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## **Avoid These 10 Design Disasters When Creating Your Business' Marketing Materials**

**What *Not* to Do When Designing Marketing Pieces Yourself** - Avoid these 10 design disasters when you're creating your own materials.

Have you ever noticed how many articles there are on creating your own marketing materials? These articles concentrate on things you "should do," offering such clever advice as "Know your audience," "Say it with pictures" or "Write clearly and distinctly." Now I'm not saying any of that is bad advice. But you should also know what *not* to do. That's what this article is about. Or more specifically, it's about what most do-it-yourselfers are tempted to do--but shouldn't.

### **Nothing screams "Design Novice" like the following 10 mistakes:**

**1. Don't enlarge your logo so it's the main focus of the page.** Yes, your logo features the name of your company. But it's not the main point. People are interested in what you're selling, not who you are. In fact, the smaller your logo, the more established your company will appear. Besides, if they are interested in what you're selling or promoting, they will look to the bottom to find out where to get it.



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**2. Don't place your logo in the text of your piece.** Of course it's fine to use the name of your company in the text of any of your marketing materials, but inserting your actual logo into a headline or body copy is design suicide.

**3. Don't use every font at your disposal.** Choose one or two fonts for all your materials to build your brand. Your font choices should be consistent with your image and your industry. Cursive and creative fonts are often hard to read, know your audience's ability to read such things and they must still stand out.

**4. Don't use color indiscriminately.** More color doesn't necessarily make something more appealing. Often it just makes it loud and annoying. When someone screams at you, do you want to listen or run away? Most, if not all, your text should be the same color, preferably black for readability or red for a call to action. For a unique look, try duotone photographs or print in two colors. If you plan to use full color on a piece make sure you really utilize that color instead of just putting it in your logo for example and nowhere else – that's just a waste of color and you're paying extra for that. On the flip side, try not to use too many colors in the text; I've seen sometimes 5-7 colors in the text on just a business card and that makes nothing stand out plus it's hard to follow.

**5. Don't be redundant.** Don't repeat the name of your industry or product in your company name and your tagline and your headline. Potential customers know your industry. Restating it implies you don't.

**6. Don't choose low-quality or low-resolution photography.** A photo may look great in an album, but unless it features balanced lighting and good composition, it's not print-worthy. Photos need to be at least 300 dpi. And yes, people can tell the difference.



**7. Don't fill up every inch of white space on the page.** White space, or negative space, brings focus to what's important and gives the eye a rest. You may have a lot to say, but cramming it all in creates chaos and minimizes impact. Your piece will end up visually overwhelming. Think less, not more. Besides you should have a website now that people can go to for more detailed information.

**8. Don't focus on the details of your product or service; instead, focus on how it benefits your audience.** Unless your product is extremely technical, make your offering relevant to your audience by emphasizing its benefits, not its features. Otherwise it's like going to a party and talking about yourself all night. That's not exactly the best way to win friends or gain customers. Your heading and your message must hit your target market's "hot buttons" and what's in it for them?

**9. Don't do exactly what your competitors are doing.** When you're positioning your product, it's good to know your competition. But don't copy them. Find out what your customers want and are attracted to. Stand out without sticking out. If you can take your logo and place it in your competitor's ad and it applies and vice versa then you're not getting creative or unique enough with your message and you just look like everyone else. Besides, who knows if they're getting good response on their ads? They might not be.

**10. Don't change design styles with every marketing piece you create.** Strive for a consistent look and feel, keeping the same fonts and logo placement. If you use photos in one ad, don't use illustrations in another. If you place your logo in the middle of one brochure, don't place in at the top-right corner in another. You get the gist.



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Finally, *do* be clear, clean, compelling and consistent. You'll end up looking--and selling--like a pro. **K. Sawa Marketing can help you design, create and print as inexpensively as possible all your marketing materials, brochures, websites and more! Just ask.**

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### **About the Author**



Katrina Sawa, Small Biz Marketing Expert, helps entrepreneurs and small business owners build their database of clients and prospects, determine the best ways to market their business to their target market, teach them how to network, develop follow up systems, marketing and advertising plans and find ways to get free or low cost publicity which all lead to more customers and increased sales!

Katrina has been named "The Networking Queen" by her peers and clients ever since she founded her business in 2002. She was always found out mingling at chamber of commerce mixers, business networking events and expos and any event she could attend where her target market would be in attendance. Consistent networking and follow up is the primary reason Katrina has been so successful in her business.

An avid gardener, party planner and softball buff, Katrina enjoys the sunshine of Northern California. She grew up not too far from the Sacramento area and then received her B.S. in Business, Marketing Concentration, from California State University, Sacramento.

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