

Hotel Rack Cards - How to Find the Right Rack Card Printer

Click here to download this article in Adobe Acrobat PDF format. Finding the right rack card printer to print your hotel's rack card can be a challenging process. Every printer has a seemingly great reason why they should print your rack card. This article contains some helpful tips and things to consider when selecting your rack card printer.

- **If you are a branded hotel, does your rack card printer have a template for rack cards that meets your brand identity standards?**

Since most rack card layouts are now done by the rack card printer, it should be their responsibility to insure your hotel rack card meets your hotel's brand identity standards. Make sure your printer is familiar with your hotel's standards and has templates for rack cards on file. Don't be afraid to ask for samples of a rack card they printed for another hotel with the same brand. Ask for a guarantee, in writing, that your rack cards printers will meet those specifications.

- **On what type of paper will your rack card be printed?**

This is a very big deal. Hotel rack cards are called rack cards for a specific reason. Most of them are placed in a display rack. They need to stand up straight and tall. Droopy rack cards say droopy hotel and even worse, your sales message, at the top of the card is facing the floor, not your prospective guest. Solve this problem by insisting your rack cards be printed on a minimum of 100 pound cover paper. 120 pound cover paper is even better. In addition, the paper should have a glossy finish. The glossy finish adds strength, but more importantly, makes your hotel pictures really stand out or pop. At INNstuff.com, we use a 120 pound cover paper with a glossy finish on both sides.

- **How will your printer present your hotel's pictures?**

The old saying "a picture is worth a thousand words" was never more true than when printing a hotel rack card. Usually, there is a picture within a picture. The essence of image your pictures are trying to convey needs to be front and center. That means cropping out all the extra sky, parking lot, guest room ceilings and walls. Will your rack card printer, do this for you or will they simply drop in the pictures you send into the rack card template. What about picture quality? A professional photographer is always the best solution, but these days, software programs can make amateur pictures look great. Does your rack card printer enhance photographs and is that included in the price of the rack card?

- **What about the map?**

The map and hotel directions help your guests not only find your hotel, but let them know where it is that relate to their trip to your town. A good map not only shows a few cross streets, but where your hotel is located relative to Interstates and major highways. It also needs to be accurate. A little color is also very helpful as it adds a bit of class to your rack card. Ask your printer who is designing the map. What references are being used and can you correct errors at no cost prior to printing? This little thought of item is one of the most important elements on your hotel rack card.

- **Will your rack card printer make changes and edits**

at no additional charge?

Hotel rack cards are usually printed in large quantities to save the hotel money. Therefore, the hotel rack card will probably have a shelf life of a year or two. That's too long to live with little mistakes or copy problems that arise during the proofing process. We have produced thousands of hotel rack cards and brochures and not one has had less than two sets of client initiated copy changes. Make sure your changes are free and a great low price doesn't disappear because of changes and set up charges. They all should be free.

• What about price?

Ten thousand copies of a good branded hotel rack card should be purchased for less than \$1,000.00, including shipping and handling. Add \$200.00 for an unbranded hotel. While smaller quantities of hotel rack cards can be printed, the cost per card is greatly increased. The best way to print economical hotel rack cards is through a process called "gang printing". Large batches of cards are laid out on a printing press and printed at the same time. Because tens of thousands of hotel rack cards are being printed at the same time, the volume savings are passed on to the hotel. With the advent of modern presses, the quality of "gang printing" has increased dramatically. To get a comparable price printing your card individually, you would need to print from 20,000 to 25,000 or more rack cards. It is very expensive to order rack cards 5000 at a time. As you can see, "gang printing" is a great value and the very best way to print hotel rack cards.

• Where do you find a good rack card printer?

While many printing companies and design services print hotel rack cards, few will match the design and print requirements mentioned above. Ask other hotel owners and managers for a referral or check us out at www.innstuff.com. We practice what we preach.

If you have any questions about an upcoming rack card project, give us a call at 800-459-4588 or send us an e-mail.

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