



## Investing in Your Marketing Materials :: Print Collateral

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As promised in last month's newsletter, we're covering the topic of print collateral this month in our series on Investing in Your Marketing Materials. While print collateral can include many items, we've chosen a handful of the most common and most important ones to discuss here.

### Corporate Stationery

Your stationery package is your first impression on many occasions. It includes your letterhead and envelope, business cards, note cards, etc. Money spent in developing it well is money well-spent. Think about the number of business cards you've collected during your career. Are there any that stand out? Creating a unique business card doesn't have to be expensive, but it does have to be creative and well-produced. Crucial to the look of your stationery is your company logo. We aren't going to address this specifically here, but keep in mind that scrimping on logo creation is not advisable. Even in tough economic times, it's worth the money to invest in a well-designed logo—one day the economy will turn around and you don't want to be stuck with a logo you simply settled for and have it plastered all over your company stationery.

### Renderings and/or Photography

When just starting a development, renderings are your way of creating a visual identity for the project you're embarking on. Renderings come in all styles and prices and our advice is to select with price in mind, but keep the style relevant to your brand as well. A rustic, campy cabin project isn't going to reflect well if drawn in a stylized modern form. For those of you who have parts or all of your development complete, photography takes over for renderings (or at least it should...if you have the real thing, show the real thing). For more tips on photography, see our September 2008 issue.

### Image Piece/Brochure

This is the piece of collateral you use to showcase your property. It doesn't have to be copy-heavy; in fact it probably shouldn't be. You want it to be a "wow" piece that draws the consumer in to learn more. Being a wow piece doesn't mean expensive, but again, creative and well-produced. We often see developers try to make their sales kit into their image piece; we advise against this. While the image piece should be included in the sales kit, you should allow for flexibility in use by making it a stand-alone piece. Your image piece can be your introduction before all the details of a full sales kit are needed.

### Floor Plans

Let's face it, sometimes this is the least interesting item we're asked to produce. But, by the nature of the industry we work in, we've done a lot of them. Critical to success here is to keep it simple. Floor plans for use in marketing don't have to be bogged down with builder specs. Once a buyer decides on a plan, the details can come out later and don't have to be nearly as attractive.

### Pricing Info

For many developments, this is as simple as a shell or template used by all sales agents to present the property price info. Sometimes overlooked because of its simplicity, it's still important to include it as part of your collateral package and make it coordinate accordingly.

### Property Map

Another item that is sometimes one of the least attractive, your property map happens to be one of the most important pieces in your arsenal of sales tools. It's the piece that helps consumers see how their purchase fits into the overall plan for the development. We see a lot of industrial-looking maps or rough Google Maps—maps that were clearly produced to fill a void, rather than produced as part of a collateral

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package. This is a mistake. Your property map will likely be a living document, changing as you move through phases of development. Investing in a well-produced map that complements your collateral package will help create consistency and overall appeal.

### Sales Kit

All of the items discussed above are likely (or should be) part of your property sales kit. Since we've covered the "guts" already, let's talk about the shell. As mentioned above regarding image pieces, many developers try to make the casing or shell of their sales kit a brochure-type piece. We more often recommend a simple, yet well-produced, vehicle to house all the "guts." This allows for flexibility in use. It can be something as simple as a pocket folder, or as elaborate as a bound piece with pockets and/or inserts. A variety of directions can be taken, but like all the other items discussed, creativity and quality production are the most important factors to consider.

Before wrapping up, here are a couple of pointers to keep in mind that are applicable to all of these items:

- 1) Consider e-versions, but don't sacrifice the tactile quality a well-produced printed piece can bring. There are many applications that an e-version is handy for, but if you invest in creative and quality production, your collateral package can also be a tool to convey the quality of your development. This is lost in translation when consumers only get e-versions.
- 2) In-house printing vs. professional printing: while there are a lot of nice home and office printers on the market now, nothing replaces the quality of a professionally printed piece. Similar to what was stated above, a printed piece will convey the intended quality of your development. You don't want to send the wrong message by trying to save a few bucks by printing on generic paper using your office printer.

Hopefully we've shed some light on what pieces you should invest in as part of your collateral package. In next month's issue, we'll talk about your website and its roll in your marketing package.

Fresh Creative is a communications and design firm that specializes in marketing real estate development and hospitality properties. We use strategic process and experience to develop comprehensive solutions that create distinctive impressions.

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