

DESIGN BEST PRACTICES

Design plays a critical role in promoting a business district, its association and events. Strategic design saves time, money and your sanity – and makes a HUGE impact.

Call Venture Portland for help before starting the design process (503.477.9648).

Brand: Always consider and incorporate your existing brand into any new design. What is your brand? What colors, fonts and layout do you typically use? How will the new design look alongside your existing designs and logo? Will the new design add to your brand?

Target Audience(s): Who do you want to reach? Put yourself in their shoes. How do they talk? What types of things interest them? How do they like to receive information?

Imagery: Any images (photo/graphic) should be clear and crisp, without any pixelization or unintentional blurring. Colors in the image should tie in with the rest of the design. The image should add to the overall message and should be as original/specific as possible. Generic-looking images can be a sure sign of generic-looking design.

Colors: Color is vital to design. Using smart visual cues can provide direction and enhance communication. Consider (a) How do the colors make you feel? (b) What do the colors stand for/represent? (c) Is the color used consistently? (d) Do the colors match each other, the business district logo and other business district assets?

Fonts: The shape and appearance of a word says as much as the word itself. Good graphic design usually employs consistency and restraint in choosing fonts: one for the headlines, one for the body text, and a third for special accents (stop there – no more fonts are needed). Fonts should be easy to read, attract attention and complement your business district brand/logo.

Copy: The headline, body copy, accent text and contact information should convey the who, what, where, when and why of the action. Every word counts, so make sure to speak directly to your target audience(s).

Layout: When looking at a design piece, your eyes should be drawn through it in a way that provides you with relevant information almost instantly. Effective design informs without overwhelming. Remember, let your presence be known – allow for prominent placement of your business district name/logo.

Emotion: Good design speaks to you on a subconscious level before you take the time to digest the information. Let people know they should - Get Excited, Join Your Organization, Attend Your Event or SPEND MONEY IN YOUR DISTRICT!

...last but not least, DON'T FORGET

Sponsor Recognition: Properly recognizing sponsors is critical. Prior to designing anything you must know the complete details included in all sponsorship agreements, and:

- Design with sponsor recognition in mind;
- Obtain sponsor logos in a timely fashion – be respectful of sponsors' time;
- Proofread – make sure all sponsor names are spelled correctly;
- Adhere to all sponsor approval processes;
- Send thank you notes with samples of each piece that included sponsor recognition; and
- Save everything to turn in with the grant evaluation!

DESIGN CHECKLIST

Whether you are working with a designer or creating collateral yourself, it is critical to think through the key elements of design first. Strategic design saves time, money and your sanity – and makes a HUGE impact. **Call Venture Portland for help before starting the design process.**

Deadlines

Design Draft	Sponsor Approval	Design Finalized	Production	In Use

Logistics

Describe design pieces and how they will be used	Design (flyer, poster, ad, etc.)	Use (print ad, website, etc.)

Look and Feel

Target Audience	
Imagery	
Colors	
Fonts	
Layout	
Emotion	
Sponsor Recognition Required	

Copy

Headline	
Body Copy	
Contact Information	

Working with a designer (in kind or paid) is a complicated process, requiring professionalism from both parties. Thorough preparation and pre-determined deadlines are critical for success. Feel free to call Venture Portland for help (503.477.9648).