

# HOWTO ...

## use design to convey your sales messages

**HOWTO ... sales and marketing guides** from Solutions for Sales are brief practical guides for Sales and Marketing professionals. They provide a primer for the inexperienced and a reminder for those already in the know. For more guides visit our website: [www.solutionsforsales.com](http://www.solutionsforsales.com)

### The message is in the bottle

The purpose of a sales message is to communicate the benefits of a product, service or solution to a prospective buyer. That message needs to convey a wealth of information about the seller and the offering in a simple and interesting way that engages the customer. Design is an important tool which if used badly can undermine the message. If used well design can add a professional touch, capture the interest of your customer and enhance your message.

Don't just tell customers your offering is best – break open the bottle and show them exactly why and how.

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### The power is in your branding

Key to conveying your message is your branding and its potential power cannot be underestimated. It is used to distinguish your business from the competition. Your corporate image is reflected in your visual communications and achieving consistency is vital to the success of your branding. It reflects the mood of your organisation, your thinking and rationale, the way you interact with your customers and the image you wish to portray.

### Organising your information

The most important element of good design is the organisation of the information. Whatever you are designing, whether it is a brochure, a website, a powerpoint presentation or an advert, the information needs to be presented clearly and powerfully with a structure that will give the important facts to the customer without overburdening them with too much information or too many images, colours and styles. You must ensure the message is right for the target customer and that it makes optimum use of the medium.

### Displaying the information

The content of your message should always follow your branding style. Type is for reading – don't get in its way. Flowing, easy to read text, plus a layout which is easy to navigate, are key to successful message delivery. Headlines should stand out clearly and be interesting to look at. For body text, use clean uncomplicated fonts which are broad with ample space between letters. Although serif fonts, with their flowing marks at the points of the letters, lead the eye onto the next letter, they are considered old fashioned and tend only to



work at larger sizes. Keep to a maximum of 3 typefaces within body text and create emphasis through using underlines, bold and italics, but use them sparingly. Watch out for ugly white spaces if you are justifying text and ensure ragged text doesn't make unsightly shapes.

“ The black space can never be beautiful until the white space is beautiful. ”

Whitespace or 'margins' around text help the eye to identify a block of text as a group and aids comprehension. Blocks of text which are too wide or too long are difficult to follow. Sometimes the smallest adjustments to the page can have huge impact. Take time to ask the questions "What would I do to improve the look of this?" and "Can I simplify it without losing the key message?".

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“ Don't make your reader ask for directions – design should be easily read. ”

### Useful and interesting visual information

Text heavy documents, websites or presentations can be boring and monotonous as they lack variety and energy. Punctuating the text with effective visual aids will capture and hold the attention of the customer, improving understanding and enhancing the credibility of the seller. Our brains can process images more quickly than text so good visual aids will be attention grabbers.

Visual aids should always work in harmony with your branding and can take many different forms:-

- **Tables present blocks of information in a simplified format.** Clearly laid out information with consistent spacing and alignment and use of colour or shading will make for easier understanding of the message
- **Graphs and charts can be used to illustrate facts and data.** The format they take can be diverse, from pie charts to line graphs – they can be one, two or three dimensional – whatever works best with your branding and the information you are conveying
- **Diagrams improve understanding of the product or solution being offered.** They are visual stories that bring meaning to complex subjects. They should be as simple as possible whilst conveying the message concisely
- **Pictures and photographs** can convey information, moods and emotions, but a bad photograph or an overpowering picture will be detrimental to the message
- **Call outs and pull quotes** emphasise important information and can be visually useful to break up the text and add a splash of colour or variation



Visual aids should be used in moderation to be effective and a good balance is important. Used badly they complicate the message and confuse the reader. Used well they simplify and enhance the text.

### Conclusions

When visual elements, which activate the emotions, are harmoniously combined with the written word, which activates the reader's powers of logic and reasoning, sales messages are conveyed clearly and understood quickly. Good design aids understanding, reinforces impact and recognition, sets a mood and helps to establish brand affinity. Ultimately, the strength of your sales messages is paramount, but when strong sales messages are combined with good visual communications you have the power to change minds, inspire trust and win customers. It is worth investing time and money to make the best possible use of design to convey your sales messages.

What do you think? If you have comments on this **HOWTO... sales and marketing guide**, or new ideas, questions, or requests for new guides then email us on [HOWTO@solutionsforsales.com](mailto:HOWTO@solutionsforsales.com), or go to [www.solutionsforsales.com](http://www.solutionsforsales.com)

**SolutionsforSales**  
the sales enablement company

t: +44 (0)1702 586742

e: [enquiries@solutionsforsales.com](mailto:enquiries@solutionsforsales.com)

w: [www.solutionsforsales.com](http://www.solutionsforsales.com)

Written for Solutions for Sales by John Brown Design

Tel: 01268 786442 [www.johnbrowndesign.co.uk](http://www.johnbrowndesign.co.uk)