

Creating A Business Image That Counts

Many things can contribute to creating the business image that you want and they should all be considered before you rush into having anything printed to promote your business.

Start with the very name you call your business. When deciding on the name consider just what the image is that you are trying to convey e.g. fun, serious, sensitive, caring, knowledgeable, etc. Don't have the name too long or too difficult to pronounce or spell.

As well as a short name, if possible it should also give an idea of what the business is about. This will help your potential customers to recognise and remember your service/product. You can also create an image or 'branding' by supporting the name with a logo (a graphic or drawing) to help customers visually recognise you. A logo does not have to be complicated - it can simply be your name, which is written in a particular way e.g. Coca Cola just uses the name of the product written in a specific style.

In most countries you have to legally register your business name. In Australia registration allows you to have an individual name for your business that is not identical or similar to another business name within the State where it is registered. The cost of registration is around \$70 in most Australian States.

As you may not get your first choice of a name, the registration form allows for alternative suggestions. Do not make the name of your business too long. It is difficult to fit in computer fields, and you may find clients end up abbreviating it.

Registration will not necessarily protect the rights of the name from being used by other businesses especially if they create a company or add another word in front of the name.

In Australia, the registration lasts for three years and can be renewed. The Certificate of Registration you are given must be displayed in a prominent position at the place of business or outside every location where business is conducted under that name.

The registered name also must appear on all stationery such as letterheads together with the ABN (Australian Business Number).

It is important that you do not commence using the name you have chosen, or have it printed on anything, until you receive notification that it has been accepted for registration (you will receive a Certificate with your business name attached). You cannot claim any expenses in relationship to your business until you have a registered name (unless you trade only using your actual name)

Business cards are a cheap and most effective way to promote and advertise your business and are an invaluable networking tool. Each business card should contain the business name, persons name, title, address, phone, fax, email and web address. If the name of your business is not self descriptive, put a couple of words to explain what your business does, e.g. Gabogrean Enterprises - Art Commissions, Tourist and Fashion Product.

Your card should be designed with the image you want to create, in mind. Colour, style and size of fonts, logo and the quality of card used, can all contribute to the image you wish to create.

Business cards are often stored in special containers or plastic sleeves by participants. If your card cannot fit these receptacles, they will be placed in a drawer and forgotten. If you want to have a magnet card, or some other type of interesting format - produce and present two business cards. One for storing with others and the special one to make an extra impact.

When exchanging a business card, take the trouble to read the information at that moment (it shows genuine interest and helps you remember the person). Jot some details on the back e.g. Date and function at which cards were exchanged, and any special details to assist you in remembering the contact e.g. opened the door for me!

Business cards that have a great deal of information printed on the back, are laminated, or are of a very dark colour, make this networking function impossible.

Always have business cards with you. Keep them in a wide variety of places so you do not forget them. Carry blank cards with you for those people you meet who have forgotten theirs.

Remember, business is often about perception. If you are targeting the small or micro business sector and your printed material is 'over the top' this can lose customers just as quickly as promotional material that is scatty and obviously disjointed.

This 'over the top' material is something big business does all the time and then they wonder why they cannot win over customers from smaller business. The bigger and bolder the 'splash' of your promotional material is the more it will suggest that what you have to offer is expensive - is this the image you want to portray? Remember that the smaller business does not necessarily think expensive means quality service or product.

Think out your image before having a single thing printed and this includes how you will present it e.g. will a brochure, flyer, business card be presented in a folder? Once you have decided on your image - then promote it and build up your brand recognition.

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About the Author

Barbara Gabogrecan has spent the last 10 years helping the Micro/HBB sector to achieve a 'point of difference' so that they can 'beat their competitors to the punch', grow their customer base and increase their sales. To discover how you can do this go to <http://www.micronavigator.com.au>