



Start and Grow your Dream Business

# Marketing Materials Checklist for Small Business

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Give each one of these items solid consideration for your initial array of marketing materials for your small business:

## Logo

You'll want to create a polished image from the beginning and some kind of unique visual hook for your company, and then splash it on your business cards, stationery and anything else you can think of.

But that doesn't necessarily mean spending thousands on a designer to come up with an icon that expresses your business. "You can [network with other entrepreneurs](#), and there's bound to be a graphic or [web designer](#) among the group who will charge significantly less than big design firms," says Jennifer Kalita, founder of an entrepreneurial-services company in Silver Spring, Md. "And they may be willing to trade services or be open to payment plans."

## Business cards

Many marketing gurus say that a great business card can be your most effective marketing tool. Pack it with as much information as it will hold, not just contact information. Good graphics are important, but not as crucial as actually describing what your company does in a line or two. Maybe put the contact information on the front and list your products or services on the back.

Mark Amtower, a Highland, Md.-based expert in marketing to the federal government, suggests considering a fold-over business card for twice the display space!

In any event, your business card "must be different, memorable, and prospects must want to keep it," says Joachim de Posada, an internationally known expert on small business.

## Website

You should get this up and running before you open for business. You don't need to spend a lot of money on one, with all the [site-building options](#) now available. But it should be well-designed and helpful. You might even want to start putting a blog on your site right away to start up a "conversation" with your customers.

“Using the website as a primary ‘marketing material’ for a startup is good because you can’t tell the size of a company by their website,” notes Becky Boyd, a vice president of MediaFirst, a Roswell, Ga.-based marketing agency.

## Brochure

This can be a virtual one, in PDF format on the internet, or a black-and-white, two-color or even [four-color paper handout](#). In any case, it’s important to have one, because it can cover a variety of general needs that no other single marketing document can handle, ranging from distribution at a trade show to a handy mailer for people who want basic information about your company.

## Company clothing

Be your own billboard! You might want to consider putting this really high on your checklist. Wearing clothing with your company brand can start tongues wagging everywhere you go. “People will ask you what you do,” says Ruth King, small business expert and author of the book, *The Ugly Truth about Small Business*. “Then you can recite your pitch and ask for the order.”

## E-mail signature

Don’t let any e-mail escape your computer without tagging it as a marketing message. Come up with a catchy e-mail signature and include your name, business name, contact information, pithy tag line, a web address and even a one- or two-line announcement at the bottom of the signature about a new book, product, seminar or service offering you’ve announced.

## Packets for specialized needs

Depending on the initial focus of your company, you’ll need to develop packages of materials that are formulated around particular needs. If sales are hugely important at the beginning, you may need to come up with a folder full of brochures and spec sheets. If public relations are an important early consideration for you, you’ll need to [produce some press releases](#) and a [media kit](#).

## Elevator pitch

Here at StartupNation, [the elevator pitch](#) – a strong, 30-second spoken spiel that could convince someone to invest in your business in the space of an elevator ride – is one of our favorite marketing tools.



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“This will do more to market a new business than the flashiest collateral materials,” says J.W. Arnold, principal of PRDC, a Washington, D.C., marketing agency. “It’s amazing how many startups get caught up on the ‘things’ of their marketing effort and forget exactly ‘what’ they are marketing.”

Nevertheless, you also can commit your elevator speech to paper, or modify it into a “mission statement,” and hand it out readily along with your other marketing materials.

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