

HOW'S YOUR REPUTATION?



A WHITE PAPER

How's Your Reputation?



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Have You Looked in the Mirror?

How's your company's reputation with the public? How do you know? Is there anything you can do about it? Whether you've thought through these questions or not, they're important to consider seriously, and then reconsider again. If you think about how your company looks to the public only when you're in the midst of starting up, you may sink quickly when the competition passes you by with their updates and promotions.

You need to stay relevant, fresh, and up to date not only on your services but also on your appearance. And what starts the conversation with the public? Your printed marketing pieces.

What Are They Saying?

Try to get some feedback on your company by listening to the word on the street. Do you have new customers coming in all time, getting bids, calling you for advice, and seeking out your services? If not, it may be time for a reputation boost -- or revamp.

Take a long, hard look at what your printed marketing materials are saying about you right now, then think about what you wish they said.

Let's Peek

Sloppy? Cluttered? Disorganized? Unprofessional?

Do these adjectives describe your marketing initiatives?

Gather your materials together: business cards, brochures, rack cards, postcards, newsletters, banners, trade show materials, and anything else you have. See how they look together. Is there a cohesive look, or do they all look random and uncoordinated, as if they were possibly designed by different people during different years?

When creating marketing pieces, it's important to make sure they look good together. Beautiful, well-coordinated pieces will help you make a great impression. It's like a gorgeous table setting that creates an inviting mood for dinner guests. All the pieces need to be there -- and each utensil must serve its individual purpose -- but they also need to fit together to reinforce the message that the diner is eating at a (single) fine dining establishment.

Your Logo Is Your Signature

Your logo is the one consistent design element that should be on all your marketing pieces. It should provide a strong, visual synopsis of who your company is. When people see your logo, do they see contemporary and stylish or reserved and classic? Do they know you offer the latest and greatest gadgets, or does it say that you have a commitment to preserving the past? No matter what your expertise is, let your logo reflect it. Don't try to be everything to everyone.

However, just because you have a logo done at one time doesn't mean that it's your permanent logo forever. It will need a facelift every few years just to keep it current. You can keep your passion and direction for your business, but updating the logo will reflect your passion to stay competitive and current.

Investing in a top-notch graphic designer will pay off in the long run. They can save you time by knowing how to improve the font or touch up the other elements.

You're Naked Without Your Business Card

Create a snapshot of yourself on your business card, and pack it full of critical information. This is much tougher said than done because it involves fabulous, well-placed design so that all your information will be included without sacrificing white space and creativity.

Don't waste good cardstock, elegant design, and raw talent on a business card that only features your name and contact information. Use it to its fullest potential. Be specific about what services you offer and how you compare to the competition. But do it in a creative way.

Use a fold-over business card to maximize the available real estate. Add your picture or your building's picture, or even a small map. Add a list of services that you offer so you don't miss any opportunity to do business with a potential client. (If they don't know you offer a service, they can't ask for a quote.)

How Do You Implement Style?

Doing graphic design yourself will only end up costing you more headaches, time, and problems. You'll reap far more rewards by having a professional help you through this process. Be clear about your objectives, and then let them help you reveal your style. Communicate openly with them, so you can hear why they chose a certain font or particular design element, and so you can tell them why you like or don't like something.

You will want to make sure that after the logo is complete, all of your other printed marketing materials are followed up with the same style and definition. Make sure you include things that not only tell about your company but also entice people to want to do business with you.

Watch Your Language

When creating a buzz about your reputation, watch the type of language you use in your promotional pieces. If you want to appear hip, young, and edgy, use shorter words and some catchphrases that are common to people who would be interested in your services. Talk in a more casual, friendly way by using shorter sentences and powerful words.

If, however, you are looking to create more of a buzz within a sophisticated group of people, use eloquent words and longer sentences. Be sure that you consult with a copywriter who knows what they're doing, so you can achieve the result you're looking for. Once again, working with a professional in this arena will help you in the long run. Your results will be better, and you'll reach the right audience.

If you're targeting a group of people who know about high-tech items, gadgets, computers, or other specialized topics, feel free to use the language they're most familiar with. Remember, you're writing for your audience. Your product may not be for everyone, so your printed marketing materials should not be for everyone.

Create Your Image and Watch Your Reputation Soar

Today is a great day to think (or rethink) your image. Don't waste another day with old, outdated, poorly printed marketing materials. Recycle them rather than waiting until they're all used up. Otherwise, those old materials will hurt your reputation in the business world.

You need to create the image you want for your business, starting with the logo, great copywriting, and design. Make your materials pop, shine, and do their thing. Start getting the response you want by targeting the right people. It all begins with the right package of printed, cohesive marketing materials.

We'd love to help you get started today. It's easier than you think.