

A stack of several brochures and leaflets, fanned out to show their covers and pages. The colors are vibrant and varied, including shades of blue, green, white, and brown. The pages are slightly curved, giving a sense of depth and movement. The text is overlaid on the lower portion of the stack.

**A guide to
creating great
brochures and
uplifting leaflets**

40 WAYS TO CREATE GREAT BROCHURES AND UPLIFTING LEAFLETS

INTRODUCTION

If you are thinking about producing any promotional material, you should insist that your next brochure or leaflet stops prospects in their tracks, keeps their attention and makes them want to find out more about you.

This booklet shows you how to do this – and much more. Combine these ideas and you will improve your customers understanding of what you do and therefore the likelihood of them buying from you. In fact, if you implement all of the ideas suggested in this report, you should be able to improve the impact of your brochure many times over. The ideas are proven and needn't cost you any more to produce than your present brochure.

Much of its contents are common sense – but uncommon knowledge.

Your competitors will not know or use much of the information included in this booklet, giving you an advantage after reading. However, the only way you can benefit from knowing these tips is if you put them into action in your next brochure or leaflet.

Before you start work on your brochure

Most businesses have some form of brochure or leaflet, but many are ineffective because they don't explain how they can help their prospect. If your brochure spells out clearly what benefits you can offer your customer and nothing else, it will stand head and shoulders above your competitors.

1. Think about why you are creating your brochure in the first place. It is not to boast, or show off your new offices – it is purely a selling aid. Any pictures, text or diagrams are there only to explain how you can help your prospect in order to assist the selling process – anything else has no place in a brochure.
2. Consider who you are creating your brochure for. Many companies produce a 'one size fits all' brochure for existing clients and prospects from all industries. Ask yourself, do all your customers buy for the same reasons, or do you have a range of different appeals for a number of different markets?
3. Decide to make your brochure a carefully targeted skilful piece of communication. If it's too generic, you will end up with a meaningless document that won't appeal to anyone. That's why the term 'corporate glossy' and 'waste paper basket' are so closely linked.
4. . If you do have a number of different markets that you are aiming at, create a separate (but perhaps similar) brochure for each one. For example let's assume that you have three main markets: one for butchers, one for bakers and one for candlestick makers. The product that you provide for each is fairly similar but because you are a smart company, you have targeted these three niche markets by spelling out the distinct benefits that you can offer each one; ultimately leading to your success.
5. Don't let your specialist knowledge go to waste. If you understand your prospects' problems, why not tell them in a language that they understand? Why let all your specialist knowledge go to waste when producing your brochure? By all means you could decide on a common layout and theme for the three brochures? but it's important to select some pictures for the cover that best reflects each market and write at least the key sections of your text, addressing the specific needs of the butcher, baker and candlestick maker.
6. Creating a series of specialist brochures it is no more expensive to produce, but the end product will be four times more effective as a selling tool.

7. Make your brochure or leaflet direct response, not institutional. At every stage of your brochure you want to make it easy for your prospect to contact you. It should contain a number of calls to action – at least one on each page.
8. Many brochures appear to be created to please the directors of a company rather than the customers. Remember, the only reason that you want somebody to read about you in a brochure is to buy from you. The buying process may well occur in two or more stages, but you want the brochure that the prospect is reading to stir them into taking action. You want them to say 'I want to find out more about this product'.
9. Here are some examples of offers and incentives that you can include within your brochure to increase and measure response:-
 - A Offer a free sample of your product which is included with the brochure.
 - B A money-off coupon can be printed on the back to be claimed. This is a great way of determining if your brochure has been effective.
 - C Include a limited offer with your brochure and time stamp it with a specific date by which the offer must be claimed.
 - D Give away a bundle of free extras if they order today. This could ideally include valuable information which is cheap for you to produce, but important to your customer.
 - E Include free vouchers if they order before a certain date. These could be vouchers such as £5.00 off if you spend £50.00 in one transaction – or a percentage discount off the total price.
 - F Offer a free two hour consultation. This will appeal to any serious prospect because it puts the onus on you to prove to them that you can deliver what you promise.
 - G A '2 for the price of 1' offer can work well if you want to increase the likelihood of somebody trying your product or service for the first time.
 - H You can offer a password to a limited access website area. This makes them feel unique and trusted and can lead to other special offers and limited availability items.

If you use these notes YOU will have more chance of a prospect picking up a phone and contacting YOUR company instead of your competitors

10. Give your customers a convincing reason for buying from you. In your brochure, ask yourself with every paragraph 'is this giving my customer a real reason to buy from me?' Explain why your product or service offers excellent value for money.

First Impressions Count

11. Remember that your cover is the first thing a prospect will see, therefore it should always contain a powerful headline and attention-grabbing visuals.
12. The front page of your brochure is important. How important? Ask any magazine editor if the front page of their magazine is important. More time is spent on the look and feel of the front page of a magazine than on any of the articles inside. Getting the right picture on the front can also make a huge difference to the circulation in any given month. So if you are using a picture, spend time selecting an effective one.

Some tips on choosing the right picture

13. People love looking at faces. One of the reasons so many magazine front covers have close-cropped photographs of faces is that such an image is almost impossible for us to ignore. In tests of magazine covers, the close-cropped photographs of faces are looked at more quickly and remembered far better than any other image, yet few brochures ever use an image such as this on the front page.
14. If you are using colour, the front page is certainly the place to make use of it. In fact, even if your brochure is largely in black and white, it is often worth the expense of using at least two colours on the front and back to achieve maximum impact. In most cases, it is best to use bright and light colours with plenty of space. A dark cover with crowded text implies a dense difficult read and will put people off even opening your brochure.
15. Don't forget the basics. It can be easy to get caught up in the detail, but remember to explain in simple terms what your company actually does!

16. Certain colour combinations work well together to attract the human eye. For example, red and yellow force us to look. When orange and purple are used together the orange appears incredibly bright and attractive – ask any fruit and vegetable stall holder.
17. Caption everything. A photograph without a caption is a puzzle to the reader. You may know that it is a photograph of your Managing Director, or a group of staff from your call centre, but the reader will not have a clue. Always put a caption on any photograph in your brochure.
18. If possible, include a benefit within the caption as well. For example, a caption for call centre staff could be ‘Over 200 staff are employed in our call centre ensuring that customer enquiries can be swiftly answered 24 hours a day’.
19. Make your contents specific to solving your customers’ problems.
20. When you are writing a brochure, don’t just think about what your products are; consider the problems that your customers may be currently facing. In fact, don’t just think about this, ask your customers what problems they are facing. For example, you may assume that your customers are most concerned about price, when in fact the biggest concern is speed of delivery. If they can have delivery of any item that you have in stock within 24 hours, they will happily pay more because they can pass the extra charge on to their clients.
21. If you know what the main concern of your client is, it should be the core focus of your brochure. Now, if you also happen to be competitive on price and offer a wider range of services, so much the better. But remember that these are extras. You must address your clients’ main concerns first, so if it’s speed they are after, the whole body of the leaflet needs to focus on this. The sentences should be short and the visuals should help illustrate your service. For example, the cover could show a blurred member of staff running towards the reader. The colours could be red and yellow, subheadings could include words like ‘Rocket’ or ‘Rush’ or ‘Instant’. The whole style of the report should reflect the specific concern of your core customer.

22. Always include either an order form or a choice of ways that your prospect can get in touch with you. Imagine the scenario: I have picked up your brochure and have read with some interest about a product of yours that I wish to buy. I rip out the page and put it into a folder. Later that week I take it out and look at the page to find your contact details. I search both sides of the page to find them but cannot find an e-mail address or a phone number in sight. Worst of all, I cannot remember the name of your company and it hasn't been printed on the sheet either. I would suggest that at the bottom of every page in your brochure you have at least your company name, a phone number and an e-mail address specific to the brochure. This way you will make it easier for people to reach you and make a spur of the moment call when they have seen something in your brochure that jolts them into action.
23. Now, if you were sending out a catalogue you would always include an order form, so when you send out a brochure, why should you do anything different? It always makes sense to give people a 'tick box option' that they can quickly complete and return to you. This becomes a logical step in the process. It's a form of subtle closing that leads your prospects into the next part of the buying process. Whether it is built in or stapled on, always include some kind of order form with any brochure you produce.
24. Write copy that is interesting to the reader. Obviously this is a whole area in itself but there are some quick guidelines:

Keep sentences short. Shorter sentences are easier to read. Reduce the size of paragraphs. Blocks of too much text appear daunting to the reader. Use sub headings between paragraphs.

Use the word 'you' far more often than 'I' or 'we'. People are much more interested in themselves and their problems than your company.

Don't use excessive industry or technical jargon. It is not going to impress anybody and won't sell your product.

Try to follow a logical structure in your argument: Do you have this problem? Have you tried this, but found that it didn't work? You may also have had this experience. Here's what you can do about it today.

25. Before you pass your material on to be printed, try to get as many people to proof read it as possible. Not just for punctuation, but to see whether your ideas have come across successfully and make sense to different types of readers from outside of your company. You may have overlooked some very simple points that will put the whole of your brochure in context.
26. Typefaces: Keep them simple and easy to read. On your PC you will have several hundred typefaces. Just because they are there does not mean that you need to use them. We have all had fun experimenting with typefaces in posters or letters but a brochure is not the place to do this. As a general rule for most brochures, you only need two typefaces.
27. The body copy. For most of the body copy Times, Times New Roman or Garamond is best. This report is set in Garamond as it is an easy typeface for the eye to read. It is also easier to remember the text: studies show that we understand nine times as well in such typefaces as many others. We can also read four times as quickly. If you do not believe me try this simple test. Next time somebody has sent you an e-mail that you are struggling to understand, convert it into Garamond. Instantly it will appear clearer and you will be able to read it far quicker. You will understand sentences that were incomprehensible in an alternative font.
28. The headlines and subheads. Use a different typeface for subheads such as Arial or Gills Sans. These typefaces are effective for the short sub heads that break up paragraphs, headlines at the start of a section or contact details at the bottom of the page. They also introduce variety and add a change of visual pace to your document. These are both important factors in encouraging your potential customer to continue reading.
29. All promotional material should be professionally printed. For many people, their first impression of your company will be based on your brochure. You may have put a great deal of thought into its content, however if it is obvious that it has been printed on a home printer, you will only promote a very poor first impression of what the recipient can expect from your company.
30. Work out what style is most appropriate for your customer. If you are selling a luxury product costing thousands of pounds, you cannot expect a photocopied A4 leaflet to sell your product to them. Similarly, if you are selling into a highly priced sensitive market, then overtly expensive brochures may cause a potential customer to question your profit margins.

31. When sending your brochure out, **always** include a letter. You would never dream of starting a sales presentation without introducing yourself first, so why put a brochure in an envelope without an explanatory letter. Your letter need not be long, but it should further personalise the message that you have put across in the brochure. A typical introduction may thank the reader for their enquiry and then mention something specific that you have talked about during the phone call. This could also give you the opportunity to highlight a part of the brochure which may be of particular interest. Don't ever send out a brochure without a friendly, personalised letter to accompany it.

The 9 Pitfalls.

There are a number of pitfalls that can wreck your response levels. Heed these warnings and make sure that no brochure you produce contains any of these features.

Doesn't explain what you can offer the customer.

32. It's all too easy to get caught up in the details and forget the bigger picture. The best brochure should lead the reader to a logical conclusion; a special offer or free sample perhaps. However, nobody will consider buying anything from you if it is not clear what you have on offer. Make sure you explain clearly in your brochure what you do, why you do it and why it will be of help to the prospect. You will be surprised how often people leave this out!

Creates the wrong image for your business.

33. When you put together any form of communication, you should ask yourself what sort of impression you want to leave the reader with. Begin with this in mind. You might decide you want the image of the hand-crafted cottage industry that has been unchanged by time, using traditional ingredients and recipes. To achieve this impression, everything about your brochure from the text to the layout needs to reflect it. For example, don't mention that you were only founded in 2002 and don't show your fleet of delivery motorbikes on the front page.

Out of date style or content.

34. Changing material for the sake of it is usually a mistake, but it is important to keep your style fresh. Kellogg's regularly changes elements of its logo or characters but the Honey Monster and Tony the Tiger are still there in a contemporary way. Watch out for unfashionable clothes, large mobile telephones and outdated hairstyles in photographs of people. Few things date faster than these. It also makes sense to involve a designer, or rely on the experience of a printer to offer you advice on what will work best. A dated layout will seriously detract from the message you are trying to put across.

So general that it says nothing.

35. Everybody claims that they offer great service at an affordable price. It is a phrase that means almost nothing because of its overuse. Don't be bland. If you are going to make a claim, make it specific. Offer the best service in Luton or your money back. Offer 48 hour delivery on all items not in stock – guaranteed. Tell customers specific facts that are of interest to them giving them a reason to buy from you, rather than a competitor.

Bland writing and design that is difficult to read.

36. Some designers get carried away with producing a work of art that is almost impossible to read. It might look great, but it will bring you no business. On the other hand, if you have no design in your brochure and it only consists of large blocks of text, your readership will also drop. You need to work with a designer who understands that the purpose of design is to enhance the text and the message it contains. Clarity is very important and if the reader struggles to understand your message, you will have no hope of persuading them to buy your product.

A variety of typeface styles that are confusing and hard to read.

37. In almost all cases, two typefaces are all you need. A Times, Times New Roman or Garamond is best for the body copy and a Sans typeface for the sub heads and headlines. That is it. If you overload your reader with all manner of fonts you will confuse, bewilder and lose their interest. Keep your fonts clear and easy to read with good spacing and you greatly increase the likelihood of prospects reading your text.

No way to get in touch with you.

38. Some people will not want to phone you; they would rather e-mail or fax you. Give them the choice and make it as easy as possible for them to get in touch. Provide your details on every page and have a page or a section towards the back of your brochure where they have clear instructions as to how they can take the next step.

It's boring.

39. Whilst you may have been paid to create your brochure, nobody is paid to read it. So if it is boring and irrelevant they will stop and throw it away. Cut out unnecessary flowery language, minimise jargon and make it interesting to the reader. The best way to make it interesting is to make it relevant. If somebody wants to know how to make more money, tell him or her what it is you can do to help them make more money! If somebody wants to improve the safety of their staff, show them how you will protect them. Don't be coy – spell out your advantages in a relevant straightforward way and make it interesting.

The motto that one well known advertising agency from the 1920's used was 'The truth well told'. The truth is always interesting if you tell it in a way that is relevant to your target audience.

There is no incentive to buy.

40. At the end of reading your material you don't want people thinking 'that was quite interesting, i shall bear it in mind for the future occasion'. You want to guide them into taking action by giving them easy to follow steps to reach you. You may want to give them options of what to do now, or spell out the details of your time sensitive offer. Whatever you do, it is important that they realise that if they do not do something now they may forget about what they have just learned. You want to make it clear that they should put the wheels in motion immediately; otherwise they will lose out in the future.

We hope you have found this guide useful, however if you require further information, guidance or advice please contact:

Direct Solutions
4 Faraday Close
Oakwood Industrial Estate
Clacton-on-Sea
Essex
CO15 4TR

Tel: 01255 221322



Direct Solutions
4 Faraday Close
Oakwood Industrial Estate
Clacton-on-Sea
Essex
CO15 4TR

T: 01255 221322 E: info@directsolutionsuk.com
W: www.directsolutionsuk.com