

Are Your Marketing Materials Generating New Customers?

By Jeffery Clack, Score Accredited Business Counselor, Chapter 411, Northeast Massachusetts

The three basic elements of marketing materials used to support any business are business cards, flyers, and brochures.

- **Business Cards:** these are your least costly business tool and should be distributed to anyone who could be a prospect for your product or service. Everyone knows it should contain your business name, your name, and contact information (phone, email, web site, and address if a retail establishment). But to attract customers and differentiate your business from competitors in should also include any certifications and years of experience in your field if providing a service. You also might consider using the back to list your full range of products or services while the front highlights the primary ones. You can get free business cards (paying for shipping) at vistaprint.com.
- **Flyers:** a flyer is a single page 8.5 x 11 inch piece of paper promoting your business. It can be used to announce a new business or product, offer a promotion, or notify home-owners that you are performing a service for one of their neighbors. It should include all of the basic elements on your business card and more. One or two testimonials from customers describing their satisfaction with your product or service can validate the quality of your business. You should list your price or a range of prices to demonstrate the attractiveness of your pricing. Or a promotion offer of a limited time special price. Most importantly, you must get these flyers distributed to places where your target customers will read them.
- **Brochures:** we recommend an 8.5 x 11 inch color trifold which provides 6 panels to deliver your messages. The brochure is the most expensive of the three materials and therefore should be utilized for more qualified prospects. Again, use the elements described for business cards and flyers, but now you can add more important elements that show your business interacting with customers. The two key elements are multiple testimonials and photos. By using three or four testimonials, you can insure that each testimonial supports a different product or service you provide and/or demonstrates different towns to show the breadth of area that your business covers. This expands the customer validation of your business. Photos showing customers using your product or service helps the prospect see the value you provide.

How should your brochure be designed considering the six available panels in your trifold brochure? One panel is the brochure cover with business name, primary product or service provided, all your contact information, and a great picture. As you open up the brochure, you now have three panels: left, middle and right. The left panel could detail the range of products or services you offer with a picture and testimonial. Do not make it text intensive – use bulleted text, pictures and spacing to keep it clean and uncluttered. The right panel could detail your business's experience or if offering a service, your experience as the service provider. A picture or graphic might help here as well. The middle panel should emphasize why a customer picks your business versus a competitor's. Is it experience, value, quality, location, or something else? Adding testimonials on this panel to support your business's unique value is very important. The last two panels on the other side can be used for a variety of things depending on your business.

This article provides a broad outline of the elements for your basic marketing materials. To truly develop your brochure or other materials, we suggest you create a first draft and then make an appointment with SCORE for a review and discussion. Then we all can work together to insure that you deliver the best message in a process that will create more new, qualified customers.

If you would like FREE business counseling, please contact the Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce staff at 781-592-2900 or info@LynnAreaChamber.com