

The **art** of print media

A business or an organisation's success is governed to a large degree by the effectiveness of its communications

The business case for investing in high quality print media

DRIVE SALES AND FORM OPINION

A well-executed piece of literature can make a huge difference in driving sales and forming opinions

If you think the world of print is on it's way out just go to your nearest newsagent and see how many magazines there are on the subject of digital media (photography, film, music, gaming, web design, etc). Chances are that the shelf will be straining under the sheer weight of so many magazines. So is print dead? Far from it.

People still like to read information on the printed page but only if it is both interesting and relevant to them.

How does your company currently use literature?

THIS AUDIT SHOULD HELP YOU ANSWER THIS QUESTION...

- › Do you have an overview brochure that promotes why your product or service should be favoured over another company?
- › Do you have service or product literature to explain what you offer in more detail?
- › Do you have technical literature for a more in-depth view of what you offer?
- › Do you have any printed material that is specific to staff communications?
- › Have you ever sent out a mail shot to advertise your service or product?
- › Do you ever advertise in magazines, journals or newspapers?
- › Do you have a company newsletter or magazine?
- › Does your reports and bid documents follow a professionally designed template?

To what extent does your literature meet its objective?

KNOW YOUR OBJECTIVES

Overview brochure:

To target decision makers and promote why your company or organisation should be favoured over others who provide a similar service or product.

Service/product brochure:

To furnish prospective clients/customers with specific information that they or you have identified as being of interest to them.

Product or data specifications:

To support service literature and offer detailed information on an area of your service or product that a client has specified interest in.

Tender documentation and reports:

To promote a professional approach and ensure the manner in which information is supplied is clear, easy to follow and reflects your brand.

Mailshot / Direct mail:

To be sent to people who have requested information and to people who you think might be interested in your service or product.

Staff literature:

To make sure your brand values are understood and appreciated by the people who work for you. (see our brand-building book)

Magazine or Newsletter:

To inform staff, clients and potential clients and position you as an industry leader.

**Objectives set.
You now need
to consider
the brief and
investment
required**

A STRATEGY FOR SUCCESS

The following pages are common strategies that form the creative brief for the different types of literature outlined on the previous page. This information is to act as a guide and an informative backdrop when discussing any literature projects with your design agency. You will of course have your own thoughts on strategy, but you should always allow ideas to come from the creative team you appoint for these important business investments.

A combination of your thinking, our guide and your design company's experience should go a long way in meeting your objectives.

THINK BIG. THINK BOLD. THINK BRAND.

How much you invest in your literature should be in line with your objectives. In simple terms, if objectives are met what value is that to your business?

Corporate brochures

THE PRINTED SALESMAN

Every business should have a corporate or 'overview' brochure. You may have a website, but literature can be used at any time and anywhere as a very useful sales tool. If produced to a high quality it will help you think strategically about your business model and sales pitch – the aim of a corporate brochure is to present the brand values of your company or organisation to clients and prospective clients but also to staff, and prospective staff.

- › **Be 'significantly' different from competitors.**
- › **The copywriter needs to fully understand what you do, what makes you better than your competitors and where your growth areas of business are. REMEMBER – content is king.**
- › **Avoid 'library images' that don't say very much.**
- › **Imagery needs to grab attention.**
- › **The size and type of paper used is something you should take advice on from the design team.**
- › **You should make sure you have proofs to sign off at critical stages.**
- › **You should expect all printing to be managed with a high degree of quality control.**

Service and Product Literature

IT'S TIME TO SHOWCASE YOUR PRODUCTS OR SERVICES

Service or product brochures are very different from corporate brochures. The content should showcase a specific product or service (or in some cases a series of products or services).

- › **The focus should be on the product or service so Keep company information to a minimum.**
- › **Photography and illustrations need to be of a high quality and relevant to the content.**
- › **The style of copy should be informative and helpful but also friendly in tone.**
- › **The content and key messages are more important than the amount of pages used.**
- › **The copywriter needs to demonstrate a sound level of understanding of the market sector.**
- › **Production and print management needs to be of a very high standard with proofs for signing off at critical stages in the process.**
- › **These may form part of a suite of brochures so flexibility of layout is very important.**
- › **The paper stock used should take into account the stock used in other literature for continuity.**

Technical Literature

SEAL THE DEAL

Technical specifications and data sheets can be the last stage of information that can make or break a business deal. With such importance riding on this information it is important to make sure it is presented in a clear, concise and professional manner at all times.

- › **Review all technical details and work with a copywriter to create a consistent tone/style.**
- › **The size does not have to be standard A4 sheets held within a folder. Be open to recommendations and be guided by what leading companies produce.**
- › **Information graphics are helpful but avoid over-complicating the message with too many.**
- › **Make sure 'all' graphics are of a high standard.**
- › **Build flexibility into the design as the design may have to work for future specifications.**
- › **The artwork could work as a template for a printer or inhouse team to adapt for future communications.**
- › **Make sure proofs are supplied for sign-off prior to print and check all content as the technical nature of such information may be missed by standard spell-check programmes.**

Reports and Tenders

MAKE AN IMPACT

The way in which you present your tenders or bid documents can have a positive effect on the person reading such material. From the way the information is bound together, to the overall structure and visual appearance on the page – the positive effect this can have is a worthwhile investment especially when you consider the value of the bid.

- › **Compile a series of recent reports or tenders and present these to your design company – this will help them gauge what level of information is submitted and help with the overall structure.**
- › **Discuss the levels of variance from one report to another.**
- › **Once the layouts are completed and approved, ask your design company to send you printed instructions for your staff to re-work these documents into a suitable in-house format.**
- › **Send your master Word template back to your design company to make sure the style is as it should be.**
- › **Ensure that all staff members responsible for producing reports and tender documentation use the new master templates at all times.**
- › **CONSISTENCY = GOOD BRAND MANAGEMENT.**

Newsletters and Magazines

HIGH QUALITY = HIGH VALUE

The problem with most company newsletters and magazines is that they are incredibly dull. So, it is little wonder that they are seldom read and don't appear to make a significant difference to an organisation's brand or bottom line. There are exceptions to the rule but these rely on high production values to ensure their brand objectives are met.

- › **Do not produce low-cost newsletters or magazines as this could damage your brand.**
- › **If this is an internal publication, the quality should be kept high if it is to be embraced by staff.**
- › **Produce 2 quality publications per year with engaging content rather than 4 medium quality publications per year with 'space-fillers'.**
- › **Make sure there are clear objectives for such an exercise so that you can measure success.**

Staff/Internal communication

ENGAGE. EMBRACE. ENJOY!

Staff communications need to be well-considered if they are to meet their objectives. The manner that campaigns, initiatives and procedural changes are delivered can have a lasting effect on how well this information is received and embraced. Posters are fine but there are many more ways in which you can engage with your staff.

- › **Always think high quality.**
- › **Don't over complicate the message.**
- › **Consider more than one approach to get the message across and keep it fresh.**
- › **Ensure that on-going visibility is achieved.**
- › **Introduce an element of surprise/innovation.**
- › **Employ the services of a design company.**

Companies who employ high quality design to communicate with their staff will enjoy higher degrees of success than those who don't.

Direct Mail Campaigns

WILL IT WORK FOR YOU?

There is a good reason why mailshots are often referred to as junk mail. It is because they are usually produced to a low quality and are often irrelevant to the people who have been sent them. One reason why a 3% response is deemed successful, 2% average and 1% poor.

- › **Never deliver a poor quality communication.**
- › **Develop a well-researched and focussed mailing list before starting any creative. Who are you targeting for your chosen campaign?**
- › **Set out clear objectives so that success can be accurately measured.**
- › **Make sure the message is clear and understood. A conceptual approach is great but not if it confuses the audience – aim for the wow factor (or at the very least, create interest).**

When was the last time you took notice of a piece of Direct Mail and acted on it? Sadly, most suffer from poor design and low cost production :-{

Corporate Advertising

WHAT MAKES YOU DIFFERENT?

With corporate advertising the objective is not to drive a sale, but to raise awareness of your brand. So is this worth spending money on? That depends on the value you place on brand recognition in the following scenarios: 'breaking into a new market', 'launching a new service or product', 'exhibiting', 'selling your company'. There are many more but hopefully these make the point.

- › **With corporate advertising the quality of the ad is critical to it's success.**
- › **The ad should be all about brand confidence so don't overtly 'sell'.**
- › **The ad needs a great hook to be memorable.**
- › **Imagery and message are key to the ad working so leave this task to the professionals.**
- › **The larger the add the more confident the brand so plan your media spend carefully.**

Many businesses don't understand corporate advertising and it is not for everyone. It needs to be high quality to justify the spend.

Product and Service Advertising

WHAT DO YOU OFFER?

Product and service ads are easier to define and understand than corporate advertising. It's a straight forward case of selling. But mostly it is about creating awareness and interest with the sole purpose of steering people to your website for more information.

- › **Focus on one key benefit rather than a range.**
- › **Don't use bullet points (this is not a data sheet).**
- › **Invest the appropriate time required to create a high quality ad.**
- › **Reduce the amount of ads rather than the sizes, if budgets are tight.**
- › **Include a reference number for tracking enquiries and monitoring success.**
- › **Track web traffic to see which publications were most effective.**

If you have a product you simply must use advertising. For service companies this needs more consideration.

Recruitment Advertising

ATTRACT THE RIGHT PEOPLE

Any business director or partner will tell you that attracting and retaining high quality staff is the single most important ingredient to success. It is therefore crucial that you promote career opportunities in a way that maximises the significant investment you will have made in purchasing advertising space in magazines or newspapers.

- › **Develop brand consistency in all recruitment ads.**
- › **Consider the services of a professional writer.**
- › **Research effectiveness and reach of publications to be used before booking space.**
- › **Use a link to your website to expand on the position being advertised.**
- › **Monitor traffic to the website link to measure which publication drives most traffic.**

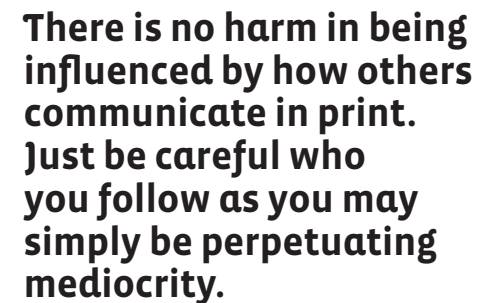
Recruitment ad space is expensive so make sure the ad you produce is worthy of this investment

How much should I spend?

THE VALUE OF DESIGN

Throughout this book there has been reference to quality design because this is what is required for every kind of communication if it is to stand any chance of meeting its objectives.

Poor communications of any kind are not what anyone would advocate but with communications in print, knowing what is acceptable and what is poor can be difficult for some people due to the fact that the majority of print communications from SME'S lacks quality – which is why much of it fails to meet expectations.



There is no harm in being influenced by how others communicate in print. Just be careful who you follow as you may simply be perpetuating mediocrity.

INTERESTED?

This book is one in a series of four that we have written and produced to help our clients arrive at the best approach for their marketing initiatives. We hope you found it informative and welcome any feedback.

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