

Speak directly to the customer. “We help you...” Use headings and subheadings to group ideas and help the reader focus on items that are of interest to him or her. Avoid industry jargon and acronyms. Use clear language that everyone can understand.

Microsoft Word allows you to create multiple columns for brochures under the format tab. Word allows you to create basic brochures and import pictures from saved sources. Professional design programs such as Adobe InDesign, Adobe Page-Maker or Quark XPress offer additional flexibility in creating your design and print the design at a printing service.

Specific Panel Design

Front Cover

Don't just name your product on the front cover, or your logo. Instead, develop a theme that captures attention and interest. Use your theme as a headline for your front cover and repeat throughout the brochure. Include a customer benefit, clearly stated or implied, whenever possible.

Back Cover

Don't put anything on the back cover other than contact information. This is the panel that people are least likely to read, so if you put an important message there, it will be lost.

Inside Front Panel - first panel you see when the brochure is opened

This is the most important panel. Use it to summarize why the customer should choose you. It is a good location for a glowing testimonial. Although this is the most important panel, write it last. If you craft the inside spread first, you will have a better idea of what you want to summarize on the inside front panel.

The inside front panel also is a great place for your phone number and/or web site address.

Inside Three Panels

When the brochure is fully open, there are three full panels to write a description of your business and what it does. Carry the brochure theme over into your inside panels.

Use images, subheads, captions and body copy that continue your front cover theme throughout the brochure.

Grab attention. Describe your top benefits. Present proof. Ask for the order.

Once the copy is completed work on making it shorter and more descriptive. If you or your designer has created a consistent visual look to your advertising with repeated images, graphics or colors, continue it in your brochure. The familiarity will be immediately recognizable to the reader.

How To Talk To Your Customers In Your Brochure

- Ask your employees to write the brochure copy. Or ask some of your better customers to help write it. You may be surprised at what you get.
- Try to eliminate as many decisions as possible in your text copy. Assume the customer will eventually buy the product or service. Don't use the words, if and maybe.
- Never ask open-ended questions in a brochure. Questions should be phrased so the answer is “YES.”
- Businesses should list the many important features of their products. Customers will not care about any feature unless there is a benefit to them. A feature is what a product has. A benefit is what a product does. The more benefits the product has, the better.
- You want your brochure to sound and look professional. A good brochure reads like a conversation, not a manuscript.

Brochure No-No's

- Do not use more than nine or ten lines of type per paragraph.
- Do not average more than two or three sentences per paragraph.
- Do not indent paragraphs that have a space between them.
- Do not start sentences with numbers.

- Do not put two spaces after periods if using a computer. Page layout and word processing programs put the proper spacing after periods automatically.
- Do not use underline or all capitals as a way to stress a point. Use bold or italics instead.
- Use italic and all capitals sparingly as they are hard for people to read.

How To Get Started

- Go to your local Chamber of Commerce, economic development office or a major hotel and look for a large rack of brochures. Stand back and look at the rack. Which brochures catch your eye? Which ones do you want to pick up? Is it because of the ink color, typeface, headline, paper color or visual design?
- Now, look again. Take out some of the brochures you didn't select and ask the following:
 - Why didn't you look at them?
 - Can you find something specific that made you skip right over them?
- Was it the lack of an eye-catching graphic?
- Was it a hard to read type-face?
- Did the headline lack sales appeal? Was it a label instead of a call to action?
- Was it because the design of the rack hid the real message?
- Was it because it was printed on a blah color or paper?
- Set up some basic ideas and blocks of text on a folded piece of 8 1/2 x 11 paper. Does your text flow well? Does the copy seem logical for those panel placements? What images/theme would benefit this copy and sell the brochure?
- If you decide to create the brochure yourself, begin laying it out in Microsoft Word in the column format or consult with a professional and present your ideas for your brochure design, which will then be completed in a design program.

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... and justice for all

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