

Supporting Egypt's Processed Foods Export Industry

The Art of Brochures – Designing an Effective Brochure

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The logo for Abt Associates Inc. features the letters "Abt" in a large, white, serif font against a solid black rectangular background.

Abt Associates Inc.

THE ART OF BROCHURES

Putting Together an Effective Brochure

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Brochure Basics

Brochure Considerations – an Overview

- The Basic Start to Marketing Your Company
- 97 Percent of Marketing Directors Develop a Brochure
- A Brochure Positions Your Company in the Marketplace, and Communicates Your Business' Key Messages.
- Your Brochure Represents Your Company to Customers and Potential Customers When You Can't Be There to Represent it Personally.
- Every Brochure Consists of Two Components: Content and Style
- A Well-Done Brochure That Represents Your Business is a Critical Element of Any Business Development Plan.
- Content
- Style
- How Many Do I Print?

Does your company have a brochure? Should it? Consider these basics when making your decision.

So, you're going along in your food processing business, and savvy business person that you are, you are always on the lookout for innovative ways to reach new customers and retain your existing ones.

How many times has it crossed your mind, "Maybe what my company needs is a brochure?" You know, something tasteful and tangible to hand potential customers during a sales call, or to mail to them describing your services and presenting your company as the best one to meet their food distribution/retail needs.

It turns out that if you are considering developing a brochure for your business, you have hit upon POINT ONE of any marketing plan, be it simple or elaborate. So, right from the start, you're brilliant.

Now, just as an aside here: marketing consultants will tell you, and rightfully so, that marketing consists of more, *much more* than brochures. Marketing consists of strategies to identify your customers, find out what they need, determine what to charge them, tell them you have what they need and sell it to them efficiently and at a sustainable profit. Obviously, a brochure is only a small part of this whole process.

However, if a full marketing plan seems like too much to put on your plate on your first pass through the buffet line, (and let's face it, for many businesses it is) marketing consultants will also tell you that a brochure is a great place to start. In fact, a nationwide survey of marketing directors in 1991 revealed that 97 percent of firms used or planned to use a general brochure for promotion purposes.

Everyone knows what a brochure is. It can be as simple as a sheet of paper or card stock folded in half or in thirds with basic information typed out on a computer and

run off in black ink on a photocopying machine; or as elaborate as an oversized booklet laid out by a professional designer and printed on glossy paper stock with full-color printing and photographs.

A brochure can be part of a long-range plan to reach hundreds of new customers and increase business among the customers you already have, or a simple informative piece outlining your basic services and how to reach you that you present during a sales call.

Whatever it looks like, though, and however you use it to promote your business it pays to plan carefully because a brochure speaks volumes about your company

But when it's your brochure, where do you begin? And even more important, is it worth doing in the first place? Every businessperson must answer that last question for him or herself, but for this article's purposes we'll assume that the aforementioned 97 percent of marketing directors are on to something, and that having a brochure is indeed a good thing.

"A brochure is something that you can mail before or after a sales call, or take with you when you go on a sales call or to a trade show" said Jill Lewis of Jill Lewis Public Relations in Chicago. **"It positions your company in the marketplace, and communicates your business' key messages."**

Think of it this way: **Your brochure represents your company to customers and potential customers when you can't be there to represent it personally.**

Every brochure consists of two components: Content and style. Your brochure's content serves to introduce your products and services to your customers and potential customers, while your brochure's style communicates your business image, that is the size of your operation and of your intended market; even things like what kind of customer you typically serve and how committed you are to increasing your business are hinted at by the design of your marketing materials.

According to the United States Chamber of Commerce, writing an effective brochure involves 1) identifying your target audience, 2) outlining the benefits of your products and services, and 3) presenting this information in an eye-catching and easy-to-read format. Not so hard, when you think about it.

Content

In terms of content, which should be the first thing you decide, Lewis' first rule of thumb is to tout your company's capabilities. Think of the people you want to be your customers and ask yourself, 'what are their needs?' Then tell this audience how you can meet those needs. Highlight your strengths, and don't be shy about it. "You've got to blow your own horn," Lewis said. "You don't want to be the best-kept secret in town."

Remember to focus on your customers' needs and the needs of the people you want to be your customers rather than your own internal processes. As the old adage goes, you don't sell the drill, you sell the hole. "Are your customers' priorities budget

quality, fast turnaround, your track record, customer service, or follow-through, or all of the above?" Lewis asked. Your brochure should address those needs and explain how your company can meet them.

If you have the space, your brochure can include:

- Background on your company, such as when your business was established
- The industries or companies you already serve
- Any relevant association memberships
- Awards your company has won, and
- Highlights from your mission statement.

(A tip: To indicate how much experience your company has, use the year you were established, which never changes, rather than the number of years you've been in business, which changes every year. That way, your brochure won't go out of date as quickly.) **Finally, no brochure would be complete without telling people where you are and how to reach you.**

Style

As for style, or the appearance of your brochure, here the sky is the limit. What your brochure looks like will pretty much depend on three factors:

- 1) How much information you want to give your customers and potential customers,
- 2) How much attention you want them to pay to it, and
- 3) The all-important consideration of how much you want to pay for the notice they will pay to you.

Whatever you do, **don't underestimate the importance of the appearance of your brochure. Remember, it represents your company, and you want it to make a good impression.** Even more importantly, how your brochure looks can go a long way toward making it effective. We all know that if something is attractive, people will spend more time looking at it. And the more time someone spends considering your company's capabilities, the more likely they are to use them.

- So, invest in the design of your brochure
- Use more color rather than less
- Use photos or other art if you possibly can
- Pay attention to the typefaces your brochure contains
- Have it printed professionally on a good quality paper or card stock
- And don't forget to make your brochure's design compatible with your corporate letterhead and any other printed materials your company uses

"In terms of cost, a simple brochure that you write and design yourself and have professionally printed can cost as little as a few hundred dollars to produce, while a professionally produced four-color brochure with photographs, saddle-stitched pages, and heavy glossy paper stock can cost thousands," Lewis said.

If you don't want to pay for a four-color brochure, adding a second ink color and using a textured paper stock can be very effective, and an inexpensive computer clip-art program might have some good illustrations if your budget won't accommodate a photographer.

How many do I print?

The number of brochures you'll have printed depends, of course, on how you will use them and how long it will be before you update the piece.

Plan on sending or taking the brochure to each of your current customers, to everyone you want for a customer, and to referral sources—people who can refer new business to you. Also have enough on hand to take to trade shows, conventions and association meetings you attend.

There are no hard and fast rules about how many years' worth of brochures to have printed, but a few things to keep in mind. A good, basic design can last several years, according to Lewis, but should be updated as soon as any of the content, everything from your area code to your company's capabilities changes, or when design elements such as photographs, drawings or typefaces begin to look tired. "Obviously, you don't want to spend all of your time creating and updating marketing materials, but you don't want your company's image to look 'old hat,' either," Lewis said.

Finally, is all of this effort worth it? Is a brochure an effective marketing tool? "It's hard to measure, but it does make a difference" said Lewis. With all of the pressing business issues you face every day, working on a brochure might not seem to be the best way to spend valuable time. "A well-done brochure that represents your business is a critical element of any business development plan," said Lewis, who credits her own marketing materials for bringing in clients years after she mailed them out. "You can't have a sales force everywhere. You have to think, 'what would I do without it?'"

The Art Of Brochures

Brochure Content – Layout Considerations

- **First Impressions Can Make or Break Your Business**
- **Positioning Determines Your Marketing Message**
- **Writing Your Mission Statement**
- **An Effective Brochure Communicates Value**
- **Endorsements and Testimonials**
- **The Nitty Gritty Information**
- **The Front Cover**
- **The Back Cover**
- **The Miscellaneous Panel**
- **Discover and Communicate Your Uniqueness and Value**

Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could attract new business with much less effort, and turn more of your prospects into paying clients? The greatest challenge for any small business or start-up looking to acquire new business is being able to identify and attract people who have a need for their product or service and the money to fund that need. Most small businesses have difficulty attracting new clients because they haven't created a valuable and memorable identity that clearly distinguishes them from their competitors. Typically, most entrepreneurs and professionals are ineffective at articulating the uniqueness and value of their business offering—a critical tool for turning prospects into paying clients.

First Impressions Can Make or Break Your Business

Many subtle things can contribute to, or diminish how confident a prospect feels about what you have to offer; and usually that first impression is a lasting one. For example, if your marketing materials (or lack of them) look like you're just starting out on a shoestring budget, which can have a very diminishing effect on a potential client's feeling of confidence in your business. Every once in a while it's important to take a long, hard, objective look at how others first see your business.

- Do the outer things people see instill a first impression of confidence?
- Are you creating a perception of competence, value and success?
- Is your position in the marketplace clear?
- Is your marketing message unique and memorable?

Positioning Determines Your Marketing Message

Before a word of sales or marketing copy is ever written, a positioning strategy must be carefully developed. Your positioning should convey a unique and strong selling proposition that sets you apart from your competitors. Some questions to ask yourself before committing to a market position are:

- Who is my target market and what do they really want from me?
- What requests do my prospects have?
- What is my business promising to fulfill?
- What are our strengths and weaknesses?
- Who are our perceived competitors and what are their strengths and weaknesses?
- How are we unique?
- What are the personal values that drive our business?
- What are the trends and gaps in the current market place and how can we capitalize on them?

Writing Your Mission Statement

If you're on a tight budget and can't afford to get professional help at the moment you can still create a highly effective marketing leave-behind piece on your own. A well-articulated positioning statement can serve double duty as your corporate mission statement and be sent ahead on your letterhead (with your photo and signature) as an ice-breaker and rapport builder even before the first sales call is ever made.

An effective positioning statement should be the focal point of all of your marketing materials, and will accomplish the following:

- Connect your business with your target market both emotionally and logically.
- Build trust, confidence and personal rapport (even before the first sales call!)
- Position you as an expert.
- Convey uniqueness and personality with passion and believability.
- Promise tangible results and value.
- Communicate the personal values that guide and excite you and effect your ability to serve your clients in an exceptional way.
- Motivate the reader to request more information, call for an appointment or place an order.

We recommend that your statement be 150 words or less, 3-4 short paragraphs, written in first person, friendly, conversational English (as if you were speaking in person to the reader) and be equally emotional (communicating feeling and enthusiasm) and logical (promising measurable results and tangible benefits).

An Effective Brochure Communicates Value

In a successful marketing piece, everything must work together to support the marketing position and message. Although the copywriting should be persuasive and the design compelling, an effective brochure needs to exude confidence and convey a sense of quality, honesty and knowledge to your prospects. It needs to be written in your prospect's language (generic language is not very effective in the relational marketplace). Throw out the general words that mean all things to all people and substitute sensory-based data that relates to your prospect's personal experience.

Endorsements and Testimonials

It has been estimated that 95% of all people are followers and tend to do what their peers do. Because of this fact, we suggest that one panel of your brochure be devoted to testimonials from satisfied clients. Be sure that they point to specific benefits and results and that they are not just generic fluff! If you can get a testimonial from a well-respected expert in your field, we suggest highlighting it in a shaded box, so that it really stands out and gets the notice it deserves.

The Nitty Gritty Information

One panel of your brochure should be devoted to the products you provide and give your prospects some basic information about what you do, how you do it and who can benefit from what you're offering. It works best to bullet point as much of this information as possible, so the reader can scan for what interests him, instead of having to read every word. Be sure to also include a list of several tangible benefits your clients will receive; because the most important information in a brochure answers the question, "what's in it for the client". You may also want to come up with 3-4 qualifying questions that the reader can ask him/herself. It's like a self-test to determine whether they are a prospect for whatever it is you're offering.

The Front Cover

Keep the front cover attractive, but simple. Its purpose is to motivate the reader to pick up your brochure and open it. We recommend consulting with a professional designer or marketing consultant for creative ideas. Include your corporate logo and company name and a brief tag line or slogan.

The Back Cover

We recommend that the back cover of your brochure include a 3-4 paragraph corporate biography that instills confidence in your prospects that you possess the abilities and expertise to perform as promised; in other words, the biography positions you and your company as experts in your field. In the first paragraph tell readers what motivated you to start your business, and why you are the ideal company to be doing this. The second paragraph can highlight the education, credentials and accomplishments of the principals, along with a success story that illustrates the results and benefits you have achieved for other clients. The last paragraph could list professional affiliations, human-interest items about the company or its principals and any other pertinent information you may want to add. Don't forget to include all contact info. phone, address, fax, e-mail, etc.

The Miscellaneous Panel

This panel can be for any information that didn't fit elsewhere. For food processors, it can be very advantageous to list the kinds of projects you've handled in the past, or examples of typical client requests, or a client list, an action photo (you doing what you do), or any other pertinent information that will give a prospect more of an incentive to do business with you.

Discover and Communicate Your Uniqueness and Value

There are lots more to share if you really want to do a total and professional design and print package. But for now, you can put some of the aforementioned basics to work for you without spending any money. Your business, if it's like most, probably has a lot more going for it than your prospects (or even you) are aware of--so start discovering and communicating your uniqueness and value.

Six Steps to a Better Brochure

You only get one chance to make a first impression.

That old saying rings true for most businesses, but especially for a food processor. The moment a customer walks through the door, they begin to form lasting opinions about you and your product. Once formed, those opinions can be very difficult to change. That's why having a warm, friendly but professional looking reception area that exudes cleanliness and quality is essential for building the right image in your customers' minds.

For many companies, however, that critical first impression begins to take shape long before the customer ever sets foot in your office. In fact, it starts the moment someone picks up your brochure and begins to read about you. If they don't like what they see, or if your message turns them off, you may never have another chance at catching their attention -- and their business -- again.

Obviously, customers don't choose suppliers solely on the quality of their brochures. But a well-written brochure can play an important role in helping to build your customer base. To create an effective brochure that conveys the message you want prospective customers to read, keep the following principles in mind:

1. **Understand the brochure's purpose.** The primary goal with a brochure is to get potential customers to take the next step in the buying process. So in addition to including your name, location, phone number and the products you provide, it also needs to motivate people to take action. In the case of food products, that action typically involves a phone call, e-mail or fax to learn more about your company and its products or to schedule an appointment.
2. **Sell benefits, not features.** To motivate people to take action, sell benefits, not features. People already know that you provide food products. Those products represent the features of your business. The benefits include things like filling a market niche, targeting a certain market segment, guaranteeing a sanitary product, or providing a quality product consistently and on time.
3. **Be concise.** In today's world, people are bombarded with unsolicited information. As a result, they won't take the time to read long-winded, poorly written marketing messages. To get and keep their attention with your brochure, get to the point fast. Use simple, easy-to-read language that provides educational, benefit-oriented information.
4. **Give people a reason to read beyond the headline.** Two brochures sit side by side. The first one says, "Herbs and Spices Supply Company." The second one says, "Five Good Reasons to Make Nile Herbs and Spices Company Your Supplier of Choice." Nine out of ten people will read the second brochure first. Why? Because it offers a promise of new and useful information. If you want people to read your brochure, give them a reason for doing so.
5. **Build trust.** At best, most people dislike changing suppliers. At worst, they fear it. To overcome that fear, your brochure needs to build trust. Include pictures of well-packaged products or internationally competitive processing lines. List your capabilities, certifications and years of experience. Highlight any awards you have received. Above all, let your customers know that you want their business and intend to keep it by providing good customer service and after sales support.
6. **Include a call to action.** A good brochure always includes a call to action. It doesn't have to be an aggressive sales pitch, just a friendly reminder to take the next step in the buying process. For example: "To find out why we should be partners in the food business, call 20.2.315.0000, or fax 20.2.315.0005."

Or, "Let Nile Herbs and Spices Company provide you with your next requirements. Contact us today to receive an offer."

Methods of Selling to Consider

Mix & Match:

- Customize your brochure for a specific market or an individual customer? Use inserts to target a customer or promote benefits.
- Logo & Brand Name – coalescing item
- You can't always be there to shake hands
- First impressions are critical

Expand the Idea

- Think of each insert as an independent advertisement
- Include an insert with a punch-out rotary card
- Need for speed? Use your laser printer & trim to fit
- Include a cover letter inside on a mini-letterhead
- Keep your name in front of the customer – new insert, follow-up, etc.
- Print a company profile inside the front cover (who are we?)
- Build a form for placing orders or gathering research on your company
- Include a postcard
- Include a business reply card so your prospect can request a proposal or visit
- Expanding your product lines or growing the company? Inserts are a perfect answer

Hard Sell vs. Soft Sell

Hard Sell:

- Techniques for grabbing attention
- Confidently presenting the compelling benefits of an idea, product or service
- Asking a prospect to take a specific action
- It does not deceive, intimidate; it deals with the truth
- Hopes to initiate a sell with a one time exposure to the message
- Hard sell headlines speak in the language of benefits – use the appropriate typeface – clear, strong & confident, exotic, etc. Use for emphasis
- Direct the action
- Illustrations tell a story
- Talk specifics
- Hard Sell layouts are designed like signs
- Anticipates outcomes

Soft Sell:

- "Welcome. Come look around. Get a feel for who we are and how we can help you."

- Sell the look and feel of the company & its products, where a hard sell would list specific items & sale prices
- Present an overall view of a service or product, where a hard sell makes specific, actionable offers
- Hopes to cultivate a customer over a series of repeated exposures
- More appropriate for building relationships – long term customers

10 SECRETS HOW TO CREATE MONEY-MAKING BROCHURE DESIGNS

"Appearance isn't everything" goes the old adage, and it's quite true --except when it comes to your brochure where it's of vital importance. Every day we're bombarded with an ever-increasing quantity of printed matter.

More and more graphic material comes flooding into our mail-boxes, clamoring for our attention. This visual competition makes it imperative that your brochure stands out from the rest of the pack. Its impact on your prospective client must be both immediate and striking. **There will never be a second chance for you to make a great first impression.** And just what is it that give us a great first impression? Simple. A great design.

The only mystery in designing a great brochure is that so many people think that designing is a mystery. There is no mystery. We are all designers and make design decisions every day. Choosing a green and white striped tie instead of one with polka dots is a design decision. So is the way you arrange your bookcase or the way you comb your hair. We are all born with a certain sense of design. In most of us, it remains rather undeveloped. But with practice and persistence, you can develop these design skills. If you have common sense, learn to pay more attention to detail, and aren't afraid to experiment, you, too, can create great looking, effective, money-making brochures. There are no hard and fast rules when it comes to good design. What works well in one design may be totally inappropriate in another

Yet there are certain elements that are essential in the creation of a well-designed brochure. These elements can be summed up as the following secrets

1. Look--then try to see
2. Kiss your design
3. Two B's or not two B's
4. Remember nothing
5. Less is more
6. Blow it out of proportion
7. Put on the right face
8. Coloring by the numbers
9. Following the paper trail
10. The Devil's in the details

Secret #1: Look--Then Try To See. Take the time to collect and study the brochures you like and don't like. Try to see just what it is that looks appealing to you in one design and not another. The more accustomed you become to analyzing and

seeing what you are looking at, the more you will develop your sensitivity to good design.

Secret #2: Kiss Your Design: Keep-It-Simple-Silly! So many great brochure designs have been torpedoed because this simple element was overlooked, ignored or forgotten. Incorporate only that which is essential to the effective communication of your message. If a particular graphic element is serving basically as ornamentation, ask yourself if it is helping to direct or focus the reader's attention or if it's actually distracting him. One designer reports having once had a client who was advertising hand-painted Easter eggs. He originally wanted a design that consisted of an Easter basket with his hand-painted egg inside. Working together, they eventually came up with a beautiful straw basket lined with some exquisitely rendered pieces of straw. After studying and admiring this composition, however, they realized that the basket was stealing the show and distracting attention away from the eggs. They ended up creating a piece that consisted of only one close-up view of a finely detailed, hand-painted egg with two concise phrases positioned underneath.

Secret #3: Two B's Or Not Two B's. Be parsimonious with your bars and boxes. Don't get us wrong. Boxes, borders and bars have their uses, such as directing one's attention and separating busy areas--but too many can make your brochure design end up looking like...well, a box of BB's--dense, packed, heavy and static. Let those BB's out. Let'em roll. Let'em bounce. Let'em dance!

Secret #4: Remember "Nothing." This is one of the most unappreciated elements of graphic design. "Nothing" is all those empty spaces between and around graphic objects as well as lines of text that define their relationship to each other and bring into focus their distinctness on the page. The amount of "nothing" in a design affects its overall tone of lightness or heaviness. "Nothing" provides the eye with anchoring and resting places as it sweeps across the "somethings."

Secret #5: Less Is More. You've got to get your message organized and crystallized to be able to create an effective brochure design. Put as much planning into your brochure as you would any other important project. Carefully define its purpose and create a hierarchy of the various components of your message. The clearer you are about their sequence and importance, the better your designs will be. Make sketches and move the various elements around. Don't be afraid to experiment. Repositioning one element can radically alter the design. And remember to KISS it constantly. Be ruthless as you prune down cute but unnecessary blah, blah, blah that doesn't help to clearly communicate your message.

Secret #6: Blow It Out Of Proportion. After you have made a hierarchical list that establishes the relative importance and sequence of the particular components in your message, you will be ready to consider how to treat each of the components in your message. The most important items at the top of your list should obviously receive more of your reader's attention. They would, therefore, be larger, bolder, brighter, or in some other way made to stand out from the rest of your message. It is this constant tension between the consistency and symmetry of the whole versus the contrast contained in the objects selected to stand out that gives movement and life to the design.

Secret #7: Put On The Right Face. Is your message humorous, formal, authoritative, classy or friendly? Choose a typeface that expresses the "feel" of your message and doesn't interfere with the clarity of its communication. Avoid using more than two or three typefaces. Too many are distracting and confusing to the eye. The type size of individual design components should be determined by their relative importance in the brochure. The space between lines is as crucial as the words and lines themselves. Stay away from excessive underlining. It can cause clutter and interfere with legibility.

Secret #8: Coloring By The Numbers. Color increases the numbers of your budget's bottom line. Some of the most effective brochures are done in only one or two colors. Black and white can often be more dramatic than color. There are hundreds of paper colors available. You can use dark blue or green ink instead of black that can be applied in different shades to different parts of your brochure, thereby giving it a lot more variety and richness.

Secret #9: Following The Paper Trail. Paper comes in all sizes, colors, textures and coated and uncoated. Coated paper will give more depth and brilliance to your colors. Ask your printer about recycled and synthetic papers. There's quite a lot of it available, and it's quite beautiful. Recycled paper is good for your business and good for trees. But using recycled paper can add to your brochure cost because it is generally more expensive than regular paper.)

Secret #10: The Devil Is In The Details. Minute differences in line weight, color and spacing can make the difference between a mediocre brochure and a great one. And remember – you can't proofread your final design enough before sending it out to be printed. The best designers in the business have at one time or another let some silly mistake slip past them. Once your brochure goes to the printer, it's too late to correct it. All you can do then is kick and holler. So proof and proof again!

The Effective Brochure, a checklist

Brochure Checklist

Many of the items in this list are optional. You must decide which ones are appropriate for your brochure.

For evaluation place a number in the blank to rate the effectiveness of the brochure.

1 = No, not at all 2 = About average 3 = Yes, very much

1. Name of Location, Business or Organization.

Address.

Phone Number.

Fax Number.

E-mail Address.

Web Page Address.
2. Headline that creates curiosity, states a major benefit, or otherwise entices the reader to open and read your brochure.
3. Headline that states the name of the Product, Project, or Described Process.
4. Subheadings.
5. Short, easy to read blocks of text.
6. Lists. Charts.
7. Key Benefits (2-3)
8. Features.
9. Instructions, steps, parts (for a procedure, to assemble a product, etc.)
10. Biography (of business owner, key members of organization, officers, etc.)
11. Mission Statement.
12. History.
13. Logo.
14. Graphic Image(s). (including purely decorative elements)
15. Photographs of product, place, people.
16. Diagram, flow chart.
17. Map.
18. Call to Action (What you want the reader to do: call, visit, fill out a form, etc.)