that of your competitors. This can be achieved in many ways.

- The address and other contact details provided in the business card should be accurate and up-to-date. This would reflect the identity and stability of your business which would unconsciously be registered in your customers' mind.
- Include only the mobile number and the office number on the business card as inclusion of the home phone number does not reflect professionalism.
- Remember that your business card should be printed on good quality paper.
- As the printing costs have gone down, color printing will enhance the look of your card without increasing the cost.
- Consider using a coating on the card such as a UV coating. This will make it feel different in the hand.
- You may use both sides of the card to communicate your message. Printing a photo or an image on the back of the card, with the tag line will help make your business card stand out in the minds of your potential clients.
- Printing the business card on an inkjet printer would be unprofessional.
- Having your photo included in the business card is one way of helping your customers to remember you.



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### ***Letterhead:***

A letterhead would be a combination of the logo, business name and the appropriate business address and contact information in the header. Remember the importance of your letterhead design as it will be read and viewed by thousands of people.

A few points to remember while creating an effective letterhead design:

- The header should contain the business name and the business logo. The business address may be placed in the footer, at the top right, or at a location that is visually pleasing to the eye.
- The header should not be cluttered with information but should be simple and elegant.
- The scalable business logo should be resized to fit the header of the letterhead, while ensuring that it is legible.
- The top left corner is the recommended position for placing the business logo as research shows that the human eye normally searches for information starting from the top left corner.
- The headers should not be too narrow nor too broad as that will dominate the page more than the message.
- A professional letterhead in most cases is white in color with a colored header and footer that would match the overall color scheme.

### ***Envelope:***

The envelope should also contain the logo, business name and the business address. As the envelope is what would create the first impression, the design should be appealing. Below are a few key points in designing an effective envelope:

- The envelope for your business can be designed to match the letterhead with the same look and feel. The goal is to have the recipient recognize your company by just looking at the envelope. All you have to do is look at the mail pieces you receive. You will automatically recognize the company names of some because of the colors and design elements that are used.



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- The business logo, business name and the address can be printed in the left top/bottom corner of the envelope as it is the traditional way of printing the sender's address on the envelope. This will help the reader to easily identify the sender.
- It should be seen that the sender's address and the business logo do not dominate the envelope design as the recipient's address should be prominent in order to help the USPS.
- The background color or design, if it should be used, should be contrasting to the font color so that the addresses ('From' and 'To addresses) are clearly visible.