

How Good Are Your Brochures?

Do you find yourself reluctant or even a tad apologetic when you hand out your company's brochure? Are you unhappy with it, but not sure why? If so, chances are you need a new brochure. But before you leap into that project, consider some of the points that follow. A little thought and planning now will go a long way in the creation of a brochure which both projects your corporate identity and image positively and is a brochure of which you can be proud.

Why Do You Even Need a Brochure?

First and foremost, a brochure is just as important and basic a tool as your business card. However, where your business card simply introduces you as an individual, your company brochure introduces your entire company. It is like an executive summary of your operation and offerings. It is an important marketing and sales tool, one in which you can do a little bragging and shamelessly present your credentials in the most favorable light. It is your opportunity to create a lasting impression. Make sure that it is a good one.

A Good Brochure

is essential to the success of your business. It must be brief. It must effectively communicate the most important fundamentals about your business and your products or services. It must communicate with, reach and move a prospective customer who, you must assume, knows nothing about your company. That is a tall order.

A Good Brochure

must leave the reader with the impression that yours is a solid, reliable company and therefore its products must be equally as good, solid and reliable. It is a corner stone in building trust with your prospective customers. It must leave the reader wanting to learn more about your company, but not necessarily today.

A Good Brochure

will introduce your company and give the prospect a visual feel for who you are and what you do. It should function well as both a door opener before a sales call and a reminder afterwards to which prospective clients may refer. While your brochure will seldom actually get you a sale, it will make getting the order so much easier

A Bad Brochure Is Like Bad Breath.

No one will tell you what is wrong, but they will avoid you, or in this case, your company. Your brochure, along with your phone number, will simply go right to the trash.

When that happens, you will find you have done more than just waste your money and time. You have turned a prospect into a permanent no sale without even getting a chance to get in the door. If you saved a few hundred dollars on producing your brochure, was it worth it?

A badly done or cheap looking brochure reflects badly on you, your company and your products. Do not scrimp. A company which economizes on a brochure may also be seen as scrimping on its products.

Your Brochure Should Not

attempt to be a comprehensive technical manual detailing all your product specs. It should not be a price sheet listing special sales items and the like. These are sales sheets and have completely different requirements in look, design, and purpose.

When companies try to combine these functions in a one piece *all things to all people* brochure, they often end up with a confusing, disorganized mess. You can be absolutely certain that if your brochure is difficult to read, it won't be. This could reflect a confused company to a prospect. Remember K.I.S.S.?

An acceptable combination of both types is often seen in a presentation folder. One pocket holds your corporate brochure, the other pocket holds special deals, sales sheets, price lists and the like.

Brochures Are Usually Used In Three Ways:

- **Initially:** as an introductory mailer. You may mass mail the brochure to sales leads and follow up later by phone.
- **Secondarily:** Your brochure should always be used as a leave behind at initial sales calls. Even when you have mailed out a copy in advance of a meeting, it is always a good idea to leave another copy as you finish up your sales call. It serves as a reminder that there is a solid, respectable company behind the sales rep who just left. And it certainly never hurts to have several copies of your brochure circulating in your prospect's office(s).
- **Thirdly:** A corporate brochure is essential to fulfil requests from potential clients for literature, either in response to an ad or a phone enquiry.

Do NOT Do This....

A major Canadian Bank produced a series of "Advice to Small Business" booklets to hand out to prospects. Each branch manager was supplied with a quantity of these brochures. However under the bank's accounting system they were only charged if they actually gave out the brochures. The result? You guessed it. Many of these branch managers stashed the brochures in the vaults and refused to give them out to avoid being charged.

Brochures and advertising material are wasted sitting in your mail room. Get this material into your prospects' hands.