

Christmas in July – Human Marketing Through Holiday Cards

✘ *I'm always a fan of the super human approach to doing business. And who doesn't like to get reminded that someone out there appreciates their business? Here at SBT, our take on this usually involves sparing no expense on card stock (seriously, think American Psycho levels of overthinking it), handwritten obscure literary quotes, and sent just about whenever we darn well please. Sarah Ross from Inwood Greeting Cards thinks if it's work doing, it's worth doing right, so here's her take:*

-Seth

In today's always-connected world, you have endless opportunities to digitally connect with your customers and business associates. A dashed-off email takes very little time, and is a great way to let a large group of people know about a special sale or promotional event. However, the flip side is that yours is far from the only business doing just that. Every time your contacts open their email, they are bombarded with digital advertising of every description.

To cut through the clutter and make a real impression, try sending out printed holiday cards instead. A handwritten message is unexpected, makes the recipient feel good, and gives you a few uninterrupted moments of that person's time. What you send and when you send it can make a real difference in how it is interpreted. Follow these 5 tips to make the best impression every time.

1. Choose unexpected holidays

There's nothing wrong with sending a card on Christmas or New Year's, but those are busy times for both business and personal card exchanges. Recipients are distracted, their snail mail boxes are overflowing, and they may not have time to truly appreciate what you have to say.

Why not send a card at a more unexpected time instead? The recipient's birthday is a great time to offer a special promotion. Halloween is perfect for businesses that serve families or deal in costumes or special effects. Thanksgiving and Fourth of July are all-American times to reach out to customers in the U.S., while Memorial Day and Veterans Day provide tremendous opportunities for those who support the military. Bring up a list of holidays online, and figure out which ones work best with your particular line of business and target market.

2. Make it catchy but classy

While emails are quickly deleted, archived, or ignored, many people save printed cards. They might even be shared with friends or displayed in the home or office. To increase the odds of your card being kept, choose an eye-catching design that is aesthetically pleasing. Avoid anything that is too extreme or not family-friendly.

3. Incorporate branding

Your holiday cards are a great way to enhance your brand. The colors and design do not need to match your overall advertising scheme, but they shouldn't go off in a wildly different direction. For example, a healthcare provider will do best with colors that reflect healing and hope, while a fireworks supplier would do well to stick to bright graphics.

Find a way to incorporate your logo, catch phrase, or other

element that solidly supports your overall brand. Be careful with this, though, as you don't want your card to come off as just another piece of direct mail. Exercise restraint by remembering that less is more.

4. Personalize without getting personal

Make the time to hand write a personalized message that acknowledges your existing relationship and states your reason for making contact. This ensures that your contact feels valuable, which can encourage him to further the relationship by making another purchase or providing a referral.

At the same time, remember that your relationship is a business one. Don't veer off into personal territory, which could make the recipient feel uncomfortable. Even if your wording is strictly professional, remember that religion is a highly personal matter. Avoid sending religious cards of any sort unless you are positive that your contact shares your religious beliefs.

5. Stay on target

A holiday card gives you the opportunity to further your business by making an individual pitch. Before you start writing, however, think about your reasons for sending the card. Are you hoping for a referral? Do you want the person to make another purchase? Are you trying to open a networking relationship with a business associate?

A holiday card is not the appropriate venue for a hard sell, but there is nothing wrong with clearly stating your request. Keep it short and simple, and close with a call to action that tells the recipient exactly how to follow up. For example, you might ask her to call a direct phone number or enter a discount code online.

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[Cards](#) can help. We offer personalized greeting cards for all events, suitable for business use.