

# > business card

## > objective(s):

Students will create a contemporary two-sided business card for the company they selected for the corporate logo project

## > curricular focus:

This lesson emphasizes effective compositioning in limited design space, effective use of the Pathfinder palette and advanced typesetting

## > specifications:

application: Adobe Illustrator  
save as: Business Card\_LastnameF.ai  
size: Custom (use Business Card Template.ai)  
units: Inches  
color mode: CMYK

## > instruction:

- discuss business card design fundamentals
  - two-sided design (see *Design Approaches* on page 4)
    - front composition
      - required info includes:
        - logo
        - first and last name
        - position
        - address
        - office phone
        - mobile phone
        - e-mail
        - website url
      - logo and name are two most prominent elements on front design
      - prominence created through increased size, isolation or other design techniques
      - importance of negative space in composition (see *Use of Negative Space* on page 5)
    - back composition
      - artwork that attracts attention/interest
      - usually full logo or logo graphic with website or slogan on top of creative background
  - typesetting (see *Typesetting* on page 6)
    - utilizing various alignments
    - typical font sizes for information are 7.5-8.5 but name (and position) can be larger for emphasis
- slide show and discussion of contemporary business card designs (professional and student)
- review clean construction in Adobe Illustrator (see *Clean Construction* on page 8)

## > procedure:

- research business card design ideas online
  - view Business Card Projects folder, Business Card Examples folder and websites in Business Card Websites folder
  - focus on arrangement and location of information
    - is the logo the first thing you notice?
    - is the name/position the second thing you notice?
    - is the contact information the third thing you notice?
    - how did they use of negative space to achieve legibility and visual hierarchy?
    - does the design enhance the logo, name and contact info?

**continued on page 2**

# > business card

- create thumbnails of various business card ideas and approve with instructor
  - print Business Card Thumbnail Template.pdf in lesson plan folder
    - design ideas are restricted to the standard 3.5" x 2" (or 2" x 3.5") rectangles
    - read and follow directions; complete all boxes
  - step one: place all information for front
    - remember!- *content dictates design* so naturally the placing information must come first
    - try different arrangements in each front box
    - see *Use of Negative Space* on page 5
    - it is okay to directly copy arrangements from others' designs you like
    - draw complete logo
      - the logo should be the first thing the viewer's eye notices in the design
      - achieve this through location, size and/or isolation
    - write out name and position
      - this should be the second thing the viewer's eye notices in the design
      - achieve this through a larger size, bolder, and/or a different color than the contact info
    - write out all contact information
      - this will help you get a feel for size and alignment
  - step two: add front artwork
    - remember!- front design artwork should enhance but not compete with logo, name and contact info
    - try color screens, trim lines, watermark, icons, etc.
    - see *Design Approaches* on page 4
    - explore pulling out part of the logo graphic as a visually enhancing element (if possible)
      - for example: incorporated into a foreground or background graphic, list bullets, etc.
    - what type of labels for front info?
      - phone numbers require labels (because there are two) but the rest are optional
      - full labels- **Phone:** 240.555.1212
      - letter indicators- **P:** 240.555.1212
      - symbols- ☎ 240.555.1212
  - step three: create back design
    - must include logo
      - can be complete logo (with text) or simply the logo graphic
    - may include website or slogan (but is not required)
      - no other information may appear on the back
    - must be artistically creative and have strong visual impact
      - take the same approach you did with Phone Wallpaper and Desktop Wallpaper from level 1
      - incorporate overlapping elements, filters, effects, transparencies, gradients, textures, etc.
      - cannot simply use color fill or gradient
      - feel free to refer to those lesson plan folders for reminders/inspiration
    - may be visually incongruous or tie together with front (repeated/reflected or wrap around designs)
      - see *Design Approaches* on page 4
  - step four
    - meet with instructor to approve a front and back design
    - make sure all requirements are met for all design ideas prior

**continued on page 3**

# > business card

- create mock-up of approved design
  - use Business Card Mock-up Template.pdf
  - must draw complete logo as it appears in downloaded file
  - select and label fonts
    - must use contemporary, highly legible body copy font (no Times New Roman, Helvetica or Arial)
    - see *Typesetting* on page 6
    - write out all text exactly as it is to appear in the final design
  - approve with instructor
- begin work on computer
  - open Business Card Template Template.ai
  - set up Swatches palette precisely as you did in Corporate Logo file
    - delete all swatches except None, Registration, Black and White, and your company's Pantone(s)
    - go to Swatches: Open Swatch Library: Color Books: Pantone solid coated
  - select horizontal or vertical template (default is set up for horizontal)
    - delete the template layer you are not using
  - all artwork must be completely contained within template rectangle edges
    - see *Clean Construction* on page 8
    - template layer must be on top and unaltered (delete unused template layer)
    - for Pathfinder cuts of bleed elements use duplicated shape from Template layer
    - make sure stroke of duplicated rectangle is removed
    - (if stroke is left on rectangle, it will suck onto the graphic element you're trying to cut)
  - typography
    - font sizes must be appropriate (information is generally between 7.5-8.5)
    - must use whole or half size numbers
  - carefully review and compare your work with *Top 10 Mistakes* on page 7

## > requirements:

- front design
  - contains complete logo, name, position, mailing address, office and mobile phone, e-mail and website
  - two most noticeable elements on the front must be the company logo and the person's name
  - logo, name and information must effectively use space without crowding each other or frame edges
  - graphic treatment(s) must enhance, but not compete with, the logo and information
    - these may include color screens, watermarked logo, etc.
    - no graphic may extend beyond the black outline box (all bleeds must be cut precisely to the template)
- information text
  - font must be contemporary and highly legible (no deco fonts allowed, except for labels (like a: for address))
  - type sizes must be appropriate and use whole or half numbers (for example: size 8 or 8.5, not size 8.14)
  - office and mobile phone numbers must be labeled by word, initial or icon
- back design
  - must incorporate logo graphic (logo with company name text is also okay)
    - logo graphic may have any color treatment (full color, one color, use gradients, etc.)
  - slogan and/or URL may appear (but not required) but no other additional information allowed
  - must be eye catching, sophisticated and contemporary in design (instructor's discretion)
  - must include self-created graphics and complex, sophisticated treatments (gradients, transparencies, effects, etc.)
  - no graphic may extend beyond the black outline box (all bleeds must be cut precisely to the template)
- template layer must be on top and completely unaltered
  - this allows black stroke to be complete and unbroken
- artwork fits perfectly within the template frame
  - all artwork is cut perfectly to the edge of the card with the template outline unbroken and on top
  - no stray points or empty text paths, no stroke, expanded Pathfinder treatments, expanded effects, etc.
- Swatches palette is accurate
  - includes only: None, Registration, Black and White and accurate Pantones matching company color(s)

# > design approaches

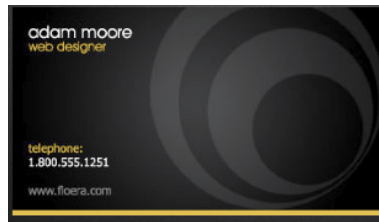
## > front design:

- you will need some sort of graphic enhancement on the front of your card; flat color or just a gradient is not enough
- make sure your design enhances, but does not compete with, the logo and text- very important



### screens

screens are areas of color that can be rectangular or more organic



### watermarks

all or part of a logo, full color or reduced to one color then faded in the background



### logo-inspired

let all or part of the logo be the driving force behind your graphic treatment on the card

## > back design:

- this should be a visually impactful design that catches a person's attention and makes them pick up the card
- you must use the logo graphic in some capacity (full color, one color, watermark, bleed, etc.)  
additional text elements are limited to company name, website, and/or slogan



### incongruous

front and back designs are completely independent design approaches; no graphic treatments such as screens or watermarks are repeated on the back



### repeated/reflected design

front and back designs share the same graphic element(s); these can be identical or reflected (as shown in the example)



### wrap around

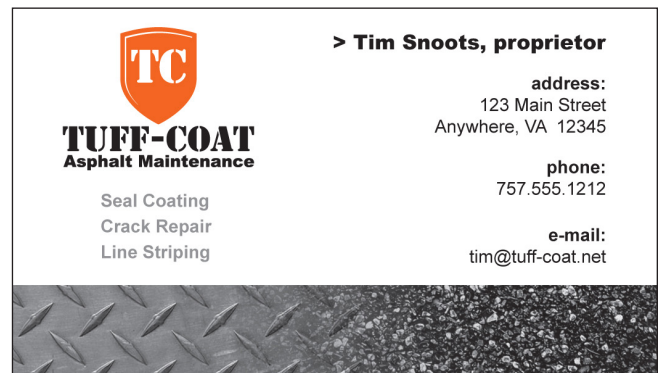
a graphic treatment on the front wraps around to the back design

# > use of negative space

## > composition that helps the brain

Business cards are not very big (only 3.5 inches by 2 inches), and some contain a lot of information. Rookie designers usually summarize that they should use all available space- but this is a big mistake. The human brain needs effective negative space to be able to chunk information so it can easily break it down. Without negative space, the brain has no way to approach the information. Carefully plan out your negative space to help your viewers!

In the comparison below, you will see the difference between ineffectiveness of utilizing the maximum design space and understanding the power of negative space in helping the brain break down visual information.



# > typesetting

## > text alignments

You have four different text alignments to choose from, as well as a variety of ways to implement them.

### • left align

probably the most commonly used alignment, this is great for text on the left or center of the card, or even the right side as long as it is not too close to the right edge (where you should be using right alignment instead)

#### example:

John Mattingly  
Middletown High School  
200 Schoolhouse Drive  
Middletown, MD 21769



### • center align

should be used only when text is centered on the card or within a defined edge (like a screen or boxed trim line)

#### example:

John Mattingly  
Middletown High School  
200 Schoolhouse Drive  
Middletown, MD 21769



### • right align

this is great for text to the right of center on the card unless it is in a sectioned off screen or boxed trim line

#### example:

John Mattingly  
Middletown High School  
200 Schoolhouse Drive  
Middletown, MD 21769

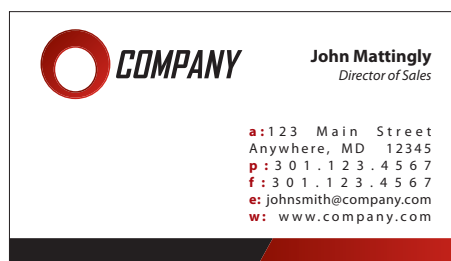


### • force justify

flush on both sides, this is a cool look unless one line is gapped so greatly it becomes distracting

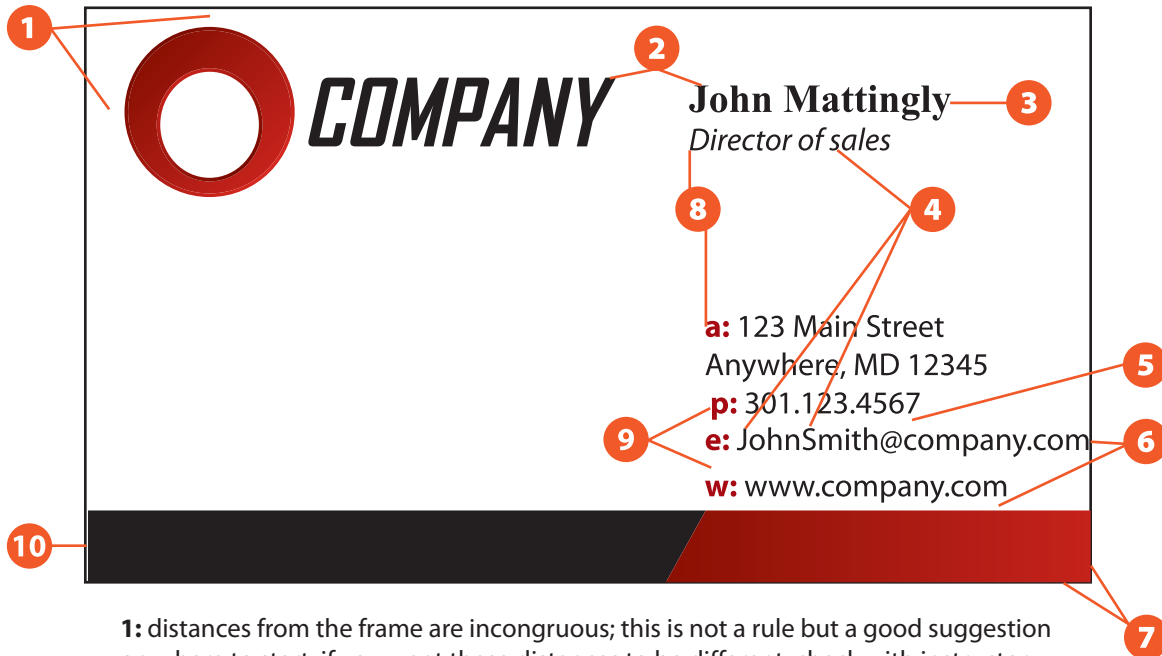
#### e x a m p l e :

John Mattingly  
Middletown High School  
200 Schoolhouse Drive  
Middletown, MD 21769



# > top 10 mistakes

Below are the most common deductions in regards to artwork and composition. Double check your work to make sure none of these issues are present in your design.



**1:** distances from the frame are incongruous; this is not a rule but a good suggestion on where to start; if you want these distances to be different, check with instructor

**2 & 8:** things that should line up do not

**3:** font does not match the mood of the company/logo or is not contemporary

**4:** improper capitalization or other typos

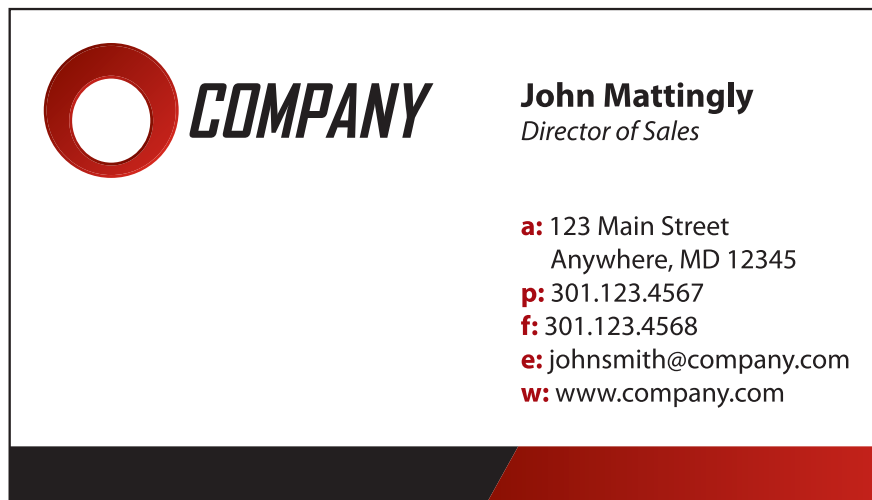
**5:** missing information (in this case, there is no fax number)

**6:** elements crowding the edge of the frame or other elements

**7:** design elements overlap the template frame, creating inconsistent stroke width

**9:** text not perfectly aligned or inconsistent spacing

**10:** elements that should bleed but do not





# > clean construction

## > what is "clean construction?"

Clean construction is where your work is completely simplified. Text is converted to paths. Strokes are converted to shape. Effects like 3D and Warp are expanded so their paths line up with the intended effect. Overlapping shapes are cut precisely to where they intersect.

## > why is clean construction important?

Basically, simplifying your work as much as possible protects it when it is used by others. As an example, text left as text requires the proper font files on other computers. Another example would be someone scaling your work that contains stroke without having the Scale Stroke and Effects turned on- this would change proportions of your work.

## > how do I clean construction?

### • step 1: Select All

### • step 2: convert text to shapes

- go to Type menu and select Create Outlines (or press Shift + Ctrl + O)

### • step 3: expand any effects, warps, filters, etc.

- go to Object menu and select Expand Appearance

### • step 4: expand stroke to shape

- go to Object menu and select Expand

### • step 5: simplify artwork

- go to Pathfinder and select Divide (bottom left)

- go to Object menu and select Ungroup (or press Shift + Ctrl + G)

### • step 6: run Clean Up

- go to Object: Path: Clean Up

make sure all boxes are checked then select OK

### • step 7: rejoin shapes of the same color that touch

- with the Direct Selection tool (white arrow), select an element of a specific color

- go to Select: Same Fill Color

(this will select all other shape areas of the exact same fill color)

- go to Pathfinder and select Unite (top left)

(this will combine areas of the same color into one)

### • step 8: delete unnecessary anchor points along straight lines

- use the Delete Anchor Point (minus) feature with the Pen Tool to eliminate unnecessary anchor points

- do not do this on curves, only straight lines

### • step 9: run Clean Up (yes, again)

- go to Object: Path: Clean Up

make sure all boxes are checked then select OK