

## Business Cards : Your most important promotional tool

Their job is to communicate your name and contact info. Images are nice but not the main point. They cannot do the job of a flyer or website so don't go there. Keep it simple— Name and logo if you have one and short statement about your work— like “Handbuilt stoneware”, “Studio Potter” or “Ceramic Artist”. The rest should be your contact info grouped together in easy to read font.

Keep some cards in your wallet, hand them out at shows, galleries, parties, openings. Include a card with each sale and keep a supply accessible in your booth. Every time I have worked sales at Showcase and other group sales I have been asked numerous times if the artist has a card because they could not find one in the booth. We can send them to the info booth but it is usually too late—you just missed an opportunity to sell more work or get them to your website or gallery!

### Business Card Design Tips:

1. Design Principles you learned in school apply here. Remember the Golden Mean: a geometric proportion in a composition. The actual definition of golden section is a line that is divided so that the smaller part of the line is to the larger part of the line as the larger part is to the whole line. This usually turns out to be a ratio of 8:13 and is visible in many works of art and architecture. The bottom line is that a rectangle divided in half is less interesting than in thirds.

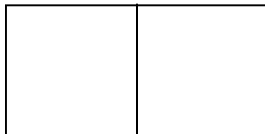
Balance

Rhythm

Proportion

Dominance

Unity



2. Use text as a design element. Think of a text block as an image. Use bold, italic and font size to create variety instead of using other fonts styles.
3. Choose a font that is easy to read. You can get by with a smaller size and will help the reader get the info they need quickly. *Balance* or *Balance* ?
4. Always left or right align text. Notice how the design principals look-easy to read, look like they belong together, your eye goes there. Centered text is harder to read and visually boring. Try right align against a strong line or image like you logo or other image to avoid capturing white space.



5. If you use colored paper make sure that your font still has enough contrast to read easily.
6. Use no more than two font styles if you must. Make sure they are different enough to provide contrast, see above. Keep font styles together with information that is related to the rest of the text block.
7. Color printing can be expensive. Consider a colored and textured cardstock with black text and logo image. It is much cheaper but looks and feels more interesting than white.
8. Those who move often or frequently change email address should consider printing smaller amounts to keep contact info current.
9. In this age of identity theft some are concerned about using their signature as their logo. Consider using an unusual font that fits your style instead or go digital with your chop or mark. If you are digitally inclined you might try “photoshopping” one of your pot images into a drawing.

10. Designing your own card doesn't necessarily require computer skills. Most print shops have a designer that you can work with and a simple card design isn't that expensive or time consuming. Once it is done just change contact info as necessary. (Usually just a few extra dollars.)
11. Printing at home? Keep in mind that inkjet ink is not color fast and will usually run if it gets wet. It can also smudge with handling. Laser printing is a heat set process and won't have that problem. You may think that home printing is cheaper but inkjet cartridges are very expensive and it is usually cheaper to get it printed on laser printer in a print shop.
12. Find a friend with computer skills that is willing to trade art or some other work for a business card design. Sometimes graphic designers are willing to do trades. You might offer to do a special order for design services. You won't know unless you ask so get creative.

## **Postcards, Flyers, Tags and Print Advertising**

The same design rules apply to other forms of print promotion. Catch the reader's eye with a well designed layout, provided easy to find and read information- *Who, What, When, Where and Keep it Simple*

1. **You have less than 3 seconds to get your point across** so don't frustrate your customer with lots of small clutter and scattered detail.
2. Make images and text as large as you can and still include the important info.
3. Larger batches are cheaper.
4. Check postal regulations **before** you design mailers-saves redesigning later, very annoying.
5. Small print shops can sometimes give you a better deal because they are not tied to corporate pricing schedules. Ask around.
6. Of course, it is professional looking but there is no rule that requires glossy color printing. If you are on a small budget get creative with black and white or look into one color printing prices.
7. Read some books on design and marketing. The library is a good source. I recommend **The Non-Designer's Design Book** by Robin Williams. It is thin, easy to read and has lots of visuals- a goldmine of information. It is worth the \$15 bucks but you might be able to find a used copy at Powell's.
8. Collect print material you like from magazines, newspapers, galleries, websites or anywhere. Keep it in a file and study it before you start a project. What do you like about it? Why? How can you use that idea in your own marketing pieces? What don't you like about it? What would you change to make it more effective?
9. Have an idea of what you want before you start. If you are working with a designer, bring along some examples of ideas you want to use or layouts that you like. That will help them get started more quickly and save you money. Bring any logo or image files with you as well as any images to use that will need to be scanned. Keep an open mind. Designers know what works best in print and may have some ideas and tips that will work better but be firm about what you want. This is your thing and you should be happy with it.
10. **Warning**-the print industry has standard software and it is usually the high end products. If you use shareware or other non industry standard software to create a piece ask your printer if they can print it before you get started. It may need to be converted to a PDF file or scanned from your print to make it work in their system. Ask first- they can help you get started and help you with what works. In the process you can start to develop a relationship with them and like customer service, that is very helpful when you get in a pinch and need help.
11. If you have questions about this just call or send me an email.

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**Yes, have some fun with this aspect of marketing. You can do it!**

## Digital Images

1. Image files need to be at least 300dpi high quality images to start with. There is no magic wand that can improve a poor quality, out of focus image.
2. Make sure your image is sized for what you want to use it for. It is easier to make an image smaller but bigger is just not going to work. When you use a digital camera use the highest quality settings. Big image files usually mean better print quality.
3. Digital images are easiest for designers but a good quality photo to scan works fine too. There will be a fee for scanning and sizing your image for the document.
4. Images can be scanned to black and white if you want to go with black and white to save money or just for special design purposes.
5. **Do not** use images taken off the internet. They may be copyrighted and are very poor quality for printing anyway.
6. Image files with a .jpg or .tiff ending are best for printing. Do not use .gif files. They are for the web.
7. Don't forget to **SAVE** often as you work. There is nothing worse than spending an hour on a project and having the power go off or a computer crash!
8. Breathe
9. Laugh
10. Have fun
11. Do YOUR thing!