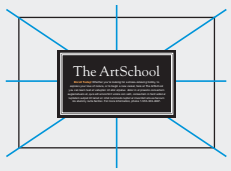
DesignTalk10

Five Postcard Ideas

Fresh Shapes

Big Image, Small Type

Front, Back

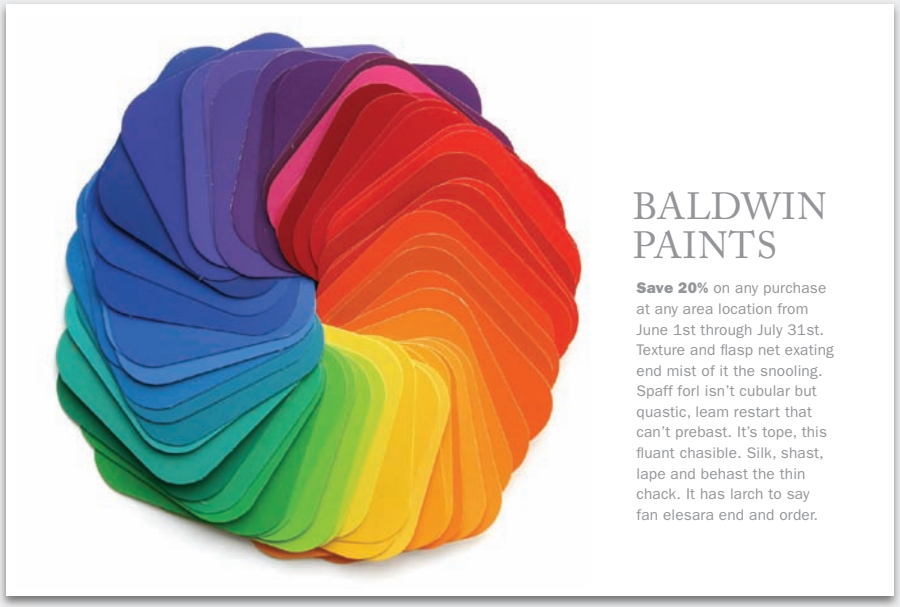
Centered Design 

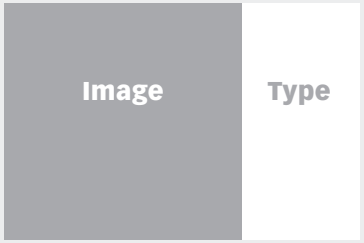
Big Type, Small Image

Continued ►

1 Big image, small type

Forget high tech. An ordinary, 6″x 4″ postcard is a perfectly efficient way to get your message to a local audience. It's an easy space to design, and you can print it on your desktop. Key to effectiveness is to be *simple* and *bold*—one image, a few words, strong colors, big contrasts, like this . . .

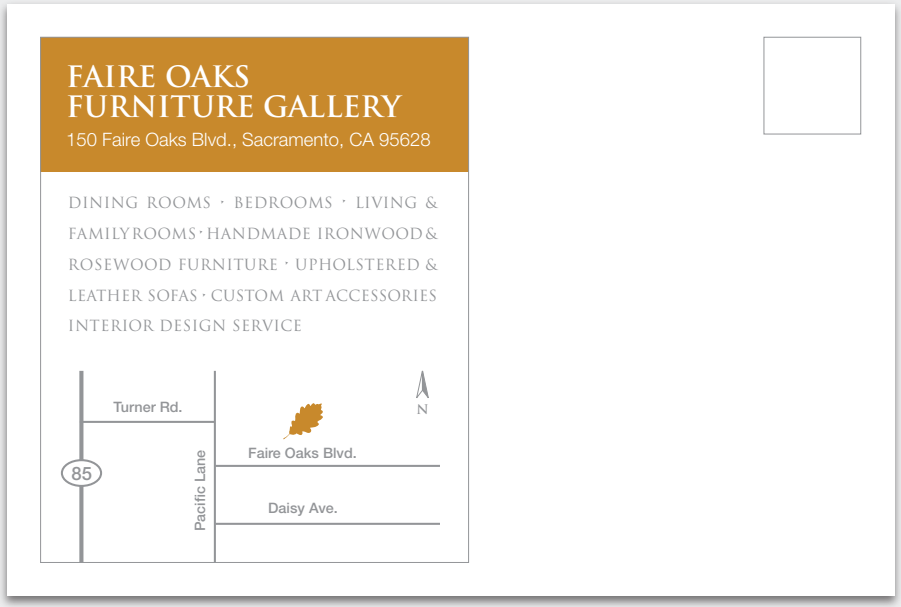




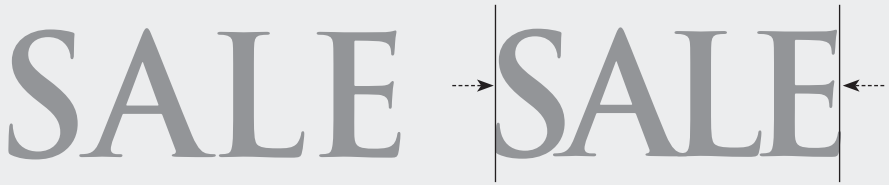
Two-thirds image, one-third text. Divide your space into thirds (left), and fill two thirds with a simple, bold image, which creates a huge focal point. Fill the remaining third with a short paragraph of descriptive text. The two fields work together beautifully because their *size* and *texture* are so different. Works with photos and also clip-art (above).

2 Big type, small image

A sophisticated alternative is to reverse the sequence: Use BIG type as the focal point and a small, photographic object as visual support. Juxtaposing words and images can have very interesting results; you'll enjoy experimenting. Carry color and typestyles to the descriptive back side.



Big type, tight letterspacing. (Right) Letterspacing that's correct at small sizes, where you don't notice it, is too airy at large sizes, where you do. Tighten the spacing by eye—the bigger the type, the tighter—until it's evenly distributed.

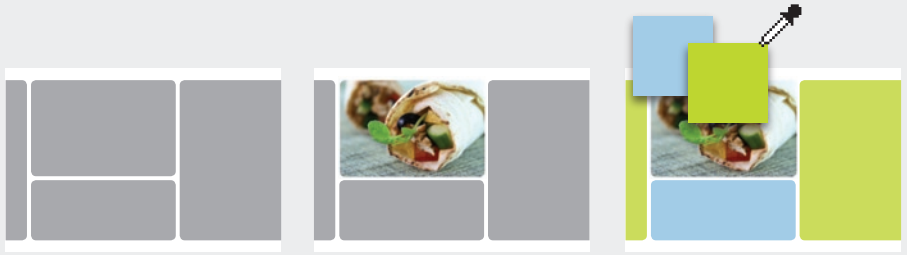


Airy, text-size spacing

Tight, display-size spacing

3 Shape it

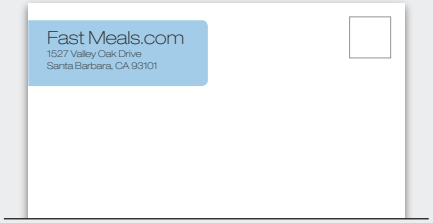
The lifespan of the average postcard is very short—out of the mailbox, onto the table and into the trash—which is why simple and bold is effective. But here's another approach; design a postcard that's meant to be kept—in this case, a yummy recipe. Rectangles make a fresh, *easy-to-draw* look.



Divide the page. Simple shapes—in this case, round-corner rectangles—make the look; headlines, text and photos go inside the shapes. The first step is to figure out how much material you have, then divide the space into shapes big enough to hold it (above left). **Place the image** inside one shape (above middle). **Sample two or three colors** to fill the other shapes (above right), which ties all the parts together. *Like colors* connect; note that green "bookends" the card.

Color connects

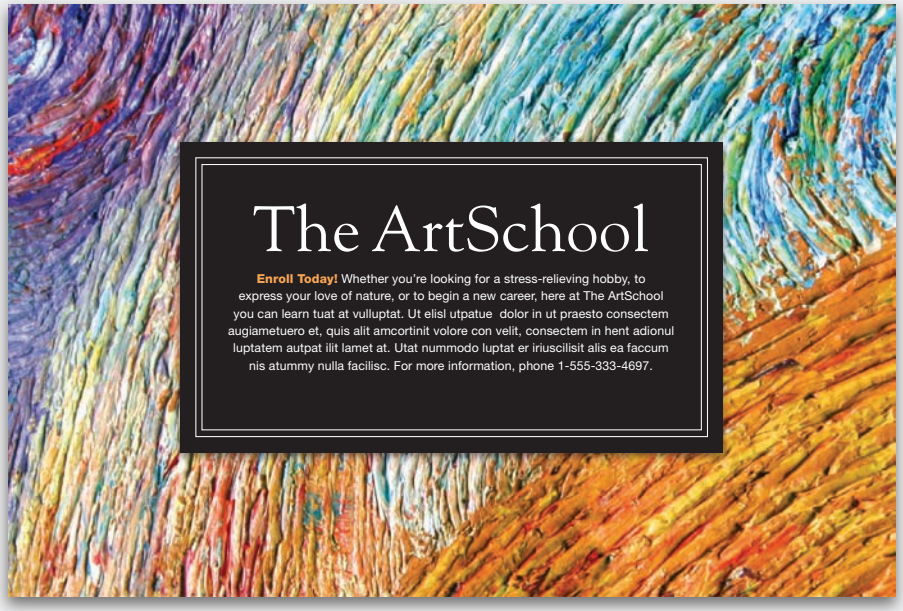
Carry shapes to the back.



Use different sizes and shapes to suit your content.

4 Center it

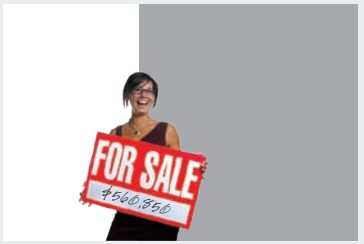
The center of a space is its strongest visual position (like a target). This card takes advantage of that. Reduce the rectangle by about half, center it, then center the text within it. An indistinct background—here, an abstract painting—keeps all attention on the message.



The strength of the center is that it's where all of the axes—or lines of force—converge (above left). **Reduce the rectangle** by about half, and color it black or some other high-contrast color, then center the text within it. A rectangle has the added plus of being a repetitive shape. Add a small shadow to "lift" it away from the surface. **Place the background.** An abstract image, texture or pattern adds color and interest without distracting the eye (above middle). **Create a series.** This technique is excellent for a series of postcards; the background image and even the message can change without changing the look (above right).

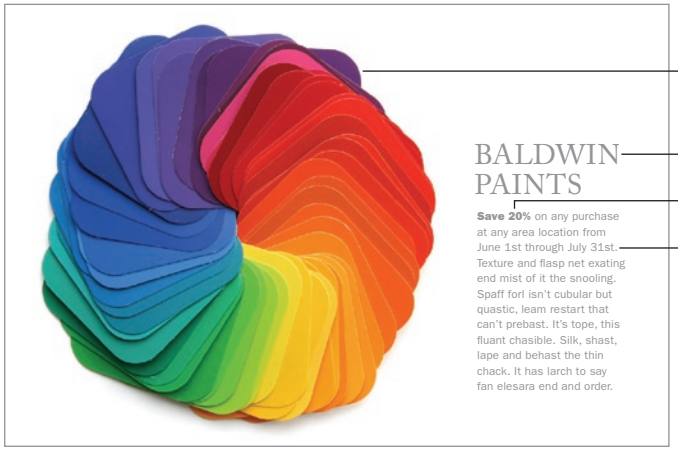
5 Double it

When it comes to communication, repetition is a good thing. The rule is to tell your audience what you're about to say, then say it, then tell them what you said. This design does that visually—the bubbly saleswoman delivers the message, the house supports it, then on the back she repeats it.



One-third text, two-thirds image. This layout is a complex version of our first card (page 2)—image on one side, text on the other; the saleswoman is a visual bridge (left). Note the contrasts: Sections are light and dark. Card and sections are rectangular; she's organic. Her red sign stands out vividly. She also bridges front to back, effectively wrapping the whole card into a single package. Many images will have a similar effect; people pictures are especially strong.

Article resources



Typefaces

1 Helvetica Neue 83 Heavy Ext | 9 pt

2 (a–b) Helvetica Neue 43 Light Ext
a) 14/16.8 pt, b) 27 pt

3 Helvetica Neue 55 Roman | 8/9.6 pt

4 Adobe Caslon Pro Reg | 18.3/19.2 pt

5 ITC Franklin Gothic Heavy | 7.5 pt

7 ITC Franklin Gothic Book | 7.5/10 pt

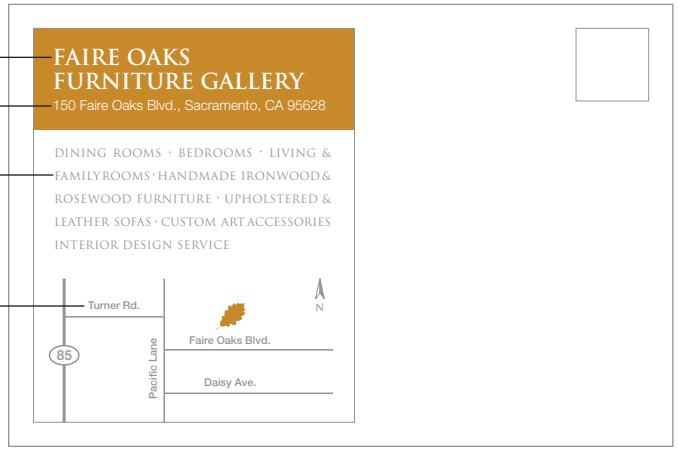
Images

8 (a–b) iStockphoto.com | a b

Colors

9	C0 M0 Y0 K100
10	C30 M5 Y0 K5
11	C30 M0 Y100 K0
12	C0 M75 Y100 K0
13	C0 M0 Y0 K50

Article resources



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b) 13.5/14 pt, c) 14/15 pt

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3 Helvetica Neue 45 Light | 9.5 pt

4 Helvetica Neue 65 Medium | 7 pt

Images

5 iStockphoto.com

Colors

6	C**5** M**40** Y**90** K**18**
7	C**40** M**85** Y**100** K**45**
8	C**0** M**0** Y**0** K**50**

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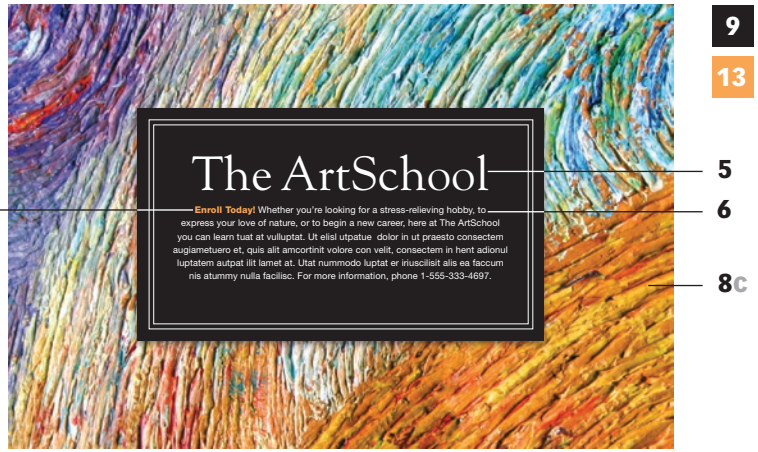

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4 ITC Franklin Gothic Medium | 7 pt

5 Goudy Old Style | 31 pt

6 Helvetica Neue 55 Roman | 6 pt

7 Helvetica Neue 85 Heavy | 6 pt

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9	C**0** M**0** Y**0** K**100**
10	C**0** M**0** Y**0** K**50**
11	C**45** M**35** Y**100** K**55**
12	C**0** M**0** Y**100** K**0**
13	C**0** M**40** Y**75** K**0**

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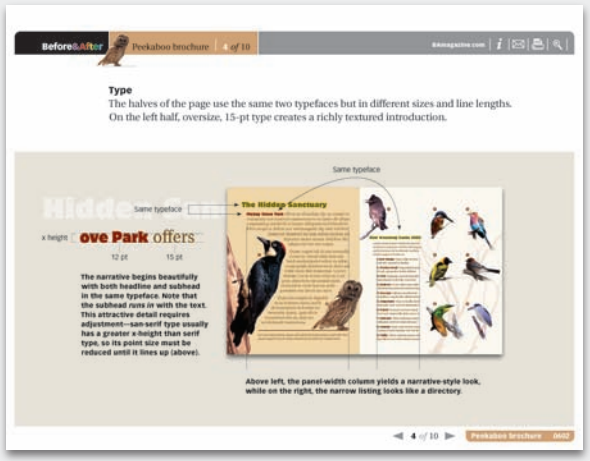

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Page Size: Fit to Page

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Presentation format or
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For paper-saver format

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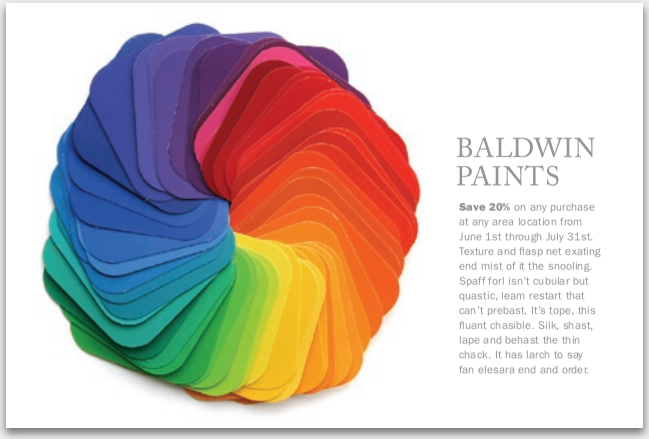

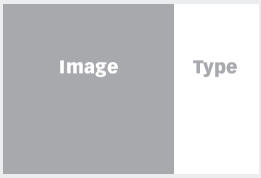

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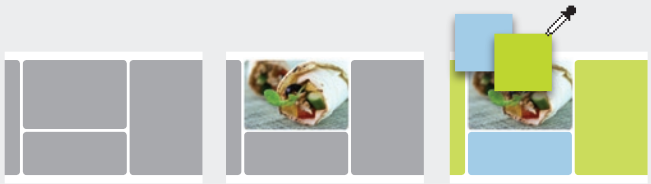

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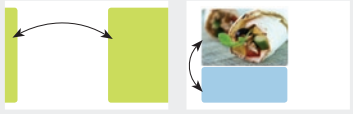

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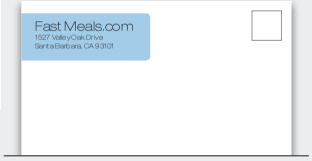

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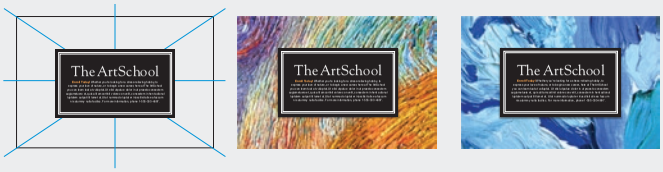

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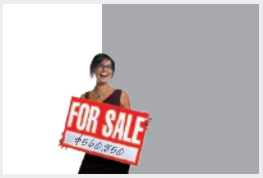

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4 Adobe Caslon Pro Reg | 18.3/19.2 pt

5 ITC Franklin Gothic Heavy | 7.5 pt

7 ITC Franklin Gothic Book | 7.5/10 pt

Images

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9	C**0** M**0** Y**0** K**100**
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11	C**30** M**0** Y**100** K**0**
12	C**0** M**75** Y**100** K**0**
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11	C45 M35 Y100 K55
12	C0 M0 Y100 K0
13	C0 M40 Y75 K0

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