

Are you putting your business card to work?

SOMETIMES THE SIMPLE IDEAS REALLY ARE THE BEST ONES. Despite the exciting developments in technology over the last decade or so, including web sites, blogging, pod-casting, e-mail marketing and SMS marketing, the humble business card remains one of the simplest, lowest-cost methods of promoting your fitness business.

But unless your business card gives your prospect a strong reason to keep it, you'd do just as well to scribble your name and number on the back of a napkin. Why? Because thanks to the aforementioned technological boom, business cards 'live' just long enough for the recipient to enter your details into their PDA or computer (if you're lucky), before it is unceremoniously tossed into the bin! Why waste your hard-earned money on something that isn't valued, and isn't likely to give you a return on investment?

Create a strong call to action

If you want your business card to really be put to work, the most important thing you need to do is provide a strong reason for the recipient to keep the card and make contact with you. This strong reason translates into a 'call to action', which could take the form of a free initial session, a free t-shirt and towel with every package of 10 sessions booked, entry into a prize drawer, or perhaps a free report on how to get toned and fit by summer (which can be downloaded from your website after the prospect has entered their name and e-mail address).

Put a value on the card, something along the lines of; 'This card entitles you to a free sports drink with every court hire', or; 'Present this card for 10% off your first session'. Give the recipient a strong reason to hang on to your card – and more importantly, to call or visit your business.

You can even use your business card to capture qualified prospect's contact details on autopilot. For around \$40 a month (plus call costs), and virtually no setup fee, you can have a 1300 or 1800 number, recorded message and answering service created just for your business card. The 1300 number links to an answering service (detailed on your card as '24 hour message service for your convenience') which allows interested prospects to leave their details. The contact details of qualified prospects are sent directly to your e-mail as audio files, allowing you to target your info packs much more effectively. And best of all, you don't have to have someone sitting by the phone all day!

Attention grabbing headline!

Once you have a strong call to action, use it to create a powerful, eye-catching headline. Instead of placing your company name and logo at the top of the card (which in itself will be of limited interest to your prospects), use this space instead to tell them why they should call you, and then follow this with your name and contact details.

ADVERTISE
YOUR
BUSINESS
HERE!

Network's
Business
Members can
now advertise
HERE, in our
specialty
publications!

E-mail
advertising@fitnessnetwork.com.au
to find out more!

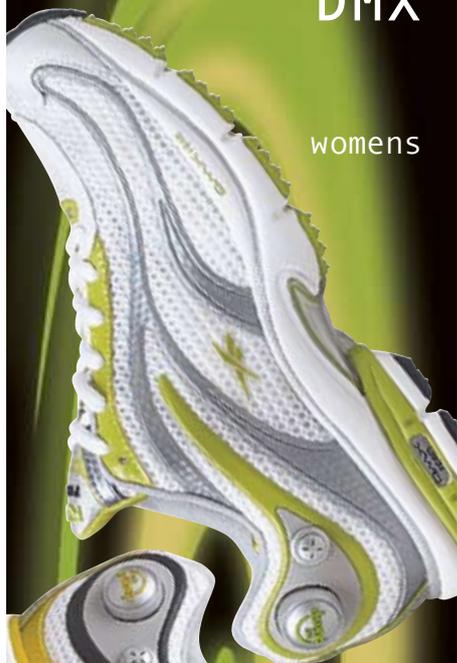


Australian fitness
network
20 YEARS STRONG



Premier Pump Paris Trainer DMX

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mens



Designed for the more narrow
footed runner seeking an equal blend
of cushioning & support

featuring a

manual pump system to
customize the fit

& provide support
around your ankle

Visit the Reebok Alliance website at
<http://alliance.reebok.com.au>
to purchase your Reebok Premier
Running Footwear at 35% off RRP.

A sample headline could be;

'FREE audio CD tells you how to lose weight SAFELY and QUICKLY – without resorting to pills, potions or fad diets'

or something a little more controversial to grab attention, like;

'Are YOU making this back-damaging mistake when you lift weights?'

Alternatively, you may opt for something simple like;

'Don't throw me away! I'm worth \$15 off of your first session!'

Picture this

Although many fitness business owners shy away from the idea, you will be surprised by the positive results you can achieve when you include a headshot of yourself on your business card. Just as relationships are stronger in person than they are over the phone or e-mail, placing a casual 'relaxed' photo of yourself on your card helps to create strong neurological pathways in your prospect's mind. They will remember you, like you, and have more trust in you simply by having your photo in front of them. The photo is particularly powerful when you're a personal trainer, because you, effectively, are the product!

Use your space

A great many people leave the back of their business card blank. Why waste this valuable space when you have gone to the effort of creating a card in the first place? This space can be used to provide further details about the offer mentioned on the front of your card, to hold client testimonials (to reduce scepticism and build reassurance in the mind of your prospect), or even for the prospect to write their name and contact details for entering into your prize drawer. If you work from a studio or premises, the prospect will then have to come in to drop the card into the prize-draw barrel, providing you with a good opportunity to chat with them and encourage them to take advantage of a free trial membership, or discounted first training session. In this way, even if the card does not result in an immediate 'sale', it has performed the highly-valuable task of capturing a 'qualified' prospect. For even more strongly qualified prospects (i.e. those who are genuinely interested in their fitness and wellbeing) using this method, offer a fitness-related prize as opposed to a holiday or generic gift.

There is much more that can be done with business cards, but of course the whole point of them is that they are personal to each individual or business, so only by considering your own circumstances will you be able to determine the best way in which your card can really work for you. For example, if you live and work in a relatively small community and you are a specialist in a particular field of fitness, your card can trumpet your unique skills, e.g. 'Beachville's Only Post-Rehab Fitness Specialist'.

Business cards truly are one of the most overlooked and under-utilised marketing tools available to fitness professionals. By using some, or all, of these ideas, you will be able to turn your humble business card into a powerful, response-generating marketing tool! ■



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Mark is a marketing consultant specialising in the fitness industry. He has over twelve years experience in running successful businesses, has a passion for health and fitness and is committed to helping fitness professionals emulate this success.

For more information or to subscribe to Mark's fitness marketing newsletter, e-mail mark@sellingfitnessmadesimple.com or visit his website at www.sellingfitnessmadesimple.com/afna.htm