

Make Your
Business
Stationery
Work Harder For You

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Ok, ok Stationery Design doesn't grab the headlines like Search Engine Optimisation, Branding or Direct Mail might, getting your business stationery to reflect your image is crucial. Poorly designed and printed stationery creates a poor impression. At best you look a bit tinpot, at worst you can look out of date and simply unprofessional. Follow these tips to ensure that whenever you hand over a business card or send a letter that you can be proud of what you're giving.

Ten simple steps to creating fabulous stationery:

- 1. Start by defining your brand personality.** Essentially, what makes you unique? What impression would you like to create? I've written an article for printing.com's idea magazine which covers this in more detail - if you'd like us to post you a copy or call us on 01483 401 818. Alternatively you can download from the articles section of our website www.guildfordprinting.com.
 - 2. Give this to anyone working on your marketing literature** –web designers, graphic designers, printers etc and give them plenty of guidance on what you're looking for in terms of the look and feel. To be honest, any designers worth their salt will ask this during the briefing stage, but it pays to be prepared!
 - 3. Make sure the stationery design does you justice.** Measure the creative output against your brand personality – is it appropriate, does it send out the right signals?
 - 4. Don't overcomplicate things.** Three blocks of text on each side of a business card is all anyone needs. Any more and it looks a mess. Keep things clean, simple and easy to read.
 - 5. Make your business cards sell for you.** Use the back of the card to sell yourself. This isn't naff, it isn't desperate - it's common sense. How many business cards do you have that tell you absolutely nothing about what that company does? Are you likely to call them? Nope! So tell people what you do, how you can help them and make sure you use benefits not features.
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6. Flag your audience on the back of your business card.

Many of the cards we create for people have statements on the back like "We help small businesses make the most out of their marketing budget through high quality graphic design and great value print". Does what it says on the tin.

7. Try making it interactive – ask them a question, or better still – a series of questions. For example "What's stopping you from achieving the business success you deserve?"

8. Differentiate yourself from everyone else. Why be boring? Nowadays making your stationery stand out is about so much more than splashing out on some cream Conqueror. Be daring - put some colour on the back of your letterheads for instant impact in the post, use an image like we did for a property developer recently. Experiment with textured paper (our Conqueror Stonemarque is just perfect for this) or interesting cuts (talk to us about shaped or folding business cards).

9. Make sure your stationery is in alignment with your charge out rates – self designed freebie business cards just won't cut it if you want to be charging a half decent hourly rate. Professional design really can give you the edge and set the standard and tone for your business.

10. Get your invoices selling for you too. Make it easy for clients to pay you with invoices that are thoughtfully laid out. Create a tear-off slip at the bottom with your address in the space for the window of the envelope. Make sure the design follows through from the letterhead and finally use the space to advertise an offer or product that you think they should be buying.

If you would like to be sure that your stationery is sending out the right signals, then we would be delighted to offer you a free "Stationery MOT". We'll look at what you're currently using and measure that against your brand personality. We'll then discuss strategies with you to improve your stationery (if it needs it) and you'll have the opportunity to view our portfolio so that you can see some of our many 'Before' and 'After' designs. To book your free place please or call us on 01483 401 818.
