

Creating a Successful Image

Do Your Research

1. Who's your target market? How does your competition attract that market?

First, define your own market (children, brides, Petaluma residents, international, etc.). Then, check out your competition via the library, Chamber of Commerce, the Internet, friends and peers. Compile a love/hate file of business identities both in your business and out. Sometimes what you dislike will help define who you are more quickly.

Also, think about the name of your business. Does it reflect who you are? Or what the business does? If it's a fictitious name (any business name that doesn't incorporate your last name) you will have to get a license for it. Either way, does it let people know what you do when they hear it?

Define Your Limits

2. Money does matter

How much can or will you spend on your business identity? Many times, a business card is the first time someone sees you in print. You know that professionals want to work with professionals, and inexpensive pre-perforated, pre-printed paper business cards may not carry the message you want to deliver.

Hire a Designer

3. Experience counts

A designer can help you clarify your ideas about yourself and your business. They have experience in marketing. They have experience in creating affordable ways to make you look good, and ways to make you stand out. And they know how to use the applications that printers need, and can match printer specifications so that you will get the professional look you want.

Take Your Time

4. A stitch in time saves nine...

Planning ahead and taking your time will save you stress and money. This design process can be done in a few days, but the outcome may not be what you really want. Don't settle for second best!

Test the Waters

5. What will people think?

Check out your logo or design with an informal survey: ask your friends, spouses, parents, and business owners. Even a stranger on the street may have a good insight! And don't forget to check in with yourself. Live with the design a while (see #4), and see if it grows on you or begins to bother you.

Use It, or Lose It

6. Be consistent

Once you've got your look, USE IT! You may use different companies to create all your marketing materials, including printed pieces, newspaper and magazine display ads, TV spots, signs, truck or car signs, billboards, promotional items and websites. Don't allow your "look" to be watered down or changed because the new company doesn't have the same typeface, or have used a low-resolution version of your artwork. (Hint: if you can work through your original designer, s/he will be able to produce a consistent look in all the various media and formats.)

And don't forget to always carry your business cards with you. It takes 27 times for an ad to be seen before someone will buy the product or services. A business card is the cheapest advertising there is!

“You never have a second chance to make a GOOD first impression.”



A.V.M. Graphics • Ann V. Moreno

Petaluma, California • P 707-773-1168 • F 707-765-0559 • ann@avmgraphics.com