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#### Overview

You don't need a big budget to develop your own marketing materials. This How-To Guide will show you how easy it is to create professional-quality brochures quickly and inexpensively. We'll take a closer look at some of the benefits and give you advice on targeting your audience and planning your message. Then we'll show you how to bring your brochure to life with easy-to use templates and choose the proper business media to put your business in the spotlight.

- >> **Understand it:** it's easy, it'll save you money, and it works -- discover the many benefits of do-it-yourself marketing.
- >> **Plan it:** pinpoint your audience and your message with these tips.
- >> **Do it:** customize HP business brochure templates by adding your own photos, artwork, and text. We'll take you through the process step by step.
- >> **Use it:** pick up great ideas for distributing your brochure.
- >> **Buy it:** shop for the products you need to create and print your own business collateral.
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#### Understand it

A marketing brochure can boost your sales efforts instantly. And by creating those materials in-house, you can save both time and money. Whether you're a real estate agent or caterer, the power of a good brochure that delivers your message with visual impact cannot be overestimated.

Let's take a closer look at some of the benefits:

#### Save money

With a high-quality printer and the right paper, it's easy to create your own marketing materials inexpensively. Plus, you can print only what you need, when you need it, eliminating the cost of overruns and preventing stacks of dusty, outdated brochures from gathering in the corners.

#### Stay in touch

Brochures are a great way to stay in touch with current customers, build loyalty, and strengthen your credibility. And, since you can print your own marketing materials instantly, it's easy to create small runs of customized materials for specific customers, presentations, or tradeshows.

#### Generate revenue

It's simple: Customers who better understand your business as a result of your marketing brochure will be more likely to spend money with you. Color, in particular, can be a great communication tool -- it can boost customer comprehension by 75 percent and accelerate learning from 55 to 75 percent.

#### Ideas in action: real estate

Imagine -- photos of your prime real estate properties displayed in brilliant color. Once you take your digital pictures, it's easy to scan your images, drop them into one of HP's customizable Microsoft Word templates, and print beautiful full-color brochures. Plus, since you can create your materials as you need them, you can continually update your brochure when hot new properties hit the market.

**Read on for tips on planning your brochure's look and message. And learn how to use the brochure templates to your advantage.**

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#### Plan it

A great marketing brochure delivers a clear, focused message in a visually compelling way. Finding that focus requires forethought about who will read the brochure and how you can convey a unique benefit to them. Below, you'll learn tactics for targeting the audience for your brochure and receive tips for crafting your message.

#### Start with the audience

Knowing whom you want to read your brochure will help you craft the message. Begin by narrowing your audience to the customers who will best help you increase business. Your individual business situation will dictate who that is.

Sometimes it's best to target customers who already know and trust your business -- especially if you're introducing a new service. But often you'll have more success marketing to new prospects. A small business consultant who specializes in your industry can help you research potential customers and tailor a message for them.

#### Pinpoint what makes you unique

Gain insights by listening to your customers, employees, and salespeople. You might be surprised by what draws people to your business and distinguishes you from the competition. Maybe it's that they can always find a parking spot near your store. Or maybe it's that they trust your real estate advice because you live in the same neighborhood where you sell homes.

Ask your customers for their opinions in an offhand, personal way -- they'll be more likely to tell you the first thing they think of, which is often the most honest answer. Write these thoughts down so you don't lose or forget them. They don't have to be complete sentences -- short fragments that express the point will work perfectly when you need to write headlines and captions for your brochure.

Prioritize these thoughts and ideas based on the business objectives the brochure is helping you meet. But keep your message focused; you'll want to emphasize just one or two of your objectives.

#### Understand what the reader sees

It's a good idea to mock up a brochure on a piece of paper and decide in advance where the photos and text will go. Years of testing has found that readers see elements on your page in a certain order almost every time:

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

Many readers, even if they have a vested interest in the brochure, will only skim the body copy. Knowing that, spend your time and energy appropriately. Make sure your headlines, illustrations, and photos tell most of your story. Body copy is important, but don't bury your most important points there.

#### Plan your message

Now it's time to gather your notes and get down to the business of writing. Write clearly and plainly, avoiding jargon and buzzwords, and always aim to explain your point in a unique and interesting way. Remember to make your headlines tell your story so that even if someone simply

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skims your brochure, they will still receive the main points.

You also may want to hire a writer or business consultant to help you hone your message.

#### Present a call to action

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An often-overlooked step in planning and writing brochures is the "call to action." It's important to call out the next step for the reader. For example, if you want the reader to come into your store, find a way to make that action more compelling. Perhaps a coupon, in-store discount, or special event would spur them into motion.

#### Say it with pictures

---

Pictures and illustrations are almost always the first thing readers look at in brochures. Think about it: No amount of text description, however well written, is going to convey the beauty of a real estate property to a potential buyer.

It doesn't take a professional photographer to capture the products, quality, and spirit of your business. Digital cameras make it easy for anyone to capture professional-quality pictures that can be downloaded for use in a brochure.

#### Artwork that works

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Bearing in mind what your main message is, find artwork that complements it. Be very discriminating; remove any artwork that doesn't fit with the message. If you don't have many pictures or illustrations on hand, you might consider free clip art. HP offers [free art you can download](#), or you can look through the free Microsoft Clip Art Library. You can explore it by opening Microsoft Word, then selecting Insert > Picture > Clip Art.

Experts also suggest staying with one style, so choose either photos or illustrations.

#### Choose the right equipment

---

To create a professional-quality full-color brochure, you need the right combination of products. Here's a look at three of the most important components:

- **Printer** -- [HP Color LaserJets](#) give you high-speed color laser printing at an affordable price (perfect for printing brochures in large quantities). They print up to 600 x 600 dpi quality with HP ImageRET 2400 for crisp text, bold graphics, and vivid images.
- **Scanner** -- Get all your photos organized and enjoy great scanning at your fingertips. [HP's Scanjet 5530 Photosmart scanner](#) is the best way to quickly and easily convert stacks of traditional standard-size photos into digital files for printing, e-mailing, and storing.
- **Digital Camera** -- Use HP's big zoom camera, the [HP Photosmart 945 digital camera](#) to add impact to your marketing materials. With 5.3 MP total, 56x total zoom, 8x precision optical lens and 7x digital, it delivers beautiful photos and enlargements. One-touch, fully automatic technology delivers great shots with manual overrides for adding creative touches.

#### Choose a brochure template

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While you could hire a freelance designer to create the brochure, HP offers several free professional-looking [brochure templates](#) that you can easily manipulate in Microsoft Word, then print yourself. The next section will give you tips and step-by-step instructions for using these templates.

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#### Do it

Once you've selected your brochure template and established your message, it's time to get down to the business using HP's [Microsoft Word brochure templates](#). Even if you decide to create a brochure using other software, these tips and guidelines for writing, designing, and printing can still help you produce a professional-looking piece.

#### Insert your headlines and copy

Replace the sample text in the brochure with your own text. And remember to proofread after you're done (even if it's been edited once before.) An easy way to catch typos is by reading the text and headlines to yourself out loud. Ask someone else to read it too, looking both for errors as well as phrases that might be confusing.

#### Add photos and artwork

Some of the templates come with a Photo Socket, which is a placeholder for digital images. To add your art, first select and delete any text in the box. Then go to the Insert menu, and select Picture. If you're using Microsoft Clip Art, choose Clip Art. More likely you're using digital pictures or charts. Choose Insert > Picture > From File, then browse your hard drive to locate the right picture.

Before you insert the picture, choose from one of three options:

1. **Autocrop to Selection Size** - This automatically fits your photo into the Photo Socket. It may crop the edges of large photos.
2. **Center in Selection Space** - This centers your photo in the middle of the Photo Socket.
3. **Align with Top Left Corner** - This places your photo in the top left corner of the Photo Socket.

Remember to touch up, crop, or otherwise improve your image using your favorite photo- or image-editing software before inserting the image in Microsoft Word.

#### Communicate with color

Don't feel obligated to use the colors suggested in the templates. Experiment! You might consider choosing your brochure colors the way you'd choose your work clothes -- deep, rich, darker colors for more conservative and traditional industries, or light, vibrant, and modern shades for businesses that emphasize a friendly, personal touch. Try to limit the number of colors you use to two or three, and choose complementary colors that go with the hue and lightness of your art.

#### Save your work

Brochure files can be quite large when you add image files. If you make several brochures to target different audiences, consider making a back-up on CD to save your hard drive space. Also, be sure to save your Microsoft Word document every few minutes to help prevent disasters in the event that the computer crashes or the power suddenly goes out.

#### Print a test copy

Producing a "proof" on plain paper allows you to check your picture placement and color. It also helps you practice your two-sided printing directions and saves the valuable specialty paper you'll use for the final brochure. Using plain paper, follow the directions for two-sided printing in Microsoft Word. Try marking the top of the paper before you print. (This may help you visualize how both sides of the paper flow through the printer.)

For your test copy, it's fine to print in draft mode to save ink and money. But when you print your

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final pieces, you'll want to use the highest-quality setting, especially if your using artwork or photos.

While you're making corrections, take the time to have someone check the text -- again -- for typos.

#### Choose the right paper

---

You've spent the time and energy producing a beautiful electronic file, but now it's time to bring your brochure to life -- on paper! Your paper choice can have a significant impact on the look and feel of your final piece. Look for a high-quality paper that's thick like a greeting card, but that will allow the colors and pictures to really shine.

Your best media option for a laser printer is [HP Soft Gloss Laser Paper](#). It's a print shop-quality soft gloss paper that's coated on both sides for vivid color and professional black text -- an ideal choice for brochures.

#### Print and produce your brochure

---

From the File menu, select Page Setup. Choose Best for the Print Quality, and choose HP Professional Brochure & Flyer for the Paper Type. Then click the Save Settings button.

Here are some more tips for getting the most from your new brochure:

- To avoid ink smears, set the pages aside to dry completely in between printing on the front and back.
- Rather than printing several brochures right away, create a prototype. This will allow you to make a final test of colors, placement, text, and two-sided printing.
- After creating a prototype, write down any special directions if the folding, binding, and cutting are complex.
- To extend the physical life of your brochures, store them in a dark, dry place where harmful rays of sunlight can't damage them. Also, keep them where the temperature won't fluctuate too much.

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#### Use it

Brochures are valuable tools--but they only fulfill their full potential when you can effectively get your message into the hands of your target audience. We'll take a look at several innovative ways to cut through the marketing clutter and distribute your marketing materials.

#### Direct mail

The best way to get literature to your target audience is usually not by a mass mailing or other means of unsolicited distribution. Unsolicited brochures (and even solicited ones) are rarely read. At best, they end up lost in a file drawer. Plus, for every two or three active leads, you'd have to send out thousands of brochures, which will most likely be thrown away.

But that's not to say that direct mail *can't* be effective. It depends on the type of business you're in and the quality of your list. Advertising a new offer to a list of tried-and-true customers, for example, could work remarkably well. But an equally excellent offer, even with a striking design and powerful copy, can fail if mailed to the wrong list.

Just know that it's important to use the most accurate and up-to-date lists possible to increase your margin of success. It's also vital to set up a system to add names--and keep them current. And it is imperative that repeat mailings be made--a common error is not mailing often enough. If you've got a good list, take advantage by keeping in touch frequently.

#### Where the consumers are

The best way to get information to a prospect is to have your brochure available at places and times when they're more responsive to your service--when it's already on their mind.

You could advertise your pet-sitting services by going door to door with brochures or fliers. But why not place the brochure in the waiting areas of veterinary offices where people are looking for something to read, or grooming and specialty shops where pet owners are apt to ask for referrals?

If you're in the travel industry, then check out the local Chamber of Commerce, visitor's center, and other places where people come looking for materials.

#### Conferences, seminars, trade shows

There are a variety of ways to distribute your brochures at conferences. You could slide materials under the hotel room doors of conference attendees the day they arrive, hire people to pass them out at the convention, or find marketing partners in your industry who will distribute your brochures at their booths.

People who request information rather than just grab a brochure are usually very good leads. Take along a notebook computer that's equipped with database software so prospects can type their own names and addresses into the database to receive a brochure later.

#### Inserts

Forming a partnership with a publication whose readership fits your target audience is another great way to approach prospects in a timely way. For example, you could include an insert for your childcare service in a local parenting magazine.

#### Website download

If you have a website, consider providing a downloadable version of your brochure for people to print themselves. Even providing a way for prospects to request a copy can help you collect some more qualified leads.

However you choose to distribute your brochure, it's always important to track the results. Including a coded special offer can help you gauge the success of a piece. A benefit of creating your own marketing materials is that you can easily change and evolve your message as you learn what's effective and works best for you.

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