

The Importance of Business Cards

The exchanging of business cards is as close to a universal ritual as you can find in the business world

The ritual may be universal, but the design of business cards and how they are swapped vary across countries. Architects have their artistic cards; lawyers like it black; the Japanese make the exchange of cards an informal ceremony. While there are cards for the deceased, and obituaries are often crammed full of cards and tributes. Some business people hand out 24-carat gold cards, and there are kidney exchange cards with what not only with the new contact details, but also with the job descriptions of their parents and even grandparents. This practice has become so common in parts of New York. For example, that the use of such cards is now prohibited by some of the area's institutions.

Cards have been around a long time. One form or another. The Chinese invented the paper notice that the intending to pay them a visit, but they were for social purposes only. Later in the 17th century, European businesspeople invented a new type of card to act as miniature advertisements. In today's world, business cards can cause people to have strong reactions ranging from hatred to embarrassment and respect. However, only very few changes can provoke more heated discussions among people more interested in social norms than functionality, the swapping of business cards.

Lots of companies try to promote themselves by designing the card. Employees at one famous toy company gave out little plastic figures containing contact details stamped on them. One fast-food company has business cards which are shaped like a portion of French fries. A Canadian flower shop once gave each customer a wooden card to redeem in their store for each of the bouquets. For many business commentators, such gimmicky business cards prove that the use of paper cards will ultimately end at an end. After all, why bother exchanging bits of thick paper at all when you can simply swap electronic versions by smartphone?

However, one can just as well argue the opposite: that business cards have a lot to say, and in a business world full of meetings and correspondence, it is more important than ever that your card is noticed. Attempts to reinvent business cards for the digital age have not been successful. Even all the latest technology won't help people get selected after handing out a little rectangle of paper rather than using a digital file format.

The traditional business card is necessary to understand how business works. Business cards are thriving in a digital age. It is a powerful reminder that there is much about business that is timeless. According to Kate Jones, a business lecturer, there is one element and inescapable issue. Her 2006 study of more than 200 business executives in North America found that it was the key element for running a successful business. You need to be able to look someone in the eye and shake that sort of person; they are. In this way, you can transform acquaintanceships into relationships. A good proportion of business life will always be about building social connections — having dinner or playing sport with clients and colleagues — and while computers can deal with administrative tasks, it is still human skills that have to function on another level.

The rapid advance of globalisation means that this relationship-building process is becoming ever more demanding. Managers have to put more effort into dealing with international counterparts, especially when there is not a common language, which is so often the case these days. A recent UK survey showed that chief executives of global organisations must routinely spend three out of every four weeks on international travel. It is in these situations that business cards are doubly useful as they are a quick way of establishing connections. Cards can also remind you that you have actually met someone in a face-to-face meeting rather than just searched for them on the internet. Looking through piles of different cards can enhance your memory in ways that simply looking through old-time electronic lists would never do.

Janet McIntyre is a leading expert on business cards in today's world. She maintains that as companies become more complex, cards are essential in determining the exact status of every contact you meet in multinational corporations. Janet also explains how exchanging business cards can be an effective way of initiating a conversation because it gives people a ritual to follow when they first meet a new business contact.

The business world is obsessed with the idea of creating and inventing new things that will change the way we do everything, and this does lead to progress. But there are lots of things that do not need to be changed and in Janet McIntyre's view, tradition also has an equally valuable role to play. Therefore, the practice of exchanging business cards is likely to continue in the business world.

Questions 1–5

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 1?

In boxes 1–5 on your answer sheet, write:

TRUE if the statement agrees with the information

FALSE if the statement contradicts the information

NOT GIVEN if there is no information on this

- 1 Children's business cards have been banned in some kindergartens.
- 2 It was the Chinese who first began the practice of using business cards.
- 3 Designing business cards can be a controversial process for some companies.
- 4 A famous toy company has boosted their sales using one type of unusual business card.
- 5 Some business commentators predict a decline in the use of paper business cards.

Questions 6–13

Complete the notes below.

Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 6–13 on your answer sheet.

How business works

Kate Jones's research

- The most important aspect of business is having 6. _____ in others.
- 7. _____ do not have the ability to establish the good relationships essential to business.

Business and globalisation

- Managers must work harder when they don't share the same 8. _____ with their contacts.
- A UK survey indicates that 9. _____ takes up the largest part of business leaders' time.
- A business person's 10. _____ of a meeting can be improved by looking at business cards.

Janet McIntyre

- Business cards clearly show the 11. _____ of each person in a large company.
- The ritual of swapping business cards is a good way of starting a 12. _____ at the beginning of a business relationship.
- Janet feels that in the business world, 13. _____ is just as important as innovation.

READING PASSAGE 2

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 14-26, which are based on Reading Passage 2 on pages 6 and 7.

Questions 14-19

The reading Passage has six paragraphs A-F

Choose the correct heading for each paragraph from the list of headings below.

Write the correct number, i-viii, in boxes 1-6 on your answer sheet.

List of Headings

- i Different areas of professional expertise
- ii Reasons why it is unfair to criticise lawyers
- iii The disadvantages of the legal system
- iv The law applies throughout our lives v The law has affected historical events
- vi A negative regard for lawyers vii public's increasing ability to influence the law
- viii growth in laws

14..... Paragraph A

15..... Paragraph B

16..... Paragraph C

17..... Paragraph D

18..... Paragraph E

19..... Paragraph F

The importance of law

A The law influences all of us virtually all the time, it governs almost all aspects of our behavior, and even what happens to us when we are no longer alive. It affects us from the embryo onwards. It governs the air we breathe, the food and drink we consume, our travel, family relationships, and our property. It applies at the bottom of the ocean and in space. Each time we examine a label on a food product, engage in work as an employee or employer, travel on the roads, go to school to learn or to teach, stay in a hotel, borrow a library book, create or dissolve a commercial company, play sports, or engage the services of someone for anything from plumbing a sink to planning a city, we are in the world of law.

B Law has also become much more widely recognised as the standard by which behavior needs to be judged. A very telling development in recent history is the way in which the idea of law has permeated all parts of social life. The universal standard of whether something is socially tolerated is progressively becoming whether it is legal, rather than something that has always been considered acceptable. In earlier times, most people were illiterate. Today, by contrast, a vast number of people can read, and it is becoming easier for people to take an interest in law, and for the general population to help actually shape the law in many countries. However, law is a versatile instrument that can be used equally well for the improvement or the degradation of humanity.

C This, of course, puts law in a very significant position. In our rapidly developing world, all sorts of skills and knowledge are valuable. Those people, for example, with knowledge of computers, the internet, and communications technology are relied upon by the rest of us. There is now someone with IT skills or an IT help desk in every UK school, every company, every hospital, every local and central government office. Without their knowledge, many parts of commercial and social life today would seize up in minutes. But legal understanding is just as vital and as universally needed. The American comedian Jerry Seinfeld put it like this, 'We are all throwing the dice, playing the game, moving our pieces around the board, but if there is a problem, the lawyer is the only person who has read the inside of the top of the box.' In other words, the lawyer is the only person who has read and made sense of the rules.

D The number of laws has never been greater. In the UK alone, about 35 new Acts of Parliament are produced every year, thereby delivering thousands of new rules. The legislative output of the British Parliament has more than doubled in recent times from 1,100 pages a year in the early 1970s, to over 2,500 pages a year today. Between 1997 and 2006, the legislature passed 365 Acts of Parliament and more than 32,000 legally binding statutory instruments. In a system with so much law, lawyers do a great deal not just to vindicate the rights of citizens and organizations but also to help develop the law through legal arguments, some of which are adapted by judges to become laws. Law courts can and do produce new law and revise old law, but they do so having heard the arguments of lawyers.

E However, despite their important role in developing the rules, lawyers are not universally admired. Anti-lawyer jokes have a long history going back to the ancient Greeks. More recently the son of a famous Hollywood actor was asked at his junior school what his father did for a living, to which he replied, 'My daddy is a movie actor, and sometimes he plays the good guy, and sometimes he plays the lawyer. For balance, though, it is worth remembering

that there are and have been many heroic and revered lawyers such as the Roman philosopher and politician Cicero and Mahatma Gandhi, the Indian campaigner for independence.

People sometimes make comments that characterise lawyers as professionals whose concerns put personal reward above truth, or who gain financially from misfortune. There are undoubtedly lawyers that would fit that bill, Just as there are some scientists, Journalists and others In that category, But, In general, it is no more Just to say that lawyers are bad because they make a living from people's problems than it is to make the same accusation In respect of nurses or IT consultants, A great many lawyers are involved in public law work, such as that Involving civil liberties, housing and other Issues. Such work Is not lavishly remunerated and the quality of the service provided by these lawyers relies on considerable professional dedication, Moreover, much legal work has nothing to do with conflict or misfortune, but is primarily concerned with drafting documents, Another source of social disaffection for lawyers, and disaffection for the law, is a limited public understanding of how law works and how It could be changed. Greater clarity about these issues, maybe as a result of better public relations, would reduce many aspects of public dissatisfaction with the law.

Questions 20-21

Choose TWO letters, A-E.

Write the correct letters in boxes 7-8 on your answer sheet.

Which TWO of the following statements does the writer make about legal skills in today's world?

- A There should be a person with legal training in every hospital.
- B Lawyers with experience in commercial law are the most in demand.
- C Knowledge of the law is as important as having computer skills.
- D Society could not function effectively without legal experts.
- E Schools should teach students about the law.

Questions 22-26

Complete the summary below.

Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 22-26 on your answer sheet.

Lawyers as professionals

People sometimes say that **22**..... is of little interest to lawyers, who are more concerned with making money. This may well be the case with some individuals, in the same way that some **23**..... or scientific experts may also be driven purely by financial greed. However, criticising lawyers because their work is concerned with people's problems would be similar to attacking IT staff or **24**..... for the same reason. In fact, many lawyers focus on questions relating, for example, to housing or civil liberties, which requires them to have **25**..... to their work. What's more, a lot of lawyers' time is spent writing **26**..... rather than dealing with people's misfortunes.

READING PASSAGE 3

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 27-40, which are based on Reading Passage 3 on pages 9 and 10

The Voynich Manuscript

The starkly modern Beinecke Library at Yale University is home to some of the most valuable books in the world: first folios of Shakespeare, Gutenberg Bibles and manuscripts from the early Middle Ages. Yet the library's most controversial possession is an unprepossessing vellum manuscript about the size of a hardback book, containing 240-odd pages of drawings and text of unknown age and authorship. Catalogued as MS408, the manuscript would attract little attention were it not for the fact that the drawings hint at esoteric knowledge, while the text seems to be some sort of code - one that no-one has been able to break. It's known to scholars as the Voynich manuscript, after the American book dealer Wilfrid Voynich, who bought the manuscript from a Jesuit college in Italy in 1912.

Over the years, the manuscript has attracted the attention of everyone from amateur dabblers to top codebreakers, all determined to succeed where countless others have failed. Academic research papers, books and websites are devoted to making sense of the contents of the manuscript, which are freely available to all. 'Most other mysteries involve secondhand reports,' says Dr Gordon Rugg of Keele University, a leading Voynich expert. But this is one that you can see for yourself.

It is certainly strange: page after page of drawings of weird plants, astrological symbolism and human figures, accompanied by a script that looks like some form of shorthand. What does it say and what are the drawings about? Voynich himself believed that the manuscript was the work of the 13th-century English monk Roger Bacon, famed for his knowledge of alchemy, philosophy and science. In 1921 Voynich's view that Bacon was the writer appeared to win support from the work of William Newbold, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania, who claimed to have found the key to the cipher system used by Bacon. According to Newbold, the manuscript proved that Bacon had access to a microscope centuries before they were supposedly first invented. The claim that this medieval monk had observed living cells created a sensation. It soon became clear, however, that Newbold had fallen victim to wishful thinking. Other scholars showed that his 'decoding' methods produced a host of possible interpretations. The Voynich manuscript has continued to defy the efforts of world-class experts. In 1944, a team was assembled to tackle the mystery, led by William Friedman, the renowned American codebreaker. They began with the most basic codebreaking task: analysing the relative frequencies of the characters making up the text, looking for signs of an underlying structure. Yet Friedman's team soon found themselves in deep water. The precise size of the alphabet of the Voynich manuscript was unclear. It's possible to make out more than 70 distinct symbols among the 170,000-character text. Furthermore, Friedman discovered that some words and phrases appeared more often than expected in a standard language, casting doubt on claims that the manuscript concealed a real language, as encryption typically reduces word frequencies.

Friedman concluded that the most plausible resolution of this paradox was that 'Voynichese' is some sort of specially created artificial language, whose words are devised from concepts, rather than linguistics. So, could the Voynich manuscript be the earliest known example of an

artificial language? Friedman's hypothesis commands respect because of the lifetime of cryptanalytical expertise he brought to bear.' says Rob Churchill, co-author of *The Voynich Manuscript*, that still leaves a host of questions unanswered, however, such as the identity of the author and the meaning of the bizarre drawings. 'It does little to advance our understanding of the manuscript as a whole. says Churchill. Even though Friedman was working more than 60 years ago, he suspected that major insights would come from using the device that had already transformed codebreaking: the computer. In this he was right - it is now the key tool for uncovering clues about the manuscript's language

The insights so far have been perplexing. For example, in 2001 another leading Voynich scholar, Dr Gabriel Landin of Birmingham University in the UK, published the results of his study of the manuscript using a pattern-detecting method called spectral analysis. This revealed evidence that the manuscript contains genuine words, rather than random nonsense. consistent with the existence of some underlying natural language. Yet the following year, Voynich expert Ren Zandbergen of the European Space Agency in Darmstadt, Germany showed that the entropy of the text (a measure of the rate of transfer of information) was consistent with Friedman's suspicions that an artificial language had been used.

Many are convinced that the Voynich manuscript isn't a hoax. For how could a medieval hoaxer create so many telltale signs of a message from random nonsense? Yet even this has been challenged in new research by Rugg. Using a system, first published by the Italian mathematician Girolamo Cardano in 1550 in which a specially constructed grille issued to pick out symbols from a table, Rugg found he could rapidly generate text with many of the basic traits of the Voynich manuscript. Publishing his results in 2004 Rugg stresses that he hadn't set out to prove the manuscript a hoax. 'I simply demonstrated that it's feasible to hoax something this complex in a few months'. he says. Inevitably, others beg to differ. Some scholars, such as Zandbergen, still suspect the text has genuine meaning, though believe it may never be decipherable. Others, such as Churchill, have suggested that the sheer weirdness of the illustrations and text hint at an author who had lost touch with reality. What is clear is that the book-sized manuscript kept under lock and key at Yale University has lost none of its fascination. "Many derive great intellectual pleasure from solving puzzles.' says Rugg. The Voynich manuscript is as challenging a puzzle as anyone could ask for.

Questions 27-30

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 3?

In boxes 27-30 on your answer sheet, write

TRUE if the statement agrees with the information

FALSE if the statement contradicts the information

NOT GIVEN if there is no information on this

27 It is uncertain when the Voynich manuscript was written.

28 Wilfrid Voynich donated the manuscript to the Beinecke Library.

29 Interest in the Voynich manuscript extends beyond that of academics and professional codebreakers.

30 The text of the Voynich manuscript contains just under 70 symbols.

Questions 31-34

Look at the following statements (Questions 31-34) and the list of people below.

Match each statement with the correct person, **A-H**.

Write the correct letter. **A-H**, in boxes 31-34 on your answer sheet

31 The number of times that some words occur make it unlikely that the manuscript is based on an authentic language

32 Unlike some other similar objects of fascination, people can gain direct access to the Voynich manuscript.

33 The person who wrote the manuscript may not have been entirely sane.

34 It is likely that the author of the manuscript is the same person as suggested by Wilfrid Voynich

List of People

A Gordon Rugg

B Roger Bacon

C William Newbold

D William Friedman

E Rob Churchill

F Gabriel Landini

G Ren Zandbergen

H Girolamo Cardano

Questions 35–39

Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 35–39 on your answer sheet.

Voynich Researchers

William Newbold believed that the author of the Voynich manuscript had been able to look at cells through a **35** _____. Other researchers later demonstrated that there were flaws in his argument.

William Friedman concluded that the manuscript was written in an artificial language that was based on **36** _____. He couldn't find out the meaning of this language but he believed that the **37** _____ would continue to bring advances in code breaking.

Dr Gabriel Landini used a system known as **38** _____ in his research, and claims to have demonstrated the presence of genuine words.

Dr Gordon Rugg's system involved a grille, that made it possible to quickly select symbols that appeared in a **39** _____. Rugg's conclusion was that the manuscript lacked genuine meaning.

Question 40

Choose the correct letter, **A, B, C or D**

Write the correct letter in box 40 on your answer sheet.

The writer's main aim in this passage is to

- A** explain the meaning of the manuscript.
- B** determine the true identity of the manuscript's author.
- C** describe the numerous attempts to decode the manuscript.
- D** identify which research into the manuscript has had the most media coverage.