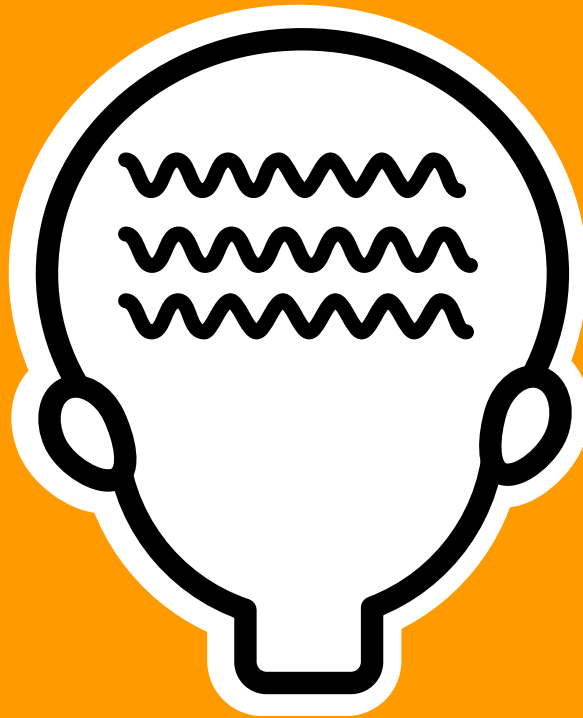


IMAG

INATION'S

EXPLORATIONS



designing business cards

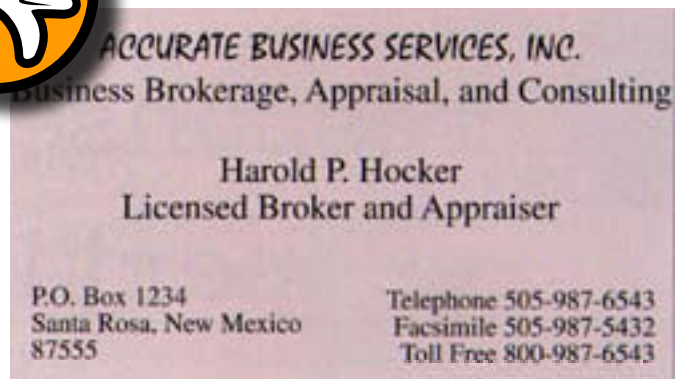


Business Card Overview

This presentation will give you some tips and rules that will help you design business cards with a professional look.



Because the business card is the smallest layout in a stationery system, it is a good way to figure out sizes and how the page elements will work together.

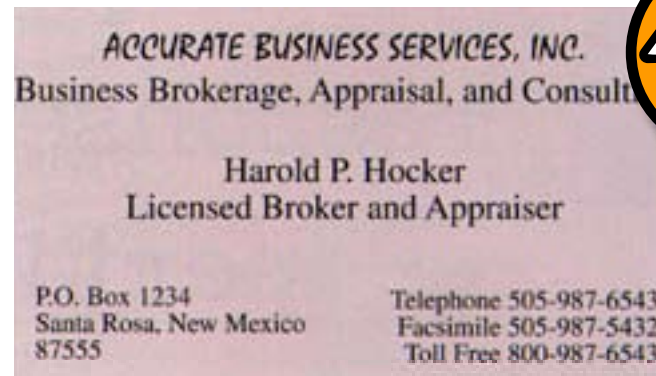


■ “EL GENERIC” BUSINESS CARD

- Many typical business cards are not well designed. They follow old conventions that really don't show much style or design thought.
- They don't reflect the business in a meaningful way. The card above is typical of the type of design offered by the local copy shop — a “one design fits all” approach.



There are a number of things that can be done to avoid cards that are boring and ordinary.



- It is okay to have empty corners.
- It is okay not to center the layout.
- It is okay not to use all caps.
- It is okay to use type smaller than 12 point.
- It is okay to use one large graphic instead of two little ones stuck in the corners.
- It is okay to use a typeface other than Helvetica (Arial) or Times.



Generic Design

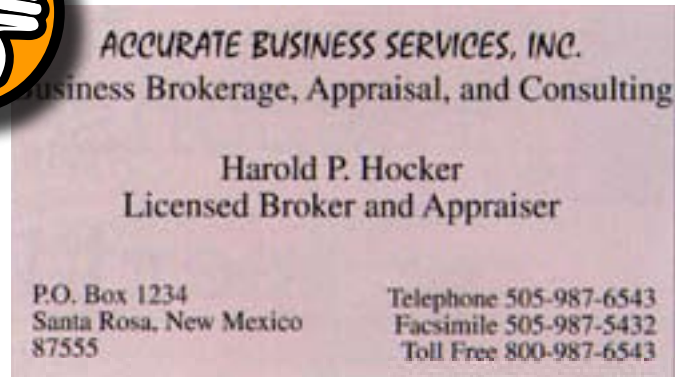


Good Design

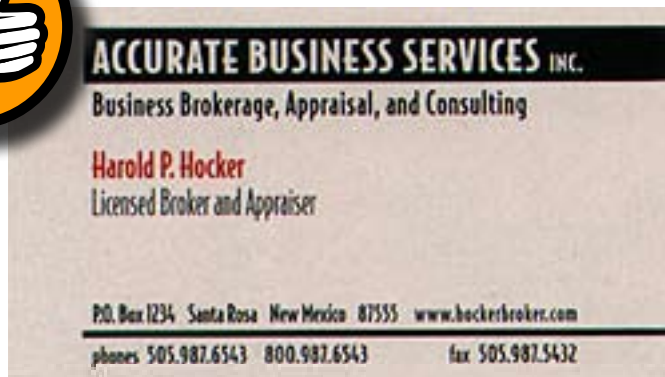
It really doesn't take much to change an ordinary looking card into one that looks more professionally designed.

Look closely at the changes that were made:

- 1. A more interesting type face that expresses the mood of the message.
- 2. Type set in upper and lower case.
- 3. One alignment (instead of flush right, flush left, and centered in the same layout).
- 4. One strong graphic as a focal point, rather than two little graphics stuck in the corners.



Generic Design



Better Design

- Here again, only a few changes were needed to improve the design of the card.
- Take some time to really look at the two examples. Try to figure out how and why the changes that were made make the second card better.
- Why does the second card seem to have better organization?
- How does the choice of type face help?
- How does the alignment help?
- How do the various sizes of type help?
- How does using a simple design element like the line help?



- Using all caps and a center alignment are not always bad. The problem with the first example is with how those features are used. When used creatively, as in the second example, all caps and center alignment can make an interesting arrangement.
- What's the difference? Why does the second example look elegant while the first example looks so ordinary?
- The first example isn't really centered—only part of it is. The combination of centered, flush left, and flush right all in the space of a little card creates a mess; there's a lack of cohesion and unity.



■ In the second example, there is one line running down the center of every element.

■ To work effectively, a centered alignment needs nice type and a pleasant amount of white space.

■ Notice how the dark line at the bottom helps maintain unity in the design.

■ Choosing the size of the type carefully can make a big difference. Avoid setting all the type too large. Try to vary the sizes whenever possible.

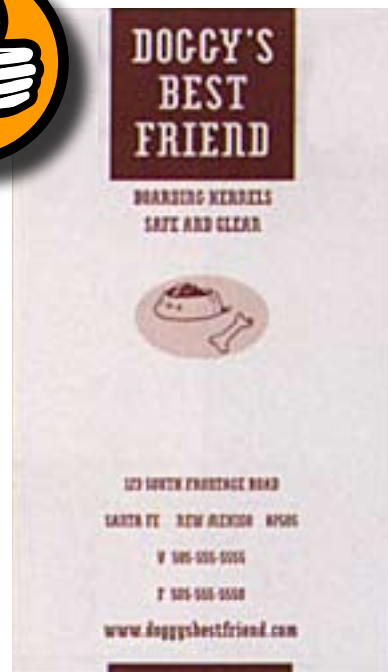
■ In the second example, the size variation in the type helps set off the title as the focal point.

■ Again, one graphic is better than two.



- The point is to really think about how the card will reflect the nature of the business.

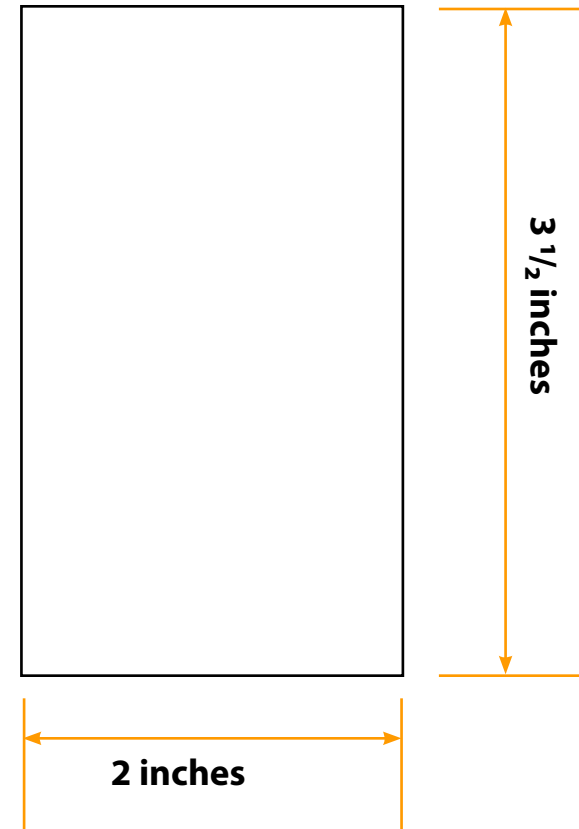
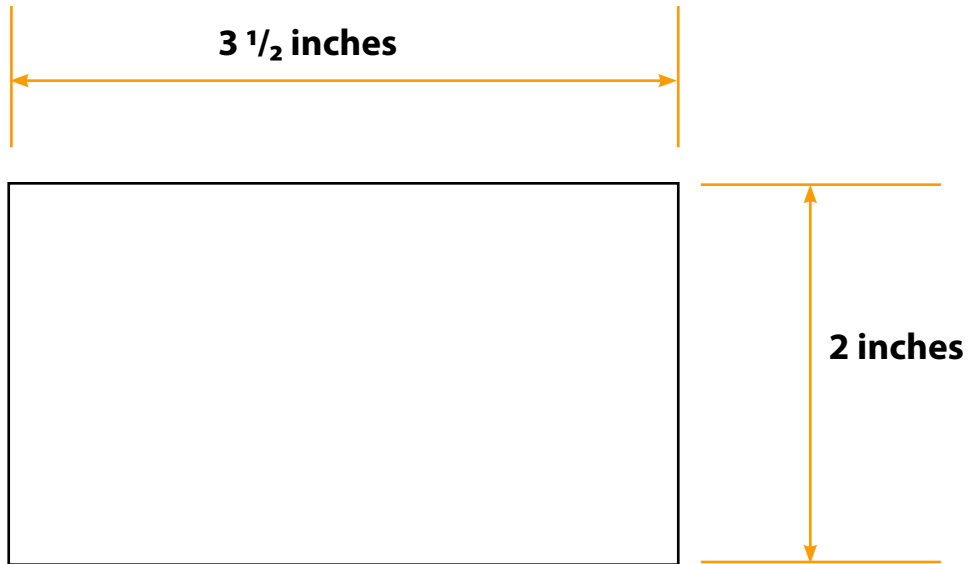
What is the mood and style the card should convey? Once you understand the message, apply an organization that expresses that mood.



- Choose the most effective type faces.
- Vary the type sizes to establish a focal point.
- Use alignment to help organize the look.
- Avoid the ordinary.



A standard U.S. business card is
3 1/2 inches wide and 2 inches high



But vertical cards are becoming more popular.



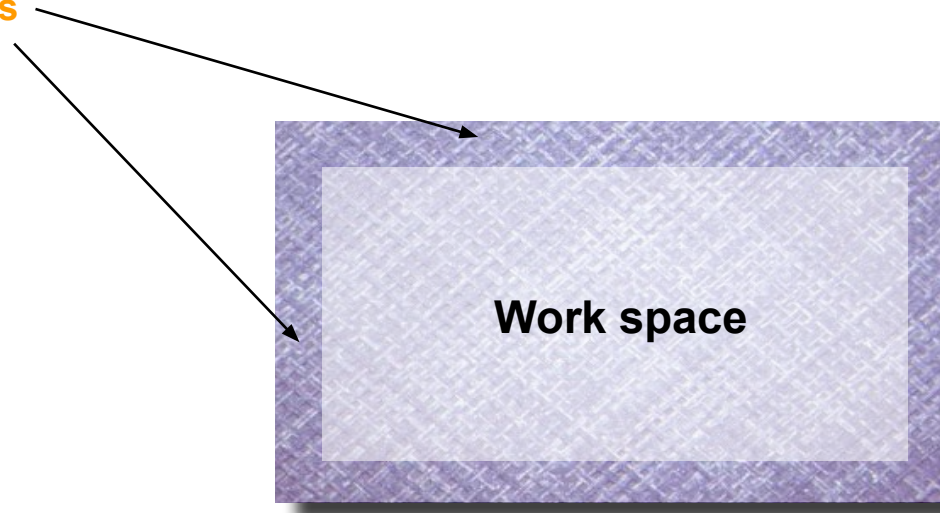
It is alright to let the a background image, pattern, or texture extend to the edge.
This is called **bleeding** the image.



Graphics may also be allowed to **bleed** off the edge of the card.



Margins



But type must stay within a designated area with a margin around the edge of the card.

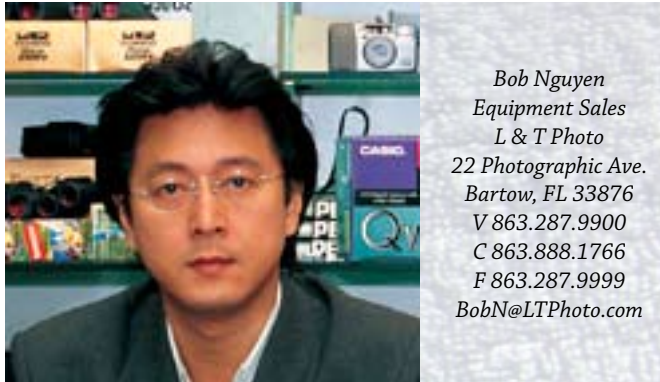


Here is a trick that the pros use to quickly organize a business card layout. Start by dividing the rectangle into two uneven areas. The area on the left is a square 2"x2". That is where you can put a graphic or logo or other image.

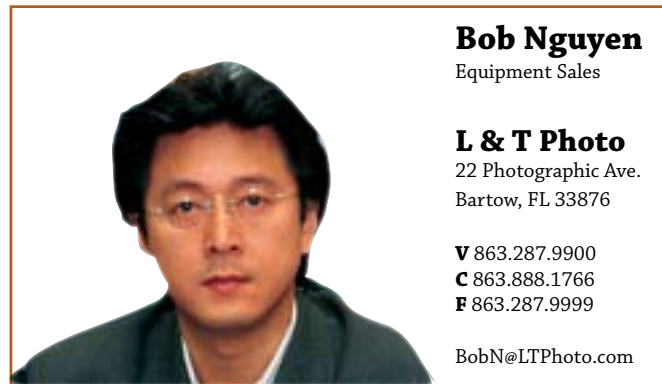
Some call this the **invisible square** design.



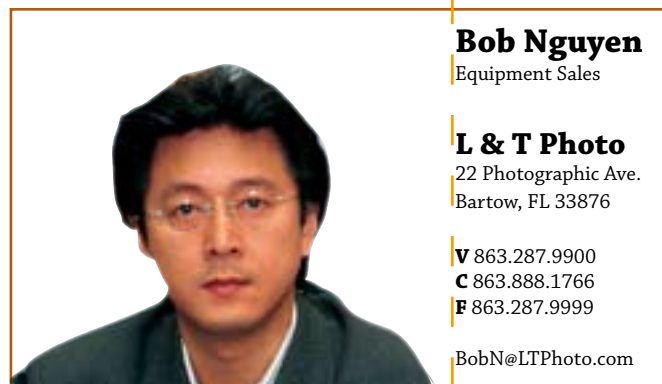
The area on the right will contain the text including the address and phone numbers. Most of the time, it will look better if the type is set flush left to establish an invisible line that maintains good alignment.



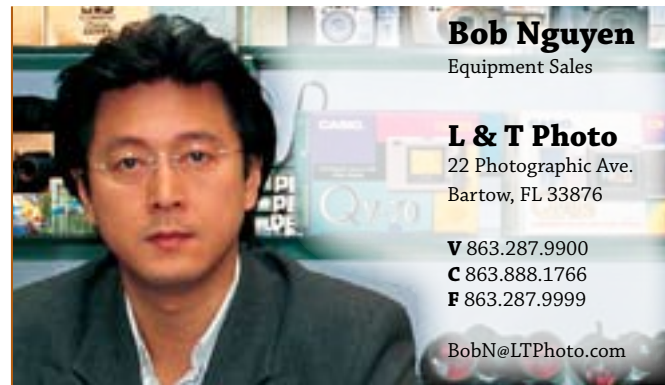
Compare these two versions of the card. See how the bottom card uses the design principles of **alignment**, **proximity**, **contrast** and **repetition** to help organize all the information on the right.



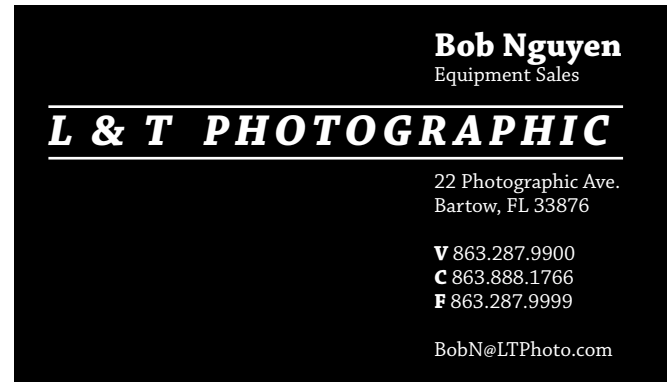
invisible alignment line



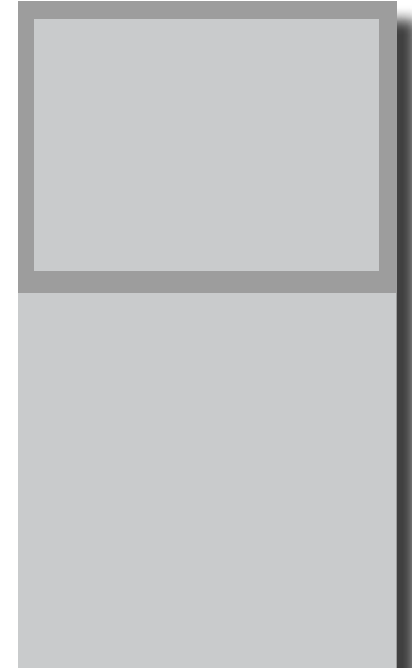
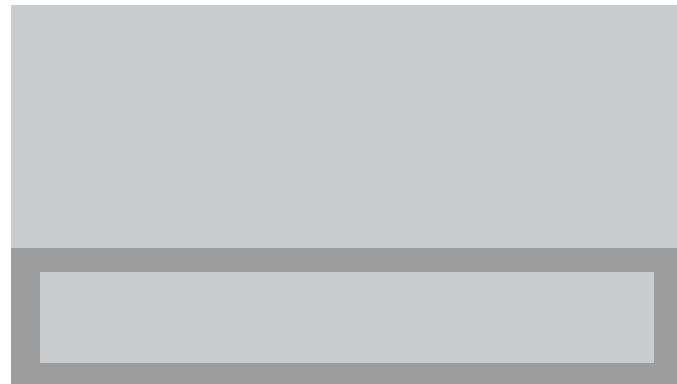
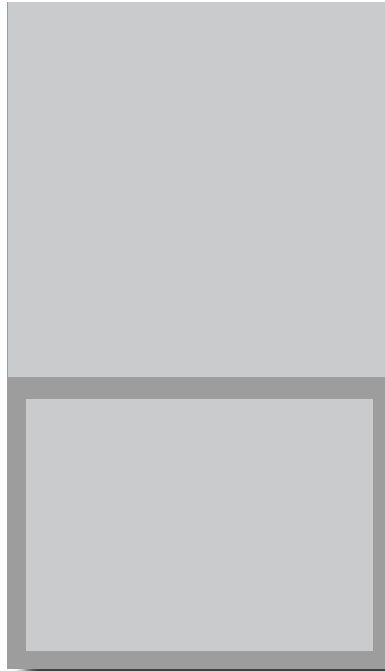
This example shows how the square shape on the left is maintained by the invisible line established by the text alignment on the right. The design concept of **closure** helps here as well.



By manipulating the image you can achieve the same basic structure in a more subtle way.



Another successful variation on the “invisible square” is the cross. See how the company name crosses through the square just at the “optical center” .



Here are some additional layout ideas. Also check out the business card gallery to help get you started on your projects. Remember, even the pros start by looking at examples to help jump start the creative process.



The following iMAG terms were used in this presentation:

bleed / bleeding

margin

alignment

proximity

contrast

repetition

closure