

## Postcards



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## Commercial Web Offset, Sheet Fed & Flexographic Printing Services

Custom printed postcards are the fastest, easiest, and most economical way to dramatically increase your sales and profits. A custom printed postcard can increase response to your sales message and enhance brand name recognition. It is an easy print means to target a prospective customer to entice them to buy your product or service. It is the perfect printed vehicle to stretch your budgeted advertising dollars.

### Considerations for printing a postcard...

Be mindful of some of the valuable information below to help you become a wiser consumer:

### Postcard definition...

A custom business postcard in most cases is simply a quick and easy means to attract the attention of the reader...in most cases a prospective customer. Other printed mediums offer similar advantages, but the postcard is by far the most efficient. Postcards usually come in three standard sizes: 4" x 6" (standard size), 5" x 7" and 5-1/2" x 8-1/2".

**Trade Tip:** Since a postcard is smaller in size, they are less expensive to produce and mail. However, expect to pay a little more for heavier-thicker card stock. Remember the heavier the stock the more durable and longer lasting the postcard will be.

### Advantages of a printed postcard...

Integrating printed postcards into your marketing plan can help broaden your customer base. A postcard can be used in various ways because it is more convenient to fill out and return than clip-out order forms, coupons, or other response devices.

### Some examples of a postcard use:

- ▶ Subscription or renewal cards for newsletters, magazines, and other periodicals.
  - ▶ Coupons
  - ▶ Products, and/or services
- ▶ Mini-news releases or announcements
  - ▶ Order forms
  - ▶ Survey forms

### Postcard design...

Ask yourself what is this postcard intended for before developing the design of your postcard?

Is it an order form, mini-news release, or a general statement of my products and/or services?

Create your postcard in a way that will persuade the reader to take action.

**Trade Tip:** If your postcard is a form for ordering or surveying, keep it simple because too much text can be confusing which may cause the reader to lose interest.

**Trade Tip:** When choosing a font make sure you use at least 10 pt. text. A sans-serif font (Arial, Tahoma, Verdana) is best suited for smaller type size because it has a cleaner sharper look.

Marketing research has proven that full color postcards are more effective than postcards printed in one or two colors. The visual cues in full color printing grab the attention of the reader so keep this in mind when undergoing the design process.

Another consideration when designing your postcard is what type of card stock you will use---coated or uncoated. Coated card stock will convey your message on your postcard more dramatically since the stock will have a smooth glossy finish. It will also be more durable.

### Additional trade tips to consider for printing an effective marketing postcard...

- ▶ Prepaid return postage.
- ▶ Pre-addressed return address on card or a pre-addressed envelope.
- ▶ Color---Neon-bright paper, pre-printed paper, or photo-postcards attract attention.
  - ▶ Plenty of room to fill in names and addresses, and easy-to-read large type.
  - ▶ Check-boxes that allow the recipient to quickly fill out order forms or surveys.
- ▶ Incentives such as free gifts or drawings for prizes to entice recipients to return surveys or other types of reply cards. Include your mailing address, phone number, or other alternate contact information on the card.
  - ▶ Repeat any special marketing message that is found in accompanying marketing materials.
    - ▶ Calls to action---Always tell the recipient what to do with the card — "Fill it out & drop it in the mail" may seem obvious, but say it anyway.

### Postcard color FYI...

Most high quality commercial post card printing is done using a four- color process called CMYK. CMYK stands for Cyan (blue), Magenta (red), Yellow and Black. These four colors are used to create the various shades of color seen in a vibrant, full color postcard. Your computer monitor is calibrated in RGB. Due to these different color models and the wide variation in monitor technologies, the colors will be similar, but not exact. If you print a sample on your inkjet or laser color printer, there may be instances of substantial variations from the high quality produced from a commercial press. Remember that RGB is a color build system used by your computer monitor to display full color. CMYK is the color space that commercial printing presses use to reproduce your printing project. RGB is Red, Green and Blue, while CMYK is Cyan (blue), Magenta (red), Yellow and Black. The final printed project that you see on your computer screen will not necessarily be the same exact colors reproduced by a high quality

printing press. In most cases there won't be a big difference, but there are some colors produced by an RGB monitor that cannot be reproduced via CMYK on a press.

### Spot Colors...

Spot colors are used most frequently for one and two color jobs and when an exact color needs to be produced every time. Logos are perfect examples for spot colors. The Pantone PMS color matching system is most frequently used for selection and printing of spot colors. For example, if your logo needs a distinctive blue, tell your commercial printer your Pantone PMS color choice.

This number will then be matched on the press to deliver the exact result you need.

### Pantone Matching System (PMS)...

PMS is a popular color matching system used by the printing industry to print spot colors. Most applications that support color printing allow you to specify colors by indicating the Pantone name or number. This assures that you get the right color when the file is printed, even though the color may not look right when displayed on your monitor. PMS works well for spot colors but not for process colors, which are generally specified using the CMYK color model.

### Protecting your postcard...

Printed postcards are often coated to enhance and protect the ink and card stock as it travels through the mail. Take a look below for the most popular finishes.

- ▶ Aqueous coating - A fast-drying, water-based, protective coating which is applied while the paper stock is on the press. Cheapest type of coating.
- ▶ UV coating - A liquid gloss plastic finish applied after printing.
- ▶ Film lamination - A process of applying a plastic film on the postcards

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