

Cut Through the Clutter

Enhance your professional book cover with a clear corporate image.

by Michele DeFilippo

A professionally designed book cover is absolutely essential when it comes to marketing your book. If your book looks good and stands out from the crowd, it has a better chance to sell.

The exact same principle also applies when prospective customers are viewing your marketing materials. It's imperative to cut through the clutter, establish credibility, and help busy prospects notice your sales message. (The next time you're going through that pile of junk mail, pay attention to what you keep and what you toss, and why.)

It doesn't matter if you publish one book or a hundred, customers want to do business with a company that will be there tomorrow. Since they can't meet you personally, the only way they can judge your company is by your marketing materials.

Every contact you make with a potential customer, whether it is a postcard, flyer, brochure, letter or website, sends a message about your company. If your materials are carefully designed, you are telling your prospective customer that you are a stable, reliable company and that they can be confident when they spend money with you.

The first step to a professional corporate identity is to design a logo that reflects the vision and purpose of your company. The best logos are simple and should be designed to look contemporary for a minimum of 10 years. Your designer will present a number of ideas and refine them until you are delighted with the result. A logo should be designed to look good in black and white first, because that's how it will be seen most of the time (on faxes and on invoices, for example). A strong logo design can be printed in black and white or one color, saving you money on printing down the road.

Step two is to establish design standards so that all of your marketing materials have a consistent look. The size and position of your logo, as well as type faces and colors used consistently, will give your marketing materials a "family" look that will project an image of stability for your company. Your designer can write a "graphic standards manual" that explains how your logo is (and is not) to be used. With this document for reference, every marketing piece you produce now or in the future, either in house or with the help of an outside designer, will be consistent.

While it's convenient to call a quick printer every time you think of a new marketing piece, planning ahead can save you significant money on printing. Your designer works with larger commercial printers on a regular basis and can suggest ways to stretch your printing budget that will still allow you the flexibility to update materials on your desktop whenever the need arises. For example, if you know you'll be sending out mailers every two months for the next year, you may realize savings by printing "shells" in color and then updating the message in house on your laser printer.

Another way to save money on printing is to produce book marks and postcards at the same time that your cover prints. Not all book printers will do this, but even if they don't, you can get the most for your printing dollar locally by "ganging up" your printing jobs instead of ordering each project individually.

Someone once said "the most expensive brochure is the one that doesn't work." Reserving a portion of your production budget for professional marketing materials will pay for itself many times over.

Michele DeFilippo owns **1106 Design, LLC** and is a member of Arizona Book Publishing Association. She has been designing book covers and interiors, ads, magazines, and promotional materials since 1972, and would be delighted to help with your next (or first) book. Recent samples are posted on her website at www.1106design.com. Contact Michele via e-mail at michele@1106design.com or call (602) 866-3226 for additional information or a free quote.



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