

DIY Business Cards

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A local design expert tells you how to make your calling card—and business—stand out with a handmade touch.

I like to think of business cards as tiny gifts that get passed from one hand to another. They're often the first impression for your business, and as such, they need to communicate the care and attention you'll give customers. So how do you make sure your cards send the right message? A crafty touch or two — no special skills required — can set you apart from the masses. Here are a few ideas to get your creative juices flowing and the phone ringing:

Make Your Mark

An eye-catching business card might be as close as the rubber-stamp aisle at your local craft store. Pick a fun design and apply it to the front or back of an existing card with metallic ink. You can also order custom-made rubber stamps featuring your logo and contact information online (www.simonstamps.com) and simply make cards as you need them.

Sew Easy

If there's a sewing machine collecting dust in the back of your closet, it might be time to take it out of retirement. A simple row of stitches across the bottom of pre-printed cards lets people know you pay attention to details. You can also spray the back of your card with adhesive mount (available at craft stores) and attach a square of patterned fabric. Then add a few decorative stitches as finishing touches.

Picture Perfect

Think about incorporating your own photographs into a business-card design. One card I love features a picture of a photographer's hand with her business information written across her palm. Do you have memorable shots hidden away in a scrapbook or on the computer? Can you take one that relates to your business?

Don't be a Square

I recommend sticking with the standard 3-1/2x2-inch size so your business card fits easily into organizers and wallets. But you can set yourself apart by slightly altering that square shape. Hit the scrapbook aisle at a local craft store — or look online at www.store.scrapbook.com — for an inexpensive corner punch. This simple tool allows you to round off the four corners of your card for a softer look. Want something more adventurous? These same outlets carry rolling die-cuts, which allow you to create a variety of decorative edges.

More Ideas:

- Print your cards on handmade or linen papers for a tactile experience. I recommend looking for these gorgeous options at Xpedx Paper Store or Hobby Lobby.
- Do you have pretty handwriting or know someone who does? Write out your business information by hand for a truly personal touch.
- Print your cards in one color then use markers to add additional shades by hand.
- Create a two-toned card by gluing two relatively thin pieces of paper — in different colors — together then cutting down to size.