

Marketing Your Sewing Business With Business Cards, Fliers, And Brochures

Business cards, fliers, and brochures strengthen the marketing position of a business in many ways. They establish credibility and transmit a professional image; they communicate benefits and outstanding characteristics of products and services; they differentiate a business from its competitors; and finally, they foster customer trust. Business cards, fliers, and brochures are marketing tools that any business can use to build relationships with existing customers and to attract new ones.

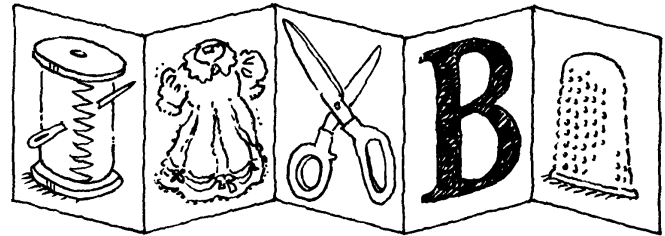
Because the vast majority of sewing businesses are home-based enterprises operated on a tight budget, production concerns often take precedence over marketing issues. However, a small business needs to balance production and marketing if the business is to grow to its full potential. This publication explains the value of business cards, fliers, and brochures, and describes how to create and use them in a sewing business.

Reasons To Use Business Cards, Fliers, And Brochures

If you have not taken advantage of business cards, fliers, and brochures in your business, consider the many reasons why you should. You will find that business cards, fliers, and brochures are valuable marketing tools.

Reason #1. Business cards, fliers, and brochures can be part of your business plan to target specific consumers who want and need your product or service. A well-written business plan reveals marketing opportunities and guides decisions regarding the best ways to represent your products or services, approach customers, and position your business in the marketplace. Good planning is the first step toward building the customer base required to sustain a business.

Specifics of creating a business plan or a marketing strategy will not be discussed in this publication. Many public, college, and university libraries can provide you with detailed information. Additionally, Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) located throughout Alabama, and nationally, provide



assistance on a one-to-one basis. Contact the U. S. Small Business Administration (SBA) office to learn about SBDCs in your area.

Reason #2. Business cards, fliers, and brochures are a cost-effective means of reaching customers. Evaluate cost-effectiveness on the basis of the number of inquiries brought in, sales made, and contacts reached. Think about where the customers you want to reach are located and whether printed materials can be used to attract them to your business. Also consider what your chief competitors are doing to be successful. If businesses you compete with use printed materials, consider making the investment.

Reason #3. Business cards, fliers, and brochures can increase sales. While word-of-mouth is widely used by owners of sewing businesses, it should never be the only method used to attract customers. Printed materials combined with other methods give you a sense of control that cannot be achieved by word of mouth alone. The greater the number of people who know about your business, the better your chances of making a sale. Business cards, fliers, and brochures give your company the visibility necessary to generate new customers.

Reason #4. Business cards, fliers, and brochures are easy to create. Creating professional-looking printed materials does not require a great deal of artistic training. As a sewing professional you already possess the creativity needed to design effective marketing materials. This publication will show you how easy it is to create your own business cards, fliers, and brochures and put them to work in your sewing business.

Which Printed Materials Are Right For Your Business?

Some businesses use business cards, fliers, and brochures simultaneously while others use only one or two types of printed materials. Consider what each type of printed material can add to your business.

A business card helps new contacts remember your name and your business. Later, customers may use the card when they need to make a purchase or refer others to your business. Fliers and brochures serve this same basic function; however, more information can be printed on fliers or brochures than on business cards. Fliers usually contain a brief, easy-to-read description of what you offer and contain some artwork. Brochures differ from fliers in that they can accommodate more detailed information and very high quality artwork. Business cards, fliers, and brochures are versatile. They can be placed in strategic locations where members of your target group will be exposed to the information.

Other considerations for deciding which printed materials to use include the following.

Your objectives. Do you want to make consumers aware of your business? Or do you want to provide information to help consumers make buying decisions? Your purpose will determine whether a simple business card, an informative flier, or a detailed brochure is needed.

Your target group. Will members of your target group respond to the method? Some methods are more effective than others for a certain consumer group. Match the method to the audience.

Cost effectiveness. Will the materials help you draw the number of customers needed to keep you in business? Select the most cost-effective methods.

Your resources. Do you have all the resources to create appropriate materials and distribute them efficiently? If there is any doubt, don't hesitate to ask for help.

Your competitors. Will printed materials make your business more competitive? The question can be answered with good investigation and evaluation. Use every tool available to enhance your competitive position.

Affordability. Are printed materials affordable? Start at a level that is financially comfortable for you. Increase your marketing budget and add printed materials as the business grows.

Design Elements

Ink, paper, typeface, artwork, and printing are elements of attractive printed materials. Each element makes a unique contribution to the finished product.

Ink. Choose an ink color that contrasts with the paper color (dark ink on light paper, for example). Black or dark ink is usually appropriate; colors other than black can add interest. Using more than one color of ink is slightly more expensive, but the increased attractiveness can easily outweigh the extra cost. Use *spot color* to highlight specific portions of the design.

Some print shops may give discounts when using the same color of ink on several types of printed materials. Some give discounts for printing large quantities.

Paper. The quality of the paper you select is an indication of the quality of your work. Use the highest quality paper you can afford.

The terms *texture* and *finish* refer to surface features that give character to paper products and make a good impression on customers. Texture makes paper feel fine, coarse, smooth, or bumpy to the touch. A finish gives paper a satiny, glossy, or matte appearance. Specialty papers are made with borders, background graphics, specks of color, blended colors, spot color, or other decorative effects.

Depending on how texture, finish, and decorative effects are combined, your printed materials can be formal, informal, natural, or whimsical in appearance. Select paper that is consistent with the business image you want to convey.

Typeface. *Typeface* refers to the various lettering styles available for use in printed materials. Selecting and using typefaces can be tricky. Choose a typeface that is not too big or too small. Use only two or three complementary typefaces on a single project. Too many different typefaces can make the message unreadable. Avoid typefaces that are overly decorative; they can be hard to read too. Crowded script or all capitals in headings also make reading difficult.

Printing. Printing is an extremely important process in creating printed materials. Offset printing, laser printing, and dot matrix are methods that provide different levels of quality and cost. Offset printing is higher in quality than laser or dot matrix printing. Offset printing requires the services of an experienced, professional printer. To identify the best printer in your area, ask other business owners which printer they use.

Use a printing method that is affordable and gives high quality results. Also, match printing

quality to the product and clientele. For example, using high gloss, offset printed materials to sell calico stuffed animals for children is overkill. But the offset method provides the quality reproduction needed to sell expensive specialty items.

Offset printing or duplicating with a high-speed copier results in clear reproductions of photographs. Color copying is an effective way to reproduce color in a design. If large quantities are printed, however, color copying is expensive.

Artwork. Artwork creates visual impact and is an essential element of printed material. Start with good quality artwork and use a printing method that does not diminish quality. Logos, drawings, and photos are categories of artwork that attract readers and encourage them to keep reading your material.

Logos identify a business or its product. A logo can consist of a picture, letters, or a combination. We all experience the power of logos. Just think of your favorite soft drink. Immediately a distinctive logo associated with the product comes to mind. Try to create a logo that will help customers recognize your company, product, and message immediately. Play with different styles of letters and drawings to get something you like.

If you will not be your own artist, you can hire an art student or graphic artist to create an original drawing. Before hiring someone, make sure you can clearly communicate what you want. Prepare by collecting magazine and catalog clippings that resemble the image you want. When selecting line drawings, make sure that lines are thick enough to be seen. Drawings with lots of detail may not reproduce well. Try to achieve high contrast and avoid heavy shading.

If your product will be best illustrated by a photograph, you can hire a professional photographer. Obtain the highest quality possible, but do not buy more than you need. For example, vivid color photographs might be necessary to sell intricate embroidery designs, while a lesser quality photograph might be adequate to sell aprons and dish towels.

Designing And Printing Materials Yourself

Should you try to design and print business cards, fliers, and brochures yourself? Business cards are usually fairly inexpensive to have printed at a local quick print shop. Fliers and brochures may be costly to design and print. You have to weigh your resources, time, and talents against the costs and quality of the final product.

Benefits Of Designing And Printing Material Yourself

- Flexibility and control of design
- Control of the quality of finished materials
- Quick response to changes in the market
- Easy retrieval of information on the computer for use in other documents

Design work and printing can be accomplished economically if you already have a computer. However, if you must purchase a computer the initial cost will be high. New or used equipment can cost thousands of dollars. If you don't want to make a large financial investment, you can use equipment at a local computer store or copy shop for a fee. Avoid wasting time and money. Hire someone in advance to teach you to use the software. College students are sometimes available at good rates.

On the other hand, purchasing a computer for your business may be something you should consider. You can produce and revise professional-looking materials quickly and easily with reasonably priced publishing software. You can also use a computer to keep records and write letters.

Before designing and printing materials on your computer, consider the following design elements.

Paper. Decorative business forms with colorful borders make printed products look distinctive and professional. Several companies in the United States offer decorative business forms by mail. Check business magazines for advertisements. Contact companies to receive paper samples. Decide on a design and place a small order. You might want to test several designs to find out which ones get the best response from customers. Print a large quantity only after you have identified a design that works.

Typefaces. The typical publishing software package offers many different typefaces. To make sure the software has the capabilities you need, read computer magazines and ask a salesperson for a demonstration prior to purchase. Compare prices at several stores and in mail-order catalogs. Software prices vary quite a bit, so shop around.

Printers. When printing from a computer, use a laser printer to produce a darker, clearer result than a dot matrix printer. If you must use a dot matrix printer, increase the resolution with the following method. Create the design on the computer screen using letters twice as large as you want in the finished product. Before printing, set the printer to reduce the design by 50 percent to get a sharper image.

Artwork. Clip-art software is a good source for camera-ready drawings. (*Camera-ready* means that the drawing is ready to be placed on a page for the printer.)

Business Cards

Business cards should be attractive and communicate quickly how your business can be reached. (See page 8 for sample business cards.)

Types Of Business Cards

The standard size for a *basic business card* is 3½ by 2 inches. Information may be printed on one or both sides. A *fold-over business card* has four panels that can be used to print information. The largest business card, the *info card*, has eight panels. Choose the card that accommodates the amount of information to be printed.

Creating Business Cards

A business card is small; therefore, the design has to be uncluttered and easy to read. Always include information that identifies the business and makes it easy for customers to contact you. Also think about including interesting or useful information that would make the customer want to keep the card. Making the customer keep and use the card is an objective. You will want to keep this in mind when deciding what information to include.

Tips For Business Cards

- Create a professional-looking, eye-catching design.
- Use the highest quality paper you can afford.
- Take advantage of all of the space available. Print information on all sides.
- Size is important. The card should fit easily in a pocket, purse, or file box.
- Highlight a few important words by making them larger or darker.
- Buy business cards in quantities that are right for you. The more cards you purchase, the lower the cost per card.

Ways To Use Business Cards

- Give to neighbors.
- Post on bulletin boards.
- Put in business letters and other mail you send out.
- Leave at fabric stores and other related businesses.
- Generously distribute to contacts at meetings and gatherings.

Basic Information For Business Cards

- Business name
- Business logo
- Positioning statement (slogan or description of what your company does)
- Address, including zip code
- Your name
- Your title
- Phone number, including area code
- Fax number, including area code
- E-mail address

Interesting Information For Business Cards

- Price lists
- Services provided
- Map to your business
- List of toll-free numbers or tourist information
- Success story of a customer
- Pictures of products, your office, or employees
- Quotes, jokes, or proverb

Fliers

Fliers are simple, one-page posters used to advertise. Their message must be straightforward and easy to understand because people usually do not spend very much time looking at them. Large quantities can be produced quickly and at a reasonable cost. (See page 8 for sample flier.)

Types Of Fliers

Fliers can be mailed or posted where they can be seen by potential customers. Make fliers more informative if they will be mailed. Use a bold typeface if the flier will be posted. Incorporate a tear-off section if appropriate. Include your name, your business name, products or services offered, and a telephone number on the flier.

Creating Fliers

Basic components of fliers are a *headline* designed to capture the attention of passersby; *body copy* that briefly describes the business you are in and the product or service you offer, and provides contact information; and *artwork* that helps to get the message across. Because a headline is the first line at the top of the page, use a bold typeface. Body copy consists of several main points stated in as few words as possible. When writing body copy, focus on benefits that your customers value. Creative artwork such as a logo, drawing, or photograph goes a long way toward attracting customers and making the message memorable.

Tips For Fliers

- Combine no more than three different typefaces on one flier.
- Use colored paper and colored ink that will get the attention of passersby.
- Make sure the headline, copy, and artwork complement one another.
- Always include company name, address, and telephone number.
- Include your name when appropriate. In some instances, a first name is sufficient.

Ways To Use Fliers

- Post on walls, windows, or bulletin boards using a staple gun, thumbtacks, or transparent tape. Do not plaster your fliers side by side or use them to cover fliers belonging to someone else.
- Hang several copies in a large space to keep your flier from getting lost among others in the area.
- Print fliers in several different colors. Hang a color that contrasts with the others hanging around it. For example, if a blue flier is already posted, hang your yellow flier beside it.
- Hang some fliers high and others low to accommodate differences in the height of readers.

Brochures

Brochures contain detailed information about a business and its products or services. Brochures are useful when the product or service is expensive or complicated, colorful illustrations and pictures are required, or a great deal of information is necessary to help readers make a buying decision.

Types Of Brochures

A brochure should be designed for its intended use. Most start with standard paper, which is 8½ inches wide and 11 or 14 inches long. Standard paper is folded, trimmed, or stapled to achieve the size and shape desired. Three common styles of brochures are the *self-mailer*, *slim-jim*, and *full-size* brochure.

The self-mailer is folded with an address label and postage attached to an outside panel. The slim-jim is folded to a size of approximately 4 by 8½ inches. Its narrow size makes the slim-jim easy to place into an envelope. The full-size brochure makes more of a statement than other types of brochures. It consists of several pages folded and assembled to make a booklet.

Marketing experts stress the importance of choosing the style that gets the best results in your situation. For example, the self-mailer is simple and ideal for mass mailings to prospects you have never had contact with before. The slim-jim and full-size brochure should be mailed to prospects who request information about your business.

Creating Brochures

Well-designed brochures lend credibility to a business and address questions customers want answered. On the outside of the brochure, place information that instantly lets readers know what to expect on the inside. Information that may appear on the outside includes business name, description of what you do, attractive graphics, and company logo. On the inside print concise statements that tell readers what products or services you offer, who can benefit, and how your business differs from the competition. Use persuasive language to make strong points and to support the overall message.

The basic format for a brochure includes a headline, copy, and artwork. The headline should tantalize the reader and indicate who you are and what you are selling. The copy should describe specific benefits, advantages, and features. Write copy from the point of view of the customer, using appealing and appropriate language. Artwork should draw readers from one section to the next and help readers understand the text. Avoid using so many pictures that your brochure appears cluttered or so few that it looks boring.

Like business cards, brochures should contain basic information and information that adds spice. Basic information should be located prominently so it will not be missed by readers. Additional information can be placed throughout to complete the brochure.

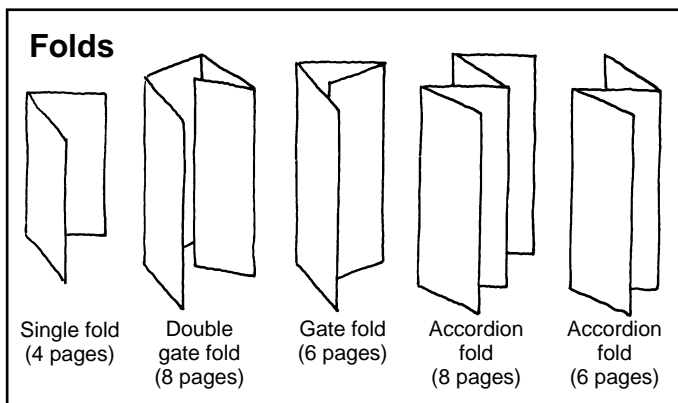
Tips For Brochures

- Create an attractive, informative design.
- Use appropriate artwork, quality paper, and high grade printing.
- Describe benefits to consumers. Focus on customer concerns, not your own.
- Highlight skills, characteristics, or services that make your products or services special.
- Write in everyday language.
- Avoid descriptions that are too long or technical. Small boxes of text are more readable than long sections.
- Double-check the spelling. If you don't trust your proofreading abilities, have someone else check the copy for spelling and grammatical errors.
- Produce the most cost-effective brochure, not the cheapest or most expensive. A brochure that is too elaborate for the market can work against you.
- Put enough information in the brochure to make it valuable to the reader. Ask yourself, "Would I want to read this if it were mailed to me?"
- Create brochures that may be used for years. Print prices on an insert instead of inside of the brochure. Simply replace the insert with an updated list when prices change.

Where To Distribute Brochures

Distribute brochures to potential customers using ads, existing customers, and various outlets available. Options include:

- Direct mail.
- Schools and community centers.
- Fairs, block parties, trade shows, concerts, and other events.
- Related businesses, such as fabric stores.
- Businesses where your potential customer can be accessed, such as day care centers and nursing homes.
- Friends and family.
- Chamber of Commerce.



Steps In Creating A Brochure

1. Collect brochures from other businesses and analyze them for ideas. Ask yourself these questions:

- How is color used?
- How is the text arranged?
- How is it folded? Would this work for my information?
- How has artwork been incorporated?
- How is the text written to make it concise?
- Has the brochure been designed to be mailed? Could I use this design for my information?
- What catches my eye in the overall layout?
- What impact does the quality of the paper make?
- What image do the graphics and artwork convey?
- What grabs my attention on the front cover?

2. Make a list of features, advantages, and benefits.

- Features—components that enable the product to perform its function.
- Advantages—functions the product or service accomplishes better than competitors.
- Benefits—results that can be attributed to use of the product or service.

3. Draft elements of the text.

4. Decide where to place each element of the text.

5. Select and decide where to place graphics.

6. Cut and paste a mock-up (an accurate model of what the finished brochure will look like).

7. At this stage you can generate a finished copy on your computer or have a graphic artist put your ideas in a camera-ready form.

Common Brochure Sizes

Paper Size	Number Of Folds	Folded Size
8½" x 11"	1	5½" x 8½"
8½" x 11"	2	3⅔" x 8½"
8½" x 14"	3	3½" x 8½"
11" x 17"	2	5½" x 8½"

Basic Information For Brochures

- Business name
- Business logo
- Request for action
- Hours of operation
- Mailing address and street address
- Shipping terms and service terms
- Ordering instructions, credit terms
- Guarantee and warranty information
- Local, toll-free, and fax telephone numbers
- Street map or written directions if the business is hard to find

Information To Spice Up Brochures

- Check list
- Order form
- List of benefits
- Price information
- List of major clients
- Event dates and places
- Questions and answers
- Association memberships
- Biographies of key personnel
- Photos, illustrations, sketches
- Quotes from satisfied customers
- Specific problems you can solve
- Suggestions for solving a problem
- Models, colors, or options available
- Problems that can occur if the reader does not act
- Informative or comparative charts, graphs, and diagrams
- Characteristics that make your business unique or special

Conclusion

As you can see, effective printed materials can be produced easily. However, if you are still not confident, look to books, videos, free-lancers, professional services, and educational programs for additional help.

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Sample business cards

The Lace Corner

(Artwork or logo)

1000 STITCH AVE.
NEEDLE, ALABAMA 35000
(205) 555-LACE
Mon.-Fri. 9-5, Sat. 10-5

Jane Smith

Glory Bee

Dana's Designs

(Artwork or logo)

Dana Lockstitch

Custom Design & Sewing
Specializing in designs for the
mature figure

888 Cross Lane, Good, AL 36000
(205) 555-3000

Sample flier

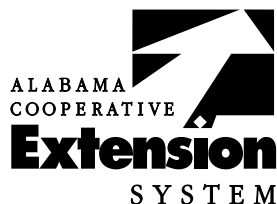
FUN WEAR SHOP

(Artwork or logo)

BETTY STARR

COLORFUL PLAY CLOTHES KIDS
LOVE TO WEAR

555 CURVY LINE HIGHWAY
FUN WEAR, ALABAMA 37000
(334) 888-2222



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UPS, 5M19, New 02:97, HE-734