

Business Cards That Work

Your business card is one of the most important marketing tools you'll ever create. You give your business card to prospects and customers so they have your contact information. You tuck your business card inside of presentation folders, drop it in letters, and use it in a myriad of other ways to let people know who you are and what you do. And, if you run ads in local newspapers, your business card may even double as camera-ready copy for the publication's "business card ad" pages.

PrintWorks offers a set of tips and guidelines to help you while designing a business card. Keep in mind that these are guidelines only, not rules.

Graphic design is not an exact science and today's standards might not be there anymore tomorrow. If you have any feedback or questions on the following information don't hesitate to contact us.

The most important element on business cards are text sizes. If your text is too small, clients might struggle to read information on the cards. There should be a visual balance between the size and position of the address and the name and title.

Text size guidelines

For determining the sizes of your typography keep the following tips in mind. Font sizes are indicated in points.

- Address and Phone contact elements should be 7 to 8 point
- Name should be 1 point bigger or set in a bold typeface
- The title could be the size point size as your address details or 1 point smaller
- If needed the Company Name should have a minimum of 12 point

Like any other design you might make a business card will look messy and untidy if you would go with a different text sizes for everything. Try to go for a typographic consistent design. If the logo you are using has a tag line or payoff try working around that font size in your details.

Different font weights and sizes on business cards.

Text size minimums

The address information should not be smaller then 6 points, or 5 point if you are setting in capitals. Anything below this will be hard to read. Add 1 point if you are setting your typography inverted (light typography on a dark background).

Industry specific information

It's common to see professionals - such as doctors, lawyers and architects - using smaller type sizes for contact information.
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Typography

While it's logical to look at the typeface suggested in the corporate identity (if available) those can be header-only fonts. Be sure to work with a font on the business card that's designed for print.
Some fonts tend to print smaller in the same point then others. The font Copperplate for example will look like 6 point while set in 7 point. Keep this in mind while testing your card (see the next chapter).

Testing

Be sure to print your business card a couple of times while designing it. Even take some effort to cut away the rest of the paper to see if the layout balances well.
A business card surrounded by a lot of white space (e.a. your printing paper) may seem different to the eye then the design cut out off actual size cards.

Content

The following is a list of information commonly found on business cards:

- Company name or logo
- Company payoff (possibly incorporated in the logo)
- Name
- Title
- Email address
- Internet Address (URL)
- Telephone number
- Mobile telephone number

- Fax (facsimile) number

When display telephone and fax numbers it's useful to start them with Tel (or T) and Fax (or F) to indicate what the number is for. It's common to see the same done with the email (E) and Internet address (I). The latter is not exactly needed but done with constancy in mind.

Telephone numbers are usually broken up with spaces to increase readability. Take the following phone number for example:

- 00493676201929

Broken up in pieces that would look something like these examples:

- +49 (366) 721 929
- +49 (366) 72 19 29

In international phone numbers you can replace the 00 for a + symbol (the example above is a random number in Germany). If your client is working overseas it's a good idea to use a international phone number. In Europe it's common to see international number notations.