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Rules On Good Catalog Design

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Summary:

Maybe you own a store or maybe you work out of your home and have great products to offer your customers. Getting the word out about your store or products locally is essential to your business, but what about people who are not local? Are you missing out on the opportunity to sell to people who do not live close to you?

A website is of course one option, but one of the basic rules of sales is that you need to get the product into the customer's hands? How do you do that i...

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Article Body:

Maybe you own a store or maybe you work out of your home and have great products to offer your customers. Getting the word out about your store or products locally is essential to your business, but what about people who are not local? Are you missing out on the opportunity to sell to people who do not live close to you?

A website is of course one option, but one of the basic rules of sales is that you need to get the product into the customer's hands? How do you do that if they cannot walk into your store or business? A catalog is the best way. People love to touch things. When you put a catalog in their hands and they begin to browse through it, they will find something they want to buy.

Catalogs work better than anything else to reach out to potential customers who are not close enough to pay you a visit. That's why large companies have been distributing catalogs for years. It is way more cost effective and makes more sales than any form of print advertising, websites, and even TV ads.

But I don't know anything about putting together a good catalog. How do I design it so that people will buy? Are there guidelines or rules I can use to design my catalog? I'm glad you asked! In this article I will be going over the basic

rules for designing an effective catalog.

First of all, don't think of your catalog as an add-on to your business or an extra you are using to entice customers to visit your store. Your catalog is a standalone business in itself. Forget about the ways you sell your product to people when they are there in front of you. Forget about everything else so you can design your catalog in a way that gives the customer everything they need.

Lets start with Information: This is one of the basic rules of good catalog design. Your catalog should contain all of the information your customer wants to know about the product. Sizes, colors, specifications, price, quantity discounts, and anything else about the products you sell so they have no questions to ask. Be thorough.

Images: This is probably the most important set of rules for designing an effective catalog. Information alone will not sell your product. You need to design your catalog so that the images speak for themselves. You have to design your catalog in a way that showcases the images so every time the customer turns the page, a spectacular image catches their eye immediately.

To do this, you need to either hire a professional photographer to take your photos for you or if you plan to design your own catalog from top to bottom, you need to make sure the camera you choose to use is a high quality digital camera. Don't scrimp on the images to save a buck. Basic rule to remember about your catalog design, "Images sell product".

Another rule about creating images for your catalog; The setting you take the photographs in is very important. You are not going to the trouble to design a beautiful catalog and then have lousy images in it. You need to choose settings that make your products stand out and settings that will enhance the "feeling" you are trying to give to your customer. Sales are about emotions. If you can cause an emotion in your customer, you can make a sale. Designing your catalog so that the images cause emotion will make you successful.

Which emotions? The whole range of emotions drives sales. Sadness, Happiness, Love, Hate, Greed, Lust, excitement, fear, pride, and other emotions are all part of making a sale. While designing your catalog images, you need to attempt to create one of those emotions.

Another rule to remember is "Design your catalog in a way that displays each photo of your products individually, not as a group of items in one picture." People tend to buy more when your products are alone in the picture. It doesn't look as cluttered.

Let's recap the rules for good catalog design that we know so far: Before you can design your catalog, you now know you need to prepare all of the information about each of your products you will be selling through the catalog. You also know that before you design your catalog, you need to produce quality images that produce emotions in your customers. Now that we have all of that, what's next?

Layout rules for designing your catalog: The different catalog design elements in the layout process are the cover, the back cover, the inside front and back covers, the first page, the index page, informational pages, and product pages. Informational pages include such things as a glossary of terms if your products are technical in nature, size and color charts where needed, shipping and ordering information, etc. You will need to add those informational pages as needed for your particular products and situation.

Rules about designing the cover of your catalog: This is probably the most important thing you will design for your catalog. This is the first thing your potential customers will see. In designing the cover of your catalog, remember the emotion rules we discussed above. Your cover has to make them want to pick it up and open it to find something inside that they have been waiting for and just didn't know it until your catalog arrived. This part of designing your catalog is one you will need to spend time and effort on or you may want to hire a professional catalog designer.

Rules about designing the back cover of your catalog: This is almost as important as the front cover. When people put your catalog down, many times they lay it so the back cover is visible. It should be just as appealing as the front cover. When you send a catalog out, several potential customers may read it. You don't want the first reader to lay the catalog on a table face down and for others not be enticed to pick it back up anyway. When you are experimenting with the front cover, take your second best choice for a cover and place it as your back cover.

Rules about designing the inside front and back covers for your catalog: While there are no hard and fast rules for designing these pages of your catalog, there are a couple of things I have seen work very well. If you have informational pages that you want to make easy to find, then you can design the inside covers to display the information they need to refer to often. The other way you can design the inside covers is to display the products that you are offering on special or the products you make the most money on. You design the inside cover with leads that talk a little about the products you put there with an image, then the page number where they can get more information about it. You

can put several of these inside the front cover and it works very well.

Rules about designing the first page of your catalog: Remember this page is the very first thing your potential customer will see when they open the catalog. They don't see the inside front cover first. They see the right hand page first. Again, you can use this page to display introductions to a few of your products they will find more information on further inside. Many people use this page as an index page, but I recommend you do that on the next page and make the first page exciting to your customer. Make them want to see more!

Rules about designing the product pages of your catalog: Remember the page turning rule discussed about the first page of your catalog? It's the same for your product pages. The upper right-hand corner or the right-hand page is the first spot your customer's eyes will go to. Make sure you put your best images in this spot on every right-hand page of your catalog.

There are more rules about creating an effective catalog that we could go into, but I wanted to cover the most important aspects of designing a catalog that makes sales here. The last note is about printing. Just like with images, saving money on the printing will cost you sales. 4-color catalogs sell more product than 2-color catalogs. The paper your catalog is printed on should be high or at least medium quality. Putting time into designing and following all of the good catalog design rules listed in this article will not help you if the printing is done cheaply.