

Graphic Information Design II • Capabilities Brochure

Businesses can be divided into two approximate categories—businesses that sell products and businesses that sell services. This distinction sounds simple, but it isn't always. Consider a man's suit. If that suit was made in a factory and sold through a retailer, this is a fundamentally different process than a suit made by a tailor, who measured the customer, brought him in for multiple fittings and finished it using customer-specified fabric, lining and buttons. Of course, a suit store may offer services such as alterations, but while a store may spruce-up pre-made products, a **service business** starts with knowledge and sometimes raw materials. If a company is predominantly in the business of providing custom manufacturing (like a printer or tailor), consulting services (like an accountant or law firm) design services (like a graphic designer, interior decorator, or architect) or personal services (like a house cleaner, doctor, dentist or dog walker) it is a service business.

Printed communications for stores and services reflects their different natures. Companies that sell products use **catalogs** as sales instruments. However, a service business does not have an inventory of pre-made items for sale. Its greatest assets include expertise, experience, equipment and facilities. Instead of catalogs, service businesses often use **capabilities brochures** as a way of documenting their abilities.

Assignment Part 1: Short Paper

Find and research three local businesses that perform the same or similar services. While any service is allowed; not all are equally suited towards creating a brochure. Choose a business that interests you, and offers a variety of abilities or a unusual specialization. Dry cleaners, house cleaning services, auto garages, dentists, and daycare centers make poor choices unless they offer something extraordinary because everyone knows what they do. A catering service that specializes in vegetarian, Kosher, and macrobiotic cuisine, or a mover that specializes in packing and moving art and antiques would be better choices because you can use the brochure to give the reader information they would not otherwise have. When you trust a company with a critical job, you want assurances that they'll get it right. You should have face-to-face contact with an owner or manager at at least one of the companies you research. **A one-page paper comparing the strengths and weaknesses of the three businesses is due one week from today.**

Part 2: Brochure

Of the companies you researched, choose the one most promising for a brochure. **Final:** 8 or 12 page brochure, with a finished cover, first (introductory) spread and informational spreads. Final pages to be completed in QuarkXpress. All art— illustration or photography to be produced by the student. Minimum page size: 8.5 × 8.5" saddle stitched. Final due on the last regular day of class.

Details

Nearly all capabilities brochures have an "about us" page. While these pages generally do not list specific personnel (You don't want the brochure to become out-of-date with each new hire) it may discuss history, awards, and value to the community. A page like this is required in your brochure.

Your second spread must get at the heart of the matter—it must cover one or more of the services that the company offers. You can do this in a very straight-forward way. If you were doing the brochure a printer, for example, you could show a press and discuss how 8 color capability allows critical color matching and spot varnishes. Alternatively, you could take a case-study approach. List client requirements show their finished printed piece, and discuss how the company went above and beyond to meet the needs of that client. Other approaches are acceptable as appropriate and approved by the instructor.

Price lists and other information likely to go out-of-date quickly are generally not included in a capability brochure and are not acceptable for this assignment. Final to be turned in in booklet form. Keep your message focused and pertinent.