



MARKETING • PRINT • WEB

Top Tips for Great Graphic Design

Are the documents being designed for your organization getting tossed or getting attention? Whether you're creating a business card, poster, brochure, advertisement, newsletter or proposal, effective design can be the difference between sale and fail.

The “look and feel” of your print communications influences your ability to connect with your audience when your goal is to inform, motivate or persuade. Most often, printed pieces deliver the first impressions for your organization in the marketplace. Do yours say, “cluttered and disorganized,” or “ordered and professional?” To improve the design of all your organization's print communications, consider these graphic tips:

- Use one typeface throughout; never more than two.
- Use sans serif type in headlines and serif type in text. Sans serif is more difficult to read in small sizes.
- Use captions under pictures; they are always read more than body copy.
- Use normal punctuation as in the editorial pages of newspapers and magazines, it is familiar and doesn't get in the way of understanding.
- Use italics sparingly and for emphasis.
- Avoid hard-to-read typefaces even if they create the mood you prefer. Readability and legibility are more important.
- For headlines, use upper case only on the first words of the headline and for proper nouns. Avoid all caps, they are proven harder to read, probably because we learn to read upper and lower case.

Body Copy Do's and Don'ts

Following are some general guidelines for body copy. Of course, there are always exceptions to the rule.

- DO set body copy in 10-point minimum. Anything smaller is too hard for most to read.
- DO break up long copy. Use frequent paragraphs and subhead to break thoughts into bullets.
- DO keep copy areas together on a page or panel to guide the reader.
- DO use drop capitals; it seems to increase readership.
- DO set text flush left.
- DO keep opening paragraphs brief; long ones can be intimidating.
- DO use white space between the lines; DON'T set “tight.”
- DON'T print text over tint blocks. Colored backgrounds reduce readability.
- DON'T print text over photographs.
- DON'T set body copy in reverse.
- DON'T use “common” fonts, like Times or Arial.