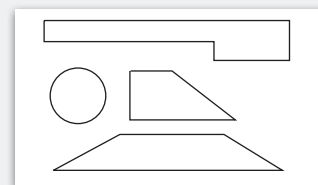
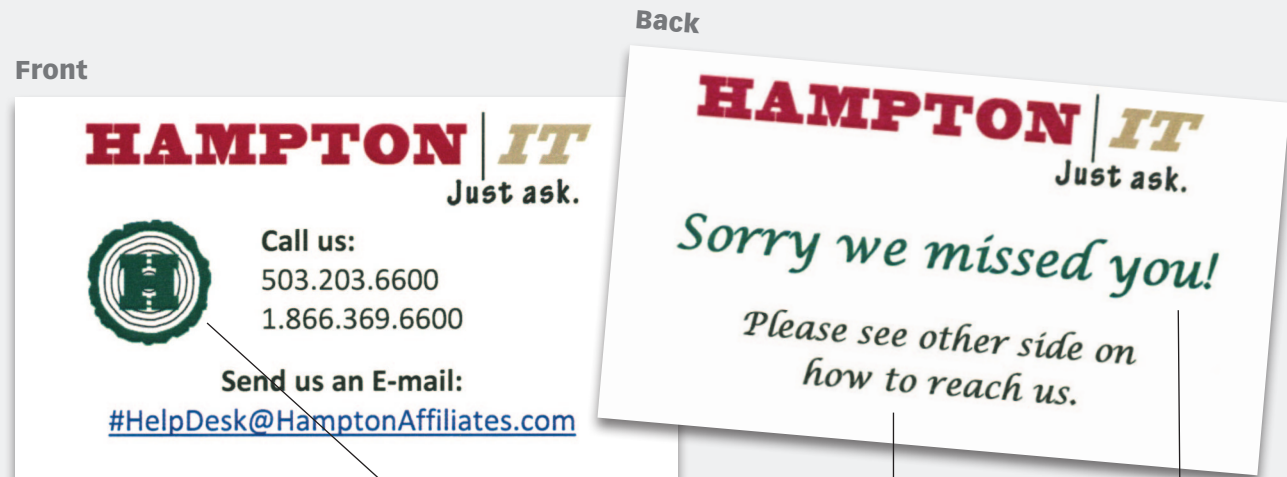


Visual organization clarifies a small card

The more information you have in a small space, the more important the details become. Limit your typestyles, have a focal point, and keep the design simple:

Before: Too busy
The IT department of Hampton Affiliates (the lumber company, not the hotel) prides itself on its interdepartmental customer service. "We made 'Just Ask' cards," said Rich Uchytel, "to drop around on people's desks, because we want others to 'just ask' us instead of trying to do it on their own." It's a helpful idea complicated by weak design. The two-sided card (right) is intended for double duty—contact information on one side and a "Sorry we missed you!" message on the other. Problem is, its many small, *undifferentiated* bits of information make a busy, not-so-clear message.



Unnecessary logo

The circle H company logo is unnecessary on an in-house card.

Unneeded instruction

Why tell the reader to turn the card over? Seems like it would come naturally when there's no information on this side.

Script is good

Swashy typeface is a good choice; its rhythmic, casual style looks like a visual voice.

Not-sure-of-itself layout

(Above) Good layout will have a guiding principle—a clear grid or focal point or typography, for example. Here, however, nothing stands out, and everything's sprinkled a little bit everywhere—a funny-shaped text block in the center, a triangular block on the bottom, empty space on the right, and a circle logo floating mid-air, all the same size.

Simpler and clearer!

Makeover improves the card by organizing it into three sections and changing its bullet-style data into a sentence-style conversation.

Front and back are the same design but in opposite colors. Black, white, red and gold are extremely versatile.

After

Makeover groups the elements into three clumps—headline, text block, and logo. Oversize “Just Ask” is the tone-setting focal point. The text puts the previously scattered bits of information into a natural sentence that fits the conversational spirit of the card. Note that each side now has all of the information. Easier!

Neutral background

will always add a softening layer of depth, against which white and black (and even red) show up equally well. Note that white (in the headline) is now an active color, not just a passive backdrop.



Centered design, simple hierarchy

Putting everything on a single axis calms the presentation. Now, instead of darting to and fro following the “sprinkles,” the eye glides quietly down a single line—big headline, instruction, departmental logotype.

Departmental logo

is now on the bottom in the anchor position, conveying quiet authority.

One typeface ties head and text simply; italics are *conversational*. Color choices follow the rule: *Color attracts, black explains*. The gold headline draws your eye, black text explains.

