

## ARE YOUR PRINTED MATERIALS DUE FOR AN UPDATE?

Printed marketing and sales materials play a crucial role in securing customers for your business. Unfortunately, too many businesses use the “set it and forget it” method of creating collateral. While some pieces can be used for a while without trouble, others might quickly become outdated. We rely so much on our websites and social media that sometimes those materials are forgotten, yet they are being passed around to potential customers all the time. It’s smart for businesses to get in the habit of auditing their printed materials and refreshing them regularly. Even something as simple as your business card may be due for an update!

### **Why should you audit your collateral?**

Using fresh, up-to-date marketing and sales collateral ensures that you accurately represent your brand to customers. These materials should speak to your brand, demonstrate what your business does, and showcase your current offerings.

If your print materials are irrelevant, it can cause confusion or frustration among buyers. Depending on how much your branding or your business has changed (think Covid-19), the materials might not even be effective for your target market at all! If your goal is to persuade customers to make a purchase, you want to ensure your messaging is both accurate and fresh.

### **When should you do a collateral audit?**

It’s a good idea to revisit these materials every three months, or once a season. Not only will this help your team catch necessary updates, but it also allows you to capitalize on seasonal promotions and align with seasonal trends in your industry.

There are other times you may want to update, or better yet create seasonal materials you can stock and reuse. Change or add:

- Any time you launch a new product or change your product line,
- Any time you rebrand or update your logo (have you done that recently?),
- Before every industry event or trade show where you’ll hand out printed materials,
- Any time your contact information or physical location (such as your address, phone number, or website) changes,
- Right now! It’s also a great time to audit and refresh your marketing materials now considering how your printed collateral can best support your sales team as they now begin scheduling in-person meetings.

### **Why have an outside service audit your materials?**

Sometimes that person outside your business, looking into it as a consumer, may be the right choice for an audit. A professional may best be able to tell you what will help make a sale better than the people ingrained on the inside.

### **Make sure everything is consistent with your branding.**

All marketing and sales materials should be consistent with your current branding and align with the style of your other marketing efforts. Ensure that each piece fits in seamlessly with your visuals on other channels, including your website, emails, and social media. Customers should easily be able to identify the materials as belonging to your business.

### **Do they speak to your target audience?**

Align your message with what your audience cares about, their needs and desires, challenges they face, and questions they ask. Also double-check your imagery and ensure that any photos of people reflect who your customers are. Consider things like age, race and ethnicity, gender, marital and family status, and lifestyle to ensure your customers feel represented.

### **Do they have a clear call to action?**

No marketing materials are effective without pointing customers in the right direction. Whether it's "Visit our website," "Call today," or "Redeem this coupon at checkout," make sure you have a prominent and clear call to action on every piece.

### **Do they reflect your current offerings?**

Businesses are constantly evolving, and your company's offerings might not be the same as they were six months or a year ago. Ensure that every piece of sales and marketing collateral reflects what your business offers right now. It's also smart to switch out seasonal products or services to keep your collateral as fresh as possible.

### **Do they include your contact information?**

Remember to provide customers with a way to reach you by including your website, social media, phone number, email, and/or physical address on every piece.

### **Don't let your materials sit stagnant.**

Keeping your sales and marketing collateral up-to-date is essential for effectively communicating with customers and putting your best foot forward. If you haven't revisited your collateral in a while, take the opportunity to do so now and make a plan to do a regular audit and refresh going forward.

Please contact us for any audit needs you have. We offer full design and rebranding services as well as content writing and print management.