THE

BRANDING BIBLE

BUSINESS CARD DESIGN EXPLAINED

A STEP-BY-STEP DIY BUSINESS CARD DESIGN GUIDE FOR SMBS

OVERVIEW

There really is no need to introduce yourself out there? Or is there?

Especially when you're running a business, governmental or not-for-profit organization that wants people to know about its mission, values and what not. Maybe you want the world to know what you do for a living? Or maybe, just maybe, you're doing to further your professional or commercial goals.

All solid reasons. All perfect goals.

So, all you now need is a business card that speaks a whole different language about who you are and what you do. And it does so in a way that makes people recall you and get in touch ASAP.

This is where this Branding Bible comes in. We're going to be showcasing the numerous elements – both aesthetical and technical – that go into making a business card instantly memorable.

So turn that page, and know the ins and outs of how your perfect business card is supposed to appeal to you, your brand, your customers, and everyone in between.

Lets get this show on the road now, shall we?

The Branding Bible

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DesignMantic

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

A Business Card? What's that?

Imagine this. You run a successful, vibrant and stable business. You have your customers, your partners, your suppliers, your distributors and what not in one well-articulated yet complex business relationship. How did you reach this point? By selling the merits, genuineness, messaging and appeal of your business to all the stakeholders.

Your business needs a logo and branding alright. But as a viable business entity with a sizeable foot-print in the industry, you might want something a lot more, shall we say, more-inclined –towards the stakeholders?

You want something that burnishes your professional credentials. You want something that serves as the first step towards you expanding and enhancing your business relationship with suppliers, distributors, contractors for future growth.

> You basically want something that says –
> ## HEY FOLKS WE'RE HERE TO STAY AND READY TO SERVE ALL YOUR NEEDS.

For all these things, there's the business card. One miniaturized wallet-sized (or not) card that immediately establishes the proper rapport with each and every stakeholder involved in furthering your business aims forward.

History Of The Card That Could Unlock Opportunities.

Today these cards might seem like the poster child for ubiquitous-ness, but that wasn't always the case.

Before they became something that almost always ended up at the back of the wallet, let us travel to 17th century Europe, the time when the idea of a business card was first floated around. Their primary use in those days? Announcing the arrival of an aristocrat to a town. They could be engraved in gold with exciting typefaces for the purpose.

15th	17th	17th	19th	20th	21st
CENTURY					
Eeishi	Visiting Cards	Trade Cards	Carte de Visite	Business Cards	Paperless Cards

Image 1.1: **The Evolution of Business Cards**

From those not-so-humble beginnings of the business card from the middle of the century, it wasn't until the 19th century that their use became widespread and popular. Everyone from the middle-class households could now get their cards printed. These 'social cards' as they were called then, would serve as a first impression for anyone who wanted to visit a household.

JOHN DOE
MANAGING DIRECTOR

Phone:000.000.0000
Email: info@company.com | www.company.com

Image 1.2: **Modern Business Card**

Then they decided took on a more commercial tinge in UK in 1830, with the cards being used for business and trade purposes with full directions and all. Thus, the social and the trade card merged to become the business card of the present day.

Why do you need these cards really?

Consider this mirage of the modern age. Digital communication is the dominant form of communication these days.

However, it's got its limitations too. Digital bommunication is mostly impersonal for the purposes of swapping contact information.

Businesses need more of the other variety of communication. The one that's predisposed between making genuine connections instead of a message that is sure to be forgotten in mere seconds.

That's where the business card perseveres. It survives as the most effective form of direct marketing. It leaves a lasting image of an encounter between two people, staying in the mind long enough to make the task of attracting leads and prospects easier.

Image 1.3: **Why You Need A Business Card?**

And yes, they can be whipped out at any time without the need to endlessly fiddle on that smartphone and texting your contact details to the other person. The business card is tangible, with enough balance of the visual information as well as the physical to make a chance encounter all the more memorable.

Business cards are here to stay as the ultimate icebreakers. They are needed in the modern world that's populated with social media networks where yesterday's information holds little value to today's new info dump.

Business cards denote confidence, preparedness and we're-ready-for-doing-business-if-you-say-the-word.

CHAPTER 2
BUSINESS CARDS AND BRANDING

How Do Business Cards Help Build Your Brand.

We live in a world where the very concept of time is limiting. No one has time for anything generally. In such a scenario, with text messages, billboards, tweets, TV advertisements bombarding the consumer, it becomes harder for a brand to wow and astound people. It's a cluttered space alright with everyone competing for your attention.

Business cards also get shafted by the wayside. Let's admit it. When was the last time you actually took out that business card from your ever growing pile of such cards in your purse/wallet?

If you are dead serious about getting your brand done right on a business card, you need to be able to get your creative code right. You need to stand out from your peers and the rest. You want to own who you are and what values you encompass.

For business card design, this is as simple and as difficult as it gets. To crack that code of creativity for your business card, here are some aspects that need to be attended to with care:
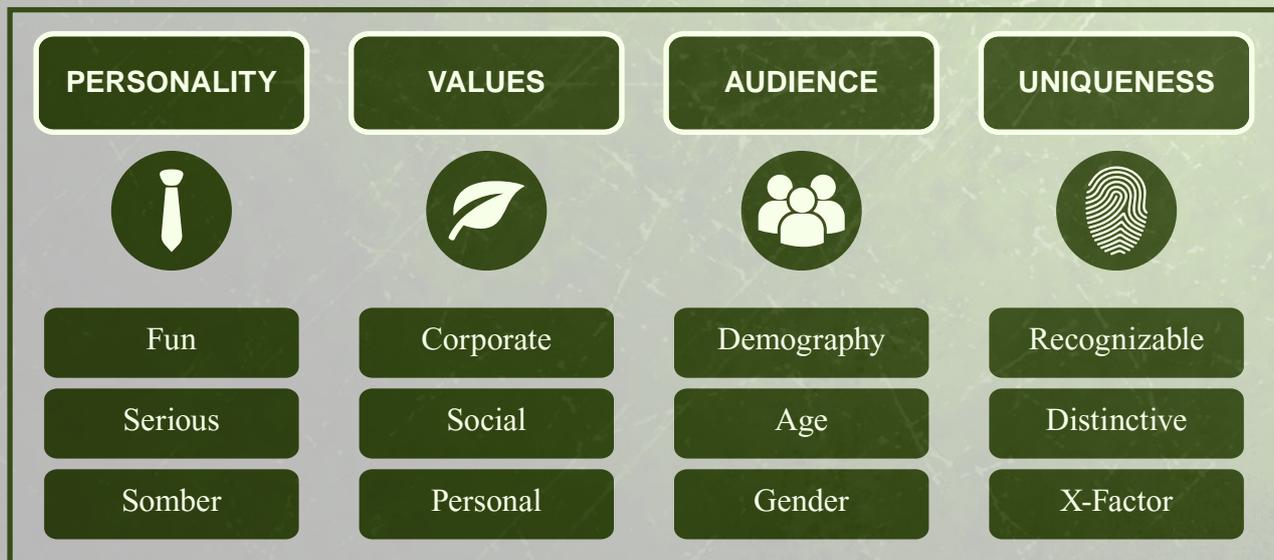
PERSONALITY	VALUES	AUDIENCE	UNIQUENESS
Fun	Corporate	Demography	Recognizable
Serious	Social	Age	Distinctive
Somber	Personal	Gender	X-Factor

Image 2.0: **Elements of Business Card**

Let's tackle each one of them one by one.

Personality

> "Your smile is your LOGO, your personality is your BUSINESS CARD, how you leave others feeling after having an experience with you becomes your TRADEMARK."
>
> –ANONYMOUS

Make no mistake about one thing. The business card just happens to be the most adept tool at personal marketing out there. Whether you're designing for a client or for your own personal branding, both can work.

Image 2.1: **Funny Business Card**

Image 2.2: **Formal Business Card**

Image 2.3: **Business Card By Industry**

Image 2.4: **Stylish Business Card**

In all these card designs, it's evident the personality of your brand is kept front and center. Which is a great idea for you to utilize as well. Listing down the personality quirks that your brand exudes can help you connect with the right audience. Plus, they sure do make your business card memorable.

Values

Business cards must stay true to their brand's philosophy and values in order to be relevant. They can't all be just about embossed company name slapped up on them. Those are so done and old now, and not in a good way we mean.

Take the example of IKEA, the ultimate DIY company on the planet.

Image 2.5: **Not Much Going On Here**

The card has no flashy elements. Only minimalist underpinnings. Especially like their products which you have to assemble yourself. Which is exactly what the IKEA brand is all about.

Next up we have the Canadian Braille Service. Braille as you know is a touch-based reading method devised for the blind.

Image 2.6: **Where The Brand And Its Values Are In Sync Literally**

See those dots there? Those can be felt by fingertips and deciphered by anyone who knows the Braille alphabet. Perfect for those who have weak eyesight.

Think of the business card as your 'napkin'. A canvas where you get to tell (in the most fewest words possible) what your business is all about. That's where values come in.

Audience

Who is your audience? The people who are most likely to be the investors in your brand?

Suppose you are an architecture design firm that really wants to sell the idea of being an architect with a difference. Sure all the construction firms more or less do the same thing but how about someone who goes wacky with their business card design like this:

Image 2.7: **Talk About Building Blocks**

La Cambre Architecture's LEGO-ized business card idea can make it strike the right chords with their audience. Playing off the concept that LEGO blocks allow for laying the foundation for something big, the firm has really brought something unique to the table as far as their business card design is concerned.

Another example of a business card that resonates well with its audience is the one designed by Intellipaper, a company that does paper cards and digital storage solutions both rolled into one.

Image 2.8: **A Business Card That Works As a USB For Sharing Data As Well?**

This is for the people who tire of cloud storage solutions and social media when it comes to project files handover. A business card with a USB can solve this problem for those who like working in the traditional way. A perfect business card with a multipurpose use for its target audience.

Uniqueness

Well. We just need something to wow the socks off our clients don't we? Here are some unique card designs that are equipped to do just that:

A graphic designer's card really should sell the idea that you know your way in and out of designing. See how this card attracts attention by being a literal head-turner?   That's one example amongst many for going unique.

And here's another unique idea for business cards – they don't just belong in your wallets or purses only.

A business card with some extra physical characteristics that can help it become a promotional tool for your brand. That's some out-of-the-box thinking right there.

Image 2.9: **Whats That On The Other Side? Oh……..**

Image 2.10: **What If We Could Hang Up a Business Card Around Our Necks? Hmmmmmm.**

Image 2.11: **A Basic Yet Powerful Starting Point To Get The Right Fonts On Your Business Card.**

Elements of A Business Card

Wonder what goes and not in a business card? This handy infographic will help you find all you need to know about designing an effective business card.

Image 2.12: **Anatomy of a Basic Business Card**

CHAPTER 3

DESIGNING YOUR BUSINESS CARD

First Things First.

Planning the Content on Business Card – Name, Company, Contact, Logo, Accents, etc.

This is a simple thing that really needs to be said ad nauseam. The content always comes first. Don't get hasty with your printing just because the local printer has some limited time promo on card prints with 'special' features like round corners or metallic inks. What you need is getting the content right first.

When doing this, you need to consider what kind of a brand you are and the message you want to send out for your audience. You will need to consider the front and back sides of the card and the space you can use for it. Suppose if you're a jewelry brand, then that metallic ink may make perfect sense for you.

Often times, people plaster all the information on one side of the card only, leaving the other all blank and unoccupied. Brand experts suggest that the back side of the card makes sense for some neat extras that can make the card more memorable.

Some ideas to make your business card's back side work:

A how-to guide for one of your products	Free consultation call-to-action	Specific 'Discount Day' idea

These are small ideas though they do succeed on an almost subliminal level to make your clients check your business card more often.

Similarly, for the front side of the card, you need to lay down the content such as:

YOUR NAME – it can even be a nickname!

YOUR BUSINESS DESIGNATION – Formal or informal names that let people know what you do

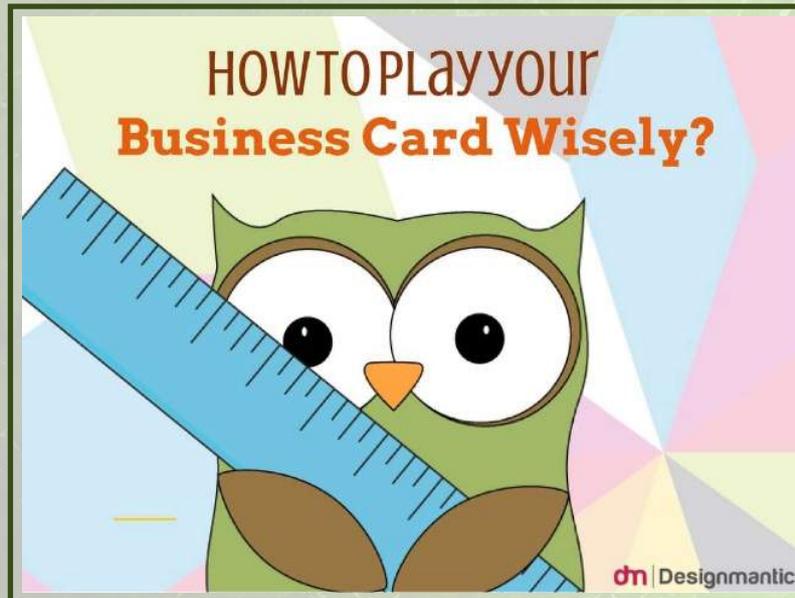CONTACT INFO – to get in touch with your clients and prospects of course!

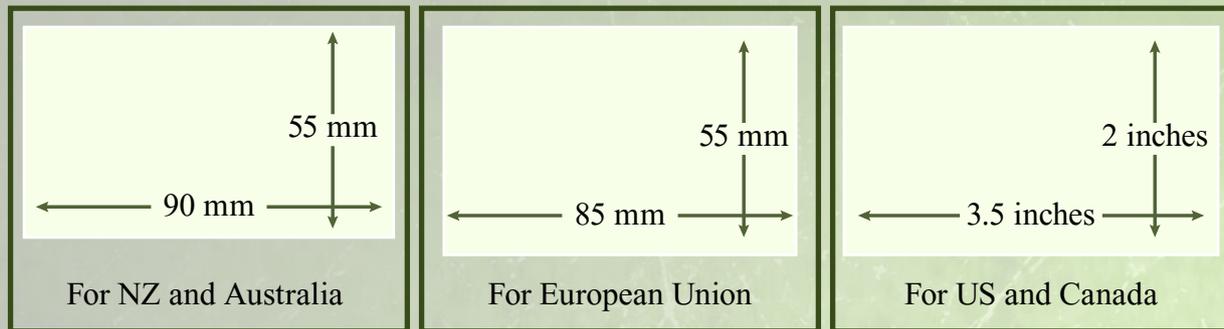Image 3.1: **A Playful Primer To Developing The Right Mindset For Your Business Card Designing.**

Know your Printer and Printing Guy

Who better knows about the materials and techniques that go into the craft of printing? It's the printing guy that can help you become aware of all the industry news and trends as well as let you see samples of different printing materials. This way you can get the feel and experience of how your card might turn out.

Decide on the card size and shape

Your card can either go the standard route or the customized route. Bear in mind that card holders out there are only made with the standard card size in mind. If your brand doesn't care about comments like 'If a business card doesn't fit in my wallet, I don't care how beautiful it is, it's going in the trash,' then you can opt for custom shapes and sizes too.

Standard Card Sizes

55 mm	55 mm	2 inches
90 mm	85 mm	3.5 inches
For NZ and Australia	For European Union	For US and Canada

*For reference, a standard credit card measures 85 x 54 mm or 3.34 x 2.25 inches

Suppose you need your card to also serve as a bookmark of sorts. If you stay within the confines of the standard card sizes, then your card will fit most pockets.

Customized Card Sizes

Unless you want your card to be remembered for something other than NOT fitting into those pockets, then you might want to go with a truly customized card. When you think about going custom, you can also think about nifty features such as:
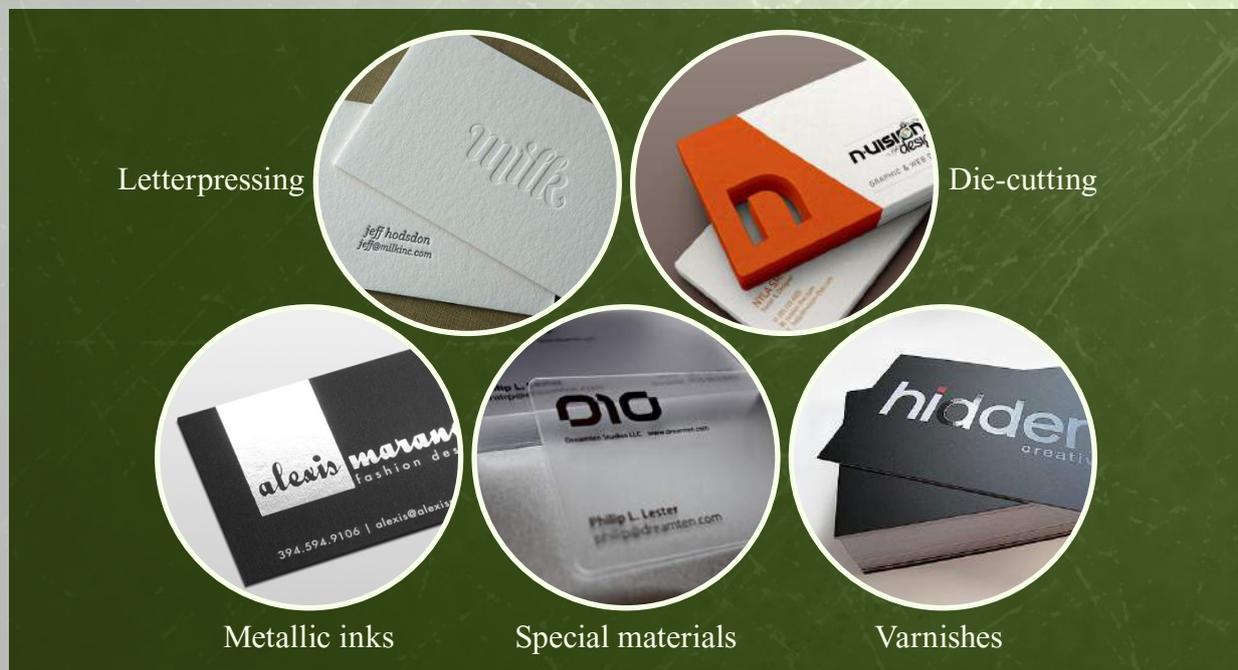

Letterpressing Die-cutting

Metallic inks Special materials Varnishes

Image 3.2: **Nifty Business Card Features**

We'll be taking a look at these a bit more in the next chapter.

Preparing your File for Print

When designing the card, certain technical details have to be kept in mind. They serve as the basis for all card designers out there irrespective of the platform they use in designing the card.

The first important thing to know is that work files for cards are prepared in industry standard softwares such as:

Adobe InDesign   Adobe Illustrator

You noticed we didn't list Photoshop here and that too for good reason. The raster image manipulation program doesn't have the kind of precision you need when it comes to creating business cards.
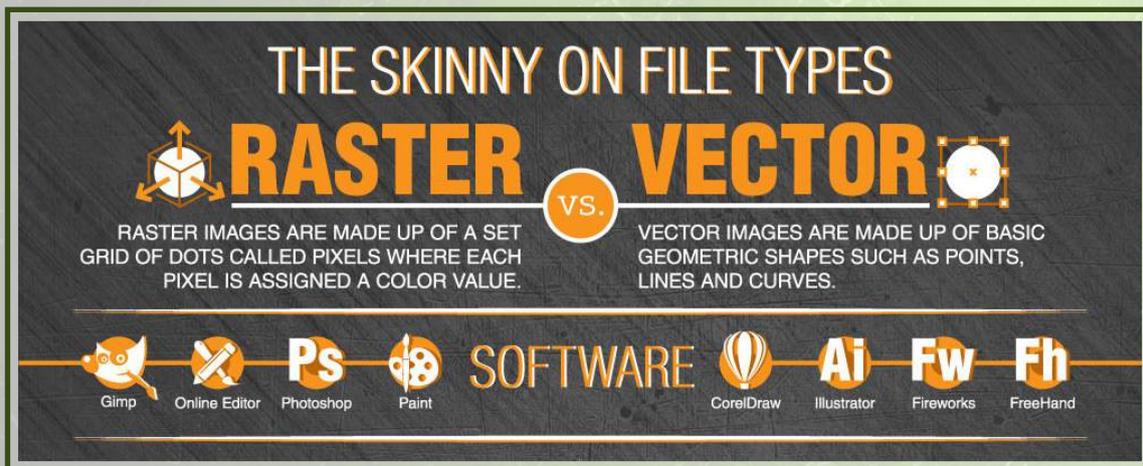

Image 3.3: **More about Raster and Vector Image File types**

Four things are technically important when starting your project:

A) PRINTED DIMENSIONS SHALL ALWAYS BE SET AT 300 PPI

B) COLOR MODE FOR PRINTING MUST BE CMYK

C) YOUR ARTWORK SHOULD HAVE A BLEED AREA OF 0.125 INCH OR 3 MM

D) FILES SHOULD BE SAVED IN A NATIVE FORMAT (AI, EPS) OR HIGH-RES PDF.

That's it. CMYK allows for accurate color reproduction for all elements present in the artwork and is the golden standard when it comes to prints. The 300 PPI (pixels per inch) ensures that detail on

the artwork is at an optimum level. As for why we need to have a bleed area of about 3mm, its because we need to be on the safe side. Experts recommend that type or logo shouldn't be placed too close to the bleed area so that they don't get cut or cropped off once printed.

CHAPTER 4
SPRUCING UP YOUR BUSINESS CARD

It's time to get to doing the deed – designing your own custom business card that is.

Playing With Colors

The first thing that you'll discover when speaking of colors and designing the card of your dreams is that, unlike RGB, you have to be very careful about the colors. The CMYK color mode is an altogether different animal from good ol' RGB that we use for web-based images. Here's how the two color gamut's step up side by side:

RGB vs. CMYK

RGB denotes red, green and blue.

CMYK denotes cyan, magenta, yellow and black.

Also called additive colors because each color adds to the other color to create a new color. And when all colors add together the outcome is white.

Also called subtractive colors because when you subtract them, you get RGB colors. And when all colors are subtracted the outcome is white.

RGB IS FOR DIGITAL OR COMPUTER SCREEN.

CMYK IS FOR PRINT MEDIA.

VIBRANT TONES.

SOFT TONES.

Image 4.0: **The Skinny on RGB vs. CMYK**

So basically, for your printing files, there should be no color overlap. Every single color must exist as an independent entity on your business card, otherwise the additive and subtractive properties of CMYK will make your prints turn out different than what you see on your display screens.

Choosing The 'right' Fonts

When getting into font selections for your design, it is important to note that there are three types of font files in the wilderness today:
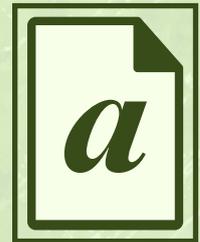
- PostScript Fonts
- TrueType Fonts
- OpenType Fonts

Post Script Fonts

These are legacy font file types. A PostScript Font comes in 2 accompanying files. One is for print and the other is for displays. The print file type is vector outline for printers whereas the display file type is for scalable appearance on the computer. PostScript fonts have an edge when it comes to high-quality and detailed font styles. They are usually used for professional quality printing for books and magazines.

TrueType Fonts

Scalable to any size, TrueType fonts are the most popular font files in use today. They are supported by Windows systems and can be sent to a printer with no issues. Unlike PostScript fonts, they come in one convenient file for each font.
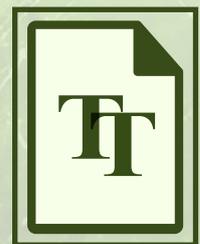
OpenType

Though they are related to the TrueType font family, OpenType fonts come with support for an expanded character set such as small capitalization, old-style numerals, and more detailed shapes, such as glyphs and ligatures. OpenType fonts are scalable and readable at any size as well. If you're looking for fine typography

or a larger character set for language coverage, an OpenType font is exactly what you need. They are also preferred for professional quality printing.
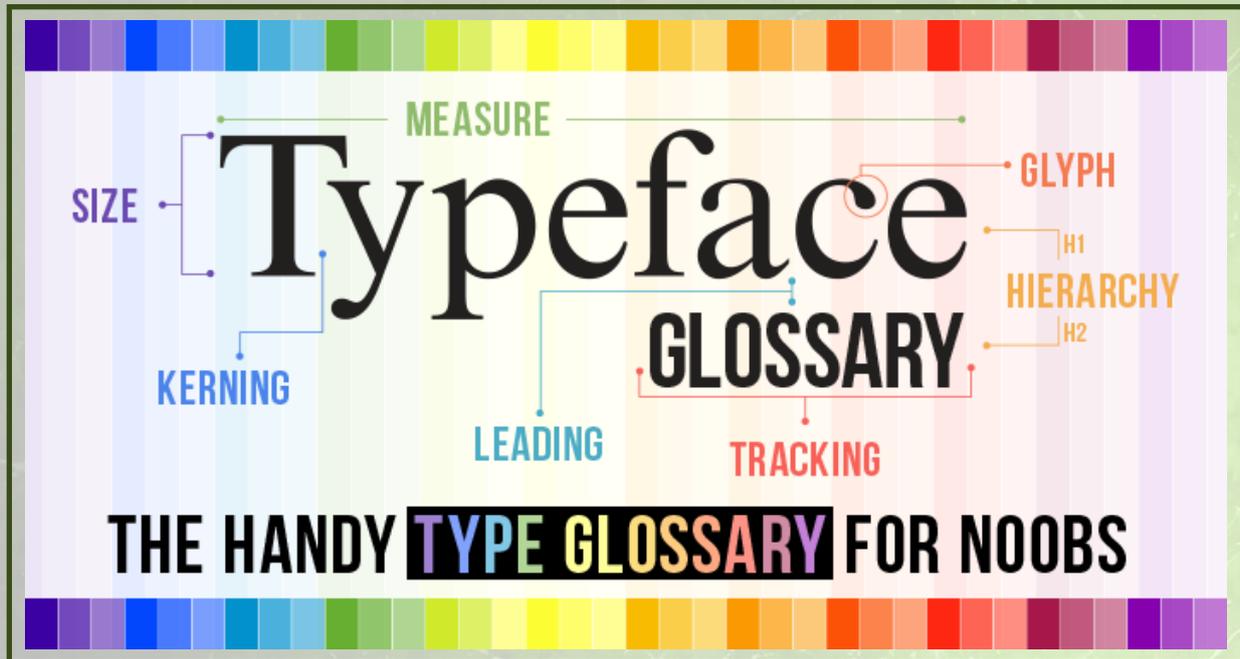

Image 4.1: **Delve Into Some Fine Intricacies Of Typefaces With This Glossary.**

Special Finishes for your Gob-smacking Business Card Design

So you've decided that you don't want to do a boring run-of-the-mill business card design? Welcome to the 'special finishes' section of the business card creation guide. We'll be taking a look at some of the options that can make your business card stand out from the rest owing to the inclusion of some unique design features. After all, the idea is to make your business card a tad bit memorable here right?

Spot UV Coating

If your card needs a glossy, matte or satin finish, you can utilize spot UV coating. This can be done by applying a clear varnish to a predefined area of your card. It makes your card have a slightly raised design element. The predefined area can be in the form of a shape or section you choose.

Image 4.2: **Spot UV Coating**

Letterpressing

Want to give your card design some increased color and depth? Letter-pressing can help you here. By inking a raised surface represented by vector shapes or text, your card gets some much needed texture and relief.

Image 4.3: **Letterpressing**

Embossing

Remember Han Solo at the end of 'The Empire Strikes Back?' Right when he's embossed in carbonite? Turns out you can also apply that technique on your business card, giving it a 3D raised effect.

Image 4.4: **Embossing**

Foil Stamping

There's aluminum foil that you can wrap your lunches with and then there's foil stamping for business card design. A thin shiny foil can be applied to an area that you can specify for your card.

Image 4.5: **Foil Stamping**

File Preparation Guidelines for any of the finishes

For the techniques listed above, you need to submit 2 files to your printer. One is with the artwork for the business card, while the other will consist wholly of the area that's defined for coating, embossing, etc.

You need to make sure that both files line up perfectly. To easily verify this, consider using a file with separate layers lined up. You can create two files out of this same file by hiding one layer and then the other.

Special Inks

Did you know you can use metallic, pearlized and fluorescent effects in your business card too, all thanks to some special inks? It's possible and it's doable. Plus you're only limited to Pantone color swatches for these effects. Talk to your printer guy for more details on ink availability.

Image 4.6: **Special Inks**

Duplexing And Tri-plexing

You can also give your cards a touch of elegance by using two or more paper sheets glued together. This technique is all about using different colored sheet of papers in between so that the card gives the appearance of colored edges. Duplexing is about a two-color edge for your business card whereas tri-plexing involves three.

Image 4.7: **Duplexing and Tri-plexing**

Scenting Inks

Want to get your card to look the part and smell of chocolate (or mildew)? Thanks to scented inks, your business card can also have an aromatic vibe to go with it.

Image 4.8: **Scenting Inks**

Choosing A Raw Material For Unique Business Cards

There are more options than you can wrap your head around with when it comes to business card design materials. More than just boring old paper that is.

Let's take a look at some of these options:

Paper and Cardboard

Why do people use same off-white or white cardboard stock for their business card all the time? Especially when there's a bevy of different options in the paper card category out there. Cold-pressed textured paper, soft-as-cloth finishes. These are just a few of what you're missing out on. A trip to your printing guy and their establishment is pretty much required for you to sample on what you're missing out on.

Image 4.9: **Cardboard Business Card**

Plastic

Did someone say transparent see-through business cards? Because yes, they exist thanks to plastic material that's frosted, stretchy or how you really like your plastic card material to be.

Image 4.10: **Plastic Business Cards**

Metal

When you want your card to suit up like IronMan, there's metal material for your business card available as well. You might want to check with your printing guy to see what colors you can use for metal card designs.

Image 4.11: **Metal Business Card**

Wood

If you dig the natural look or your brand is into planks and logs more than anything else, a wood-based business card can do wonders for your promotion.

Image 4.12: **Wood Business Card**

Cloth

Wool's the word here if you're in the market for warm and comfy things. Having your business card simulate a cloth or thread type can work for your apparel brand.

Image 4.13: **Cloth Business Card**

CHAPTER 5

LETS GO DIY WITH EASY BUSINESS CARD DESIGN

Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication, they say. We are at a point where technological advancements have democratized creativity and commerce. Today's artist and/or business person has got many tools and channels at their disposal to showcase their wares to the world. In this respect, DIY tools are paving the way for a new generation of self-made individuals and small businesses.

Presenting DesignMantic's DIY Business Card Design Feature

As an up-and-coming startup, you may be looking for options for your business card design that are:

| INEXPENSIVE | EASY TO DESIGN | EDITABLE |

Image 5.0: **Things To Consider When Designing A Business Card**

You might not have the marketing war chest of a big brand yet, but that doesn't mean you have to settle for less. As it turns out, there's just the thing for you to get your own customized business card design in a matter of minutes. And it's all DIY, short for Do-It-Yourself, a design philosophy that features the best balance of control and quality.

To make your very own business card, and that too with you calling your own shots, you can get started with DesignMantic's Business Card Creator online today. It's so easy that there's no design or technical knowledge required to work the tools here. Just you (some basic internet skills) and your imagination will do.
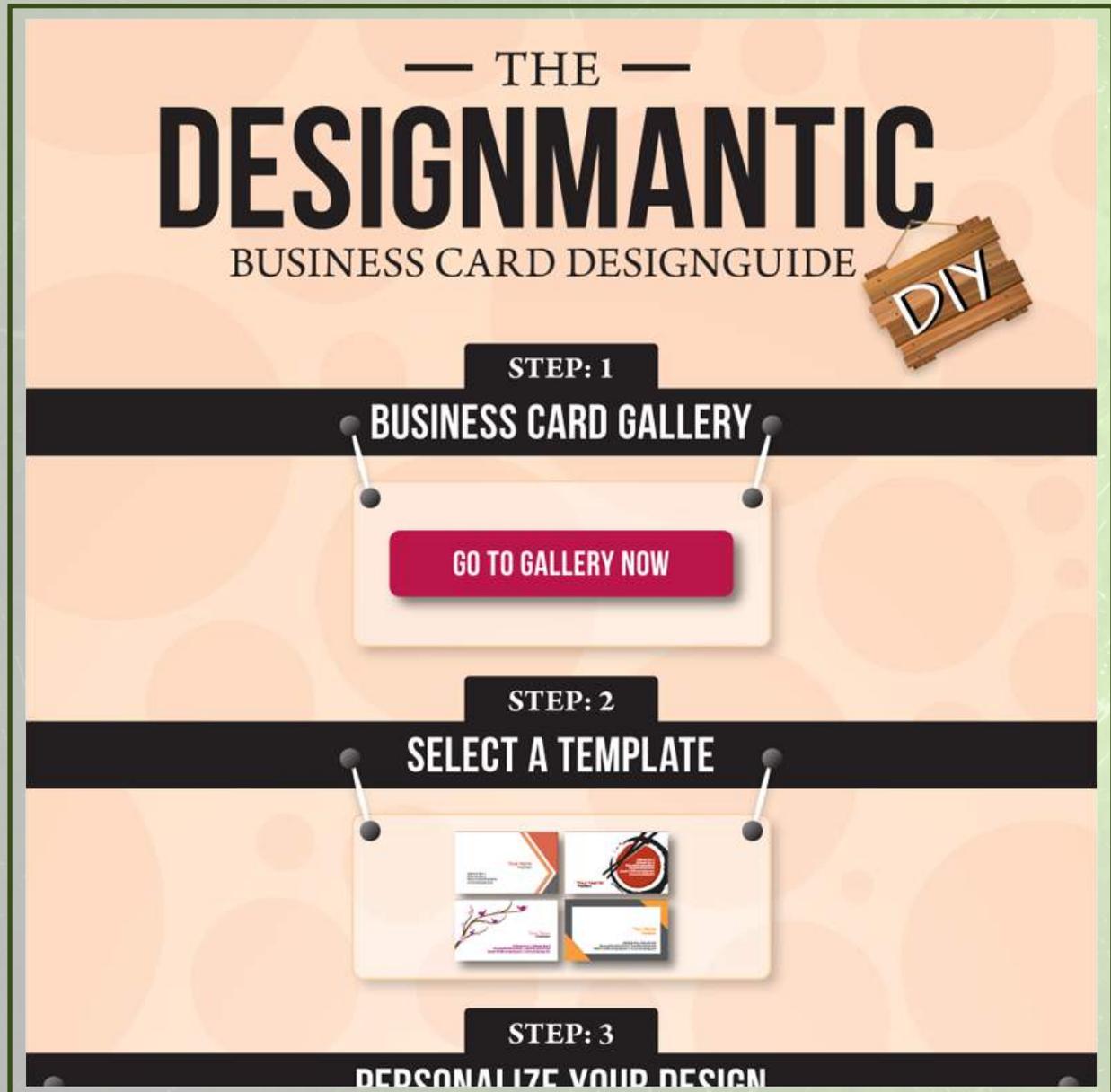

Image 5.1: **Get designing. Today.**

You get to choose your own:

Logo Designs	Colors	Shapes	Font Styles

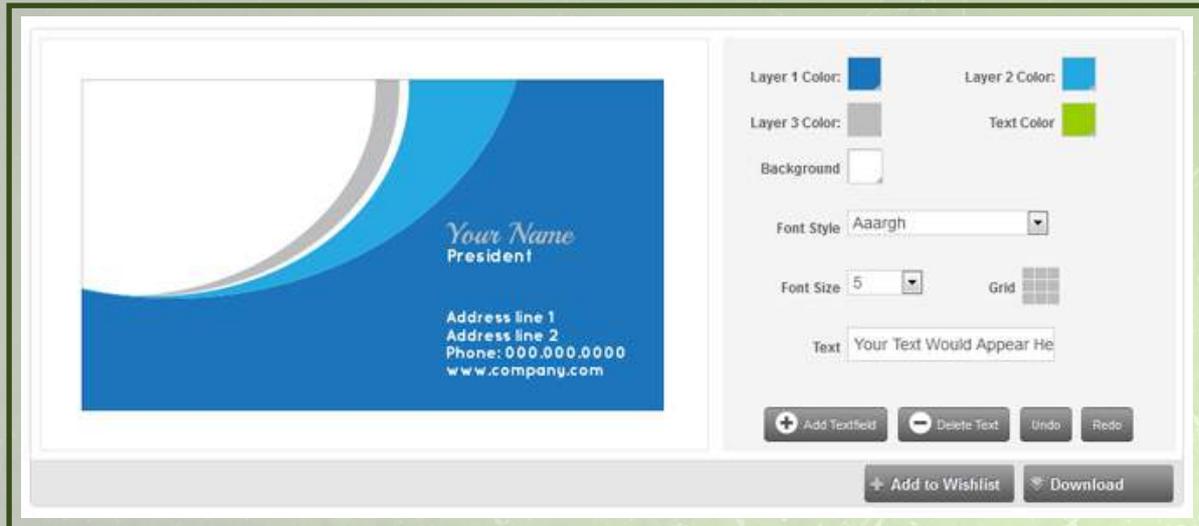| Card Types	Industry	And more.

Image 5.2: **DesignMantic Online Business Card Maker**

Creating virtually limitless options for your card design is free. And if you choose to get a design for your own business brand, a nominal fee will be charged.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

Businesses of all hues, sectors and sensibilities have a ton of options at their disposal when it comes to making a business card shine. Some can make it literally represent who they are – wooden card for a furniture firm, a thread card for a fashion firm, and so on.

There are certain things that remain constant in a business card. For instance, it is always used as a unique identifier for you and your brand. People want to call you up because they're interested in your products and services sure, but making yourself standout with your business card? Now that is what makes them call YOU instead of the dozens plus competitors out there. So you can see how designing a memorable business card works in your favor in the interim and the long term.

With thousands of stunning business card design templates to choose from and personalize to your heart's liking, the sky's the limit. In fact, you can get them printed and delivered to your doorsteps too, foregoing the need for regular visits to your printing place for color and design hijinks should they ensue. As a small business, getting a convenient all-in-one business card designing and printing services can take the sting out of commercial design and prints for you. For your professional networking and promotional needs, going DIY with your business card design can work out fabulously for your fledging startup.

So what are you waiting for? Hit DesignMantic's website if you want your business card done now and now. Or maybe even get the card of your dreams designed with all manner of materials and creative techniques available for you!

Happy Designing folks!