



News

This Month in the News

This month AH Digital FX Studios has had an unusually high volume of brochure design. Consequently, we decided to pass along some important brochure design tips that we feel would help understand what it takes to make a compelling brochure.

New Look

AH Digital FX Studios has decided to give its ahfx.net site a new look. The new logo is featured on the cover page of this E-list. The second version of the ahfx.net site is being drawn up currently to match the look and feel of the new logo.

Continuing Contest

There has been a request for additional time to submit entries for last month's contest, so we have extended the contest to run through August 25th. For more details see the CONTEST section below. Winners will be announced in the next E-list.



Actionscript 2.0 Writers

AH Digital FX Studios is looking for Actionscript 2.0 coders to support the Flash Community and submit tutorials on Actionscript 2.0. All submissions may be sent to info@ahfx.net.

Unique Artwork

AH Digital FX Studios is calling to the graphic designers out there. We are looking for unique artwork to be displayed in subsequent editions of the E-list. All artwork submitted needs to be in jpg format and should include all pertinent contact information, so that we can give credit to the correct individual. Owners of artwork chosen for the E-list will be notified via e-mail of the edition that will contain their artwork. Send submissions to info@ahfx.net. *Not all entries will be placed in the E-list. Void where prohibited. Contact AH Digital FX Studios for more information.*

Sample FLA's

Dynamic Drop-down Menu Bar

AH Digital FX Studios has added a new sample FLA to the <http://www.ahfx.net> site. This FLA demonstrates create a dynamic drop-down menu bar. It covers many important dynamic concepts and can be quickly placed into any site.

Make sure you read the Acceptable Use Policy at <http://www.ahfx.net/aup.pdf>.

Toolbox

Brochure Design

What is the purpose of your brochure? Is your brochure an advertisement? Is it a detailed product description-marketing piece? Or to put it another way, what kind of customers will be getting your brochure?

The first type of brochure design is created to attract a new customer's attention. Just like an advertisement, it screams for attention, and plays on the emotions of the customer. It has a big headline, strong visuals, and a distinct call to action.

This brochure design works to build interest, and to create desire for your products or services. It instructs customers to follow through by returning a coupon, or calling, or coming in.

The second type of brochure design is created to follow through with customers who want more detailed information. These customers have contacted you with questions. Often they want to know everything about a product or service. The second brochure design is created to give them what they want.

Certainly a brochure can both get attention and give detailed information, but you may not want to do this.

What are you trying to accomplish? Do you want new customers to come into your store? Then create interest and excitement with an advertisement type brochure designed to bring them in.

Or are your customers looking for information? Then you want to create a brochure packed with information specifically for them.

It is better to create two different brochures to accomplish these two different goals. Detailed product information will not entice a new customer to call. A lightweight sales brochure will not satisfy a demand for more information. Define your objective clearly, and use your brochure design to accomplish your goal.

This rule should be followed each time you want to target a different type of audience. If they are important, then you want to tailor your message, and your brochure design, especially for them.

Think about this: If you are sending the wrong brochure, you are just wasting your money, and you are not impressing your customers.



Brochure Content

1. Who is the brochure for? **THE CUSTOMER.** What does the brochure do? **IT SELLS.** Make sure your brochure sells. It should be carefully, professionally written. A brochure is not a decoration for your company. It is a marketing investment that brings you business. Make sure it sells.

2. Does the brochure design on the front cover get the readers attention with an emotional appeal, a provocative question, or a benefit statement? Approximately 80% of people will not open a brochure that doesn't give a prime benefit or a compelling reason on the front cover. That means your company's name probably belongs down at the bottom of the front cover, not on top. And your logo may need to go on the back cover, not the front. Brochure design is very, very important.

Toolbox (cont.)

3. Follow the rules of good sales copywriting. Yes, you want to introduce your company and your products. But you definitely want to grab the reader with benefits-benefits-benefits, and don't let go. Know your reader's desires, and demonstrate how you fill those needs. Benefits trigger emotions, and emotions will win out over logical persuasion every time.



4. Lead with the benefits - don't bury them. Feature key benefits in headlines, subheads, and captions. You must entice the reader simply to get them to read your brochure. And then you must motivate them to take action.

5. Feature or Benefit? Your new widget that saves the client an hour is a FEATURE. An extra hour to spend with your kids is a BENEFIT. List all of the features, and ask yourself, "what does the client get?" Now you have the benefits.

6. A company's brochure design should project a first class image. Are the graphics compelling? Is your writing active and enthusiastic? Is it pleasurable to look at? Stay away from crowded text, clichés, clip art, and low quality

production. Professional quality brochure design makes you look professional.

7. Technical writing is hard to read, even for technical people. Think about it. What would you rather read – a technical document, or a lighter, but comprehensive document? Always write like your talking to a good customer or a friend.

8. Interconnect your marketing materials. Offer your newsletter or web page information in your brochure, and vice-versa. Reference your other published materials or any recognition you have received.

9. Don't be subtle. Tell the reader exactly what you want them to do, and tell them to do it now. This is not being pushy, and it will not be perceived this way. People just forget if they don't act right away. And you don't want them to forget. This is good, effective brochure design.

10. Try to eliminate as many decisions as possible. Always assume the customer will eventually buy the product or service. Don't use words like "if" and "maybe".

11. Try this exercise: Count up how many times you used the words "I", "we", or "our company" in your document. Now strike them all and replace them with "you" or "your". People care about how you can make their lives better, not about how great your company is. This is effective brochure design.

12. Don't ask open-ended questions. Only ask questions that will get "yes, that's me" for an answer. I definitely suggest reading [How to Win Friends and Influence People](#). Always assume that the reader

Approximately 80% of people will not open a brochure that doesn't give a prime benefit or a compelling reason on the front cover.

Toolbox (cont.)

will contact you and buy your products or services.

13. Ultimately, it's your words that sell. Pictures are great, but words sell. Again, your brochure is not a decoration for your company. Don't let a designer make it one. And don't let anybody make it a literary masterpiece. Read the direct mail pieces that the credit card companies mail to you – these are well written sales copy.

14. Don't be embarrassed by sales copy. Customers know that they are reading a promotional brochure. They are consenting to read, and desire to read, sales information. That's why they are voluntarily reading your brochure.

15. One more very important note here. Your brochure will probably not close the sale for you. Your brochure will introduce and position your company. It will prepare the way for your salespeople. But you must close the sale. Make sure to follow up the brochure with a customer contact within a week.

16. Please review the checklist at the end of this E-list to make sure you don't forget any necessary information in your brochure design. And please be honest about how good your brochure is – your customers will be.



Brochure Design

1. Create accurate models and mock-ups for your brochure. Cut and fold your brochure to size. Use the same type of paper that you will ultimately print on, and review your work. If there are any special cuts or folds at all, review them thoroughly with your printer. If you are using a fulfillment house for a mass mailing, submit all of your samples to them, and get written confirmation that they can handle the mailing with their machines. Good brochure design includes making it work with the printer or fulfillment house. And double check mailing guidelines with the post office.

2. All of the rules for good sales copywriting apply. At the very least get a second opinion on your work. And harder still, listen to the criticism. A good suggestion is to have a good client or an employee write the copy. You will be surprised at the difference and the result. That's how you get more effective brochure design.

3. Most readers at first will only read headlines, subheads, and captions. These must give the benefits and the motivation so that your readers will want to read the rest of the copy.

4. Use high quality photographs of your products, of pretty people, or preferably of pretty people enjoying the benefits of using your products. Pictures are really worth a thousand words in brochure design.

An amazing variety of photographs are available for you to use. There is a perfect one out there

Toolbox (cont.)

for your company. Find it, and buy it. If you find the right one, you are half way to a highly effective brochure design.

5. Your brochure copy will be read out of order. Each page or panel should contain benefits and sales copy. This is good brochure design.



6. Break your headline so that you have to open the panel in order to read it. Umm, think this is silly? Open any magazine or newspaper in your house. They always break stories in the middle of an idea so that you are encouraged to turn to the next page and keep reading.

7. If your brochure is part of a package of marketing materials, make sure that your contact information is on each and every document. Make sure all contact information is on the brochure. People pass these things along, so make sure your phone number goes along too.

8. Collect brochures from other companies, [especially your competitors.] What do you like and why?

Why does their brochure design work?

9. Remember that colors represent different things in different industries. Be careful with your choice of colors. A good designer should make specific suggestions.

10. A box adds impact on a page. You could include Frequently Asked Questions, or testimonials, within a box for more effective brochure design.

11. Use white space in your brochure design. Crowded copy is hard to read. Your photos will lose impact, and the ad will appear out of balance if you don't use enough white space in your brochure design.

12. For the average person, a conservative brochure design is boring. Create a brochure that is easy to read and interesting to look at. A busy brochure design will often work better than a well-balanced brochure design, because it keeps the reader involved.

13. Stick to two typefaces, and strictly limit your use of bold, capitalization, underline, etc. By emphasizing everything, you emphasize nothing. Keep your font layout simple in your brochure design.

14. Try not to use more than five or six lines in each paragraph.

15. Try not to use more than two or three sentences per paragraph.

16. Leave a space between paragraphs, and do not indent them.

17. Just like an advertisement, your brochure design must work to get and hold attention. Strong visuals, and a center of attention on the page will help to accomplish this.

18. Design is a big field, and these are just some suggestions. We hope you are empowered enough to know if your designer is not doing a good job. We hope that if you are creating your own brochure, our guidelines are helpful.

Toolbox (cont.)

Brochure Checklist

1. Does your brochure sell? When in doubt, err on the side of selling.
2. Are the key benefits listed up front? Don't bury the benefits.
3. Does it tell the reader what action to take? Call, write, subscribe?
4. Is it as easy as possible for the reader to take action? 800#? Map with directions?
5. Name, address, map, hours of operation, phone numbers, fax number, E-mail address, web address, logo?
6. Does the headline entice the reader? Does it state a major benefit, ask a provocative question, or create curiosity?
7. Do your subheadings and captions give the critical information and create motivation?
8. Is the text in easy-to-read, short paragraphs or bulleted format?
9. Is it interesting to look at? Does it have strong graphic imagery? [Pictures of people and products are best].
10. Do you use the entire inside spread for visual impact? Do you leave enough white space?
11. Do you have testimonials? FAQ's? Before and After photo's?
12. Do you ask for their business? You must ask! This is required in good brochure design.

Additional Brochure Content

Here are some additional items to consider including in your brochure:

1. Pictures of your business and/or your employees. This may work when stability is a key issue for the client.
2. Your Mission Statement.
3. The benefactors of the organization's work.
4. Previous clients.
5. The company history.
6. Biographies from the owners or key members of the company or organization.
7. A statement from the president.
8. Any awards or press coverage you have received.
9. Annual report information – key numbers, new contracts, deals, opportunities, etc.
10. Famous quotes.
11. Third party endorsements or testimonials. [These really help to make your brochure design more effective.]
12. Instructions. Clear, simple, diagramed instructions. Please have complete strangers follow your instructions while you silently watch or videotape them.
13. National branded products, names, and logos. Associate your company with the winners.
14. Helpful hints or suggestions.
15. Anything FREE.
16. Give a guarantee. Nothing is more reassuring than a 100% guarantee.
17. List associations you belong to. List groups that you coordinate with.



The content for the Toolbox was based off of an anonymous submission.

Design Concepts

With or Without Wings

Did you know that it has been proven that people can read serif fonts faster than sans-serif fonts? Serif comes from the word for wings, referring to the feet and wings found on certain letters. Serif fonts help your eye quickly recognize differences between letters like b and h and pull your eyes left and right. Sans-serif fonts slow down your eyes. Consequently, sans-serif fonts are more commonly used for headings while serif fonts are used in the main body of your text. This helps draw attention to the headings and makes reading longer passages of text easier.

Faster than a Speeding Bullet

Did you know that bulleted lists are one of the most commonly read items in any text. People like to get their information quick and nearly always stop to read them.

- Headings
- Captions
- Bulleted Lists

By placing key concepts in captions, headings, and bulleted lists, you can draw people into the main text. Consequently, you should pay close attention to the information presented in these places.

Contest



Logo Design

The rules for this contest are as follows:

1. The logo can consist of only text. Any business name will be accepted.
2. The logo text can only use two colors. One of the colors must be either (1)white, (2) gray, or (3) black.
3. You may use any font that you would like.
4. You must submit the logo via E-mail to info@ahfx.net by August 25, 2004.
5. The top three designs will be included in the next E-list.
6. We will only accept images in .gif or .jpg format.
7. You must state the name of the font(s) used in the e-mail.
8. The background must be a solid color.
9. Only two entries per person.
10. All entries must come from e-list subscribers. (You may subscribe and enter the contest on the same day.)

Contact

Contact Information

Thank you for joining AH Digital FX Studios' E-list. If you would like AH Digital FX Studios to do an in-depth evaluation of your current website, email us at info@ahfx.net. If you have any questions, require our services, or know of someone that might need our services please contact us with the information below.



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