



Creating a complete impression for your business

In Wisconsin the rental business is said to be the “largest small business” in the entire state. There are those companies that have thousands of units and hundreds of employees and there are landlords that have only one or a few units. Actually, neither the size nor the type of business is of any concern in how the business is operated.

The small entrepreneur does many of the same things as the large businesses, except on a smaller scale.

What is important to both sizes of business is the impression they make on the initial contact with the customer. Whether it is by letter, direct contact (which is more often the case as a landlord) phone or e-mail, the impression given to the customer of the business is of the utmost importance. This often makes or breaks the desire of the customer to do business with the landlord. A case in point: We are members of an apartment association and have associate members; electricians, plumbers, painters, carpet dealers and so forth. We try to use these associate members when we can. One of our units needed new carpeting. We called the carpet dealer, which was the first time, and had him give us a quote on the carpet. He measured the area that was required and on a theme size piece of paper wrote the cost figures. That was all he wrote; no square footage or price of the carpet. I don't remember if he even had a sample of carpet to show. I know he had been a member for a long time and had done work for many of the members, but it really turned me off, it didn't seem as though he was doing a thorough job. Obviously, we had someone else do the job.

First impressions are extremely important. There is an organization called “SCORE” that says “You never get a second chance to make a good impression”. So, why do anything less than the best when preparing identity and marketing material for your business?

Something as small as a business card, can say a lot about your approach to serving customers. So, it makes sense to have your brochures, information packets, Web pages and even stationary, convey a message of professionalism and dependability.

In this day and age, if you have a computer, there is so much that can be done to make the material that you hand out to the prospective tenant look professional like it was designed and printed by a professional.

Here are some considerations for the most common types of identity materials:

Business Cards: While creative designs and paper will help your cards stand out, keep it simple – your name and title, your company name and logo (if any), address, phone numbers, e-mail address and Web site (if applicable). A brief slogan or a few words describing what your business does may also be helpful.

Brochures: A simple well-designed brochure is a convenient way to tell prospective tenants about your property. Interior pictures, showing all the rooms of the unit, listing the sizes of the bedrooms and other main rooms would be important. A list of the appliances furnished, the overall square footage of the unit, what utilities are furnished and storage available. Anything else that would be of interest to the prospect, such as if a garage is furnished or available for rent. Of course, depending on the type of unit, single family home, duplex, multi-family the brochure needs to be specific for the type of unit.

Stationary/envelopes: Nearly every type of business needs stationary. You also will need some kind of letterhead for the forms that you use. Wana-be Landlord, LLC provides the essential forms that are needed in the business and many of them will accommodate the letterhead. As with business cards, your stationary should include the specific information about your company.

Web pages: When marketing your services on the Internet, lay out your electronic pages in much the same way as your printed materials. Organizing material in 8” x 11” format makes it easier for the prospect to download and print key data.

The foregoing information is just a few of the items that you need to be aware of. Other items that help to present an air of professionalism are the forms that Wana-be Landlord provides on the available CD, ready to download and print out to use.

Another item that exudes professionalism is the use of NCR carbonless paper with the forms, of which Wana-be Landlord, LLC provides free with purchase of the CD, a 25 set 2 part packet of NCR paper.

Mentioned earlier, SCORE “Counselors to America’s Small Business” offers free services to all small businesses, including landlords and provided some material for this article. Look SCORE up in your phone book or locate an office through the internet. Just type in SCORE.