

How to Design and Layout a Brochure

Source: www.allgraphicdesign.com

Designing a basic brochure - how hard can that be? For good graphic designers, the answer is a lot tougher than you think. Even for the most basic type of brochure, before you ever put pencil to paper or click your mouse, there is essential information that you need to decide.

The first thing you need to know is the *purpose* of the brochure or what the brochure is to accomplish. That ties directly into who the target audience is and what the message of the brochure will be. There are three main types of brochures and in each case; the cover is used to accomplish a specific goal. The three types of brochures are those that are used to advertise or market, those that educate or inform, and those that entertain.

For a brochure whose primary purpose is to advertise or market products and services, the cover will most likely have two parts: a catchy phrase that grabs attention, and then lists the benefits of the product (what will this product do for me?). In the instance of a brochure that is primarily educational or informative, the product generally appears on the cover with the information of what it does or can do listed inside. The entertaining brochure is used the least.

The next thing you need to decide is the number of panels in the brochure, which is influenced by a number of factors. Some questions to consider:

- How much information will be in this brochure?
- How is this brochure going to be used?
- Is there a bleed?
- Is the brochure going to be of a unique design that might include die-cuts or unusual folding?
- Will the brochure be a direct mail piece? If so, what are the postal regulations for the size and mailing costs?
- What is the allotted budget for the brochure?

Designers need to get the parameters and specifications before they proceed, as these may greatly affect the cost. Printers can also be a tremendous resource in explaining how a brochure's parameters and specifications will affect everything from the size of paper a brochure is printed on, to trimming, folding, and special cuts.

Once those decisions are made, you need to discuss what is often referred to as the "hierarchy of information" or what's the order of information; starting with the most important and moving onto the least. At this stage, you'll need to know on which panel or panels information is being placed. In some brochures, information (particularly photographs and maps) can go across two panels to striking effect.

At the same time, when thinking about how the brochure will be laid out, consider whether each individual panel will hold distinct information or are the panels related?

You're still not quite ready to move into the actual design process as you need to refer back to that target audience the brochure is aimed at. Here you need to know the answer to the following question: what is the message being sent with this brochure? Advertising, educating, informing, and entertaining are how that message is presented; the actual message is what you want to say about the particular product, service, or company.

When all that information is gathered, you can finally get down to the business of designing. You'll take into account the basic elements of good design - alignment, repetition for a sense of unity, contrast and a focal point that provides interest, balance, scale and perspective, color, and so on. You'll also want to keep in mind the font, size, color, and orientation of the text.

As with any design there are also things you'll want to avoid. These include:

- Avoid over-used typefaces, two of which are Arial and Helvetica.
- For content type, keep the point size under 12.
- Don't use more than three type faces in a brochure.
- Generally don't use more than one alignment.

As you can see, designing even a standard six-panel brochure is often a much more complicated process than you initially might think. The more organized you are, the easier the graphic design process will be, and probably a lot more fun. With any design project, it's a good idea to have all the necessary information, pictures, parameters, and specifications before you let your creative juices flow.

Create an eye-catching design

When creating your own marketing materials from scratch, remember: **simplicity is key!** Follow these tips for a winning design:

Plan it out. Sketch the layout ahead of time, keeping in mind that people scan in this order:

1. Pictures or illustrations
2. Headlines
3. Charts or graphs
4. Captions
5. Body copy

Add photos, illustrations, and charts. Visuals are the most important piece of your brochure or flyer. They add interest and emotion as well as establish the tone of your piece. Use your own photos or

search for royalty-free images online. Charts can easily be created in Excel.

Use full color. Bold colors stand out and grab attention. For cohesive messaging, coordinate the colors of your business or logo with the flyer's photos, text, and background.

Less is more! Avoid losing key pieces of information in a cluttered, over-designed layout. When designing headings and bullets, limit yourself to one or two fonts—and don't be afraid to leave white space!

Write great content

Great marketing copy delivers a clear, focused message, so know your audience and keep it simple! There are several key elements to creating an effective brochure or flyer:

- **Get their attention.** Create a hook or an attention-grabbing headline that will draw your audience in and pique their interest.
- **Don't bury crucial information.** Body copy is important, but don't put your key points there. Keep the facts clear so your audience can easily find the information they need (who, what, where, when, why, etc.).
- **Keep it simple.** Be sure the language in your flyer or brochure is straightforward and easy to read. If it's too lengthy or wordy, your audience may lose interest or miss valuable information.
- **Create a call-to-action.** Know what you want someone who reads your brochure or flyer to do—and mention it more than once!
- **Include contact information.** Whether it's your e-mail, website, or phone number, make sure you can be contacted for more information.

Tips before you print

- **Proofread content.** Your computer may check spelling and grammar, but there are many mistakes it overlooks, including wrong words that are still spelled correctly (such as "loose" and "lose").
- **Check for consistency.** If you do something one way in one place, make sure to do it across the board! For example, if you capitalize the first letters in one header, do so in every header. Or, if you add a drop shadow to one image, add them to the others.
- **Inspect the facts.** Be sure to check your content for accuracy. Incomplete or incorrect information will make your organization look unprofessional, or worse, send people to the wrong place.