

THE LEADING SURGERY DESIGN TEAM AT LEVITCH DESIGN ASSOCIATES ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT
BUILDING, INTERIORS AND MARKETING IN ORDER TO MAKE THE MOST OUT OF YOUR PRACTICE PRESENTATION

Style Guide #5 2010

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Q: “Until recently my receptionist had been creating my marketing flyers using word processing software, but I want to get a more professional looking result. What are the benefits of using a graphic designer to create my marketing material?”

A: Your marketing pieces should not only look good, but should communicate your business objectives, via functional and memorable pieces. Your marketing tools visually convey more about your brand than 1,000 words ever could.

So why would you entrust such a vital business task to someone that is not a design professional?

When you use a graphic designer, you are paying for their experience, their understanding, their objectivity, and their credibility.

Good design is a very powerful tool, and as such should be considered an investment. All good investments provide a return, which is why using a designer to design your marketing materials should be seen as a necessary allocation of budget, not an additional cost.

It is fair to say that the difference in using a designer to create your marketing material, Vs a staff member or friend that has dabbled in photoshop, is evidenced by the differences you will see in the design process, the application of design principles, and ultimately the end result.

What gives your company an edge in the marketing sphere is having well presented ideas that distinguish your company from your competitors. A friend or colleague can at times be too close to be able to draw out the most important messages to be communicated in your marketing – they will feel every message is important! These conflicting messages can become confusing, often with the task being bogged

Investing in professional design for your marketing material will ensure cut-through in the market.

down by other responsibilities and distractions.

A designer is trained to look at what you are trying to achieve with every piece of marketing collateral from an outside perspective, and create solutions to your communication requirements from an objective position. They follow a clear design process that includes visualising the problem and solutions, highlighting the pertinent information from an end-user perspective, and will then argue for the best creative solutions to meet each unique marketing challenge.

A graphic designer is an expert at solving visual problems. They have spent years studying and understanding the processes and psychology of colours, shapes, movement. They have experience in the print and finishing process, and can create a design quickly using the latest tools. They have learnt how best to convey information to an audience.

The end result of using a graphic designer is a well designed, clear and concise marketing tool. You could mail 5,000 badly designed flyers and get no calls, or produce 1,000, extremely well designed flyers, and receive a dozen calls. Which would you prefer?

Q: *“Many of the dentists I know have their practice in converted houses. I have seen an older, red-brick house up for sale in the perfect location, on the corner of a busy major road and a quieter residential street. How can I determine whether the premises are suitable for my new practice?”*

A: Before purchasing any new premises, you must first ascertain whether a healthcare facility is an allowable use of the space, before even looking at whether the space is suitable for your particular requirements. Key primary considerations in determining whether the premises are suitable for a healthcare facility are the zoning of the premises and car parking requirements.

Zoning

You will need to consult with your local council to determine the zoning, or classification of the site. Within each zoning category, there are various ‘allowable uses’. The current zoning is important, as some prohibit or restrict healthcare practices. Generally, you are looking for the following terms as allowable uses:

- ◆ Medical centre
- ◆ Professional consulting rooms

It’s important to keep in mind that zoning laws can vary from council to council, and just because a medical practitioner is practising across the road, or in the building next door, this does not necessarily mean that your building zoning will allow for the same use. The exemption to the rule is where existing use rights apply to premises. Existing uses are lawfully commenced uses which are subsequently prohibited by an Environmental Planning Instrument. Your new premises may be located within a residential area, but if it housed a dental surgery immediately prior to you acquiring the property, you are allowed to continue using the premises for this purpose.

Car Parking

Councils attempt to define areas in the community that have specific usage so that they can have some ability to control the movement of cars and people within different precincts. Providing adequate off street parking for buildings with commercial activity is therefore crucial, and it can often become a contentious issue for practitioners looking to set up practice in residential areas.

It is important to note the number of spaces, if any, that come with premises. Disabled spaces may also need to be provided.

The number of spaces required is generally determined by one of the following formula’s:

- ◆ Spaces per practitioner – this is usually between 3 & 5



- ◆ Spaces per consult room – this is usually between 4-5
 - ◆ Spaces per sqm of the tenancy – this is usually between 1/25sqm – 1/40sqm.
- Other roadblocks to be aware of that will determine whether a site is suitable for your practice include:
- ◆ Disabled Requirements – relate to disabled access, WC’s, tactile indicators on steps, level changes, handrails, and Braille on signs and door clearances etc.
 - ◆ Emergency Egress – There are maximum travel distances that are allowed from the furthest corner of a tenancy to outside air, or fire stair / corridor.
 - ◆ Tenancy Area – This means more than just the size of your tenancy. The layout can make access and flow difficult, and you want to ensure easy access to your practice from car parks and building entry levels.
 - ◆ Suitability of the existing services – including air-conditioning, floor, ceiling, electrical services, hydraulic services, fire protection services.
 - ◆ Building Code of Australia – The BCA is the standard which all buildings are required to meet before they can be issued with an Occupation Certificate, which allows the building to be used. It is the responsibility of the building owner to ensure the building and internal fit-out complies. ◆

If you would like to find out more about the above, we would be happy to evaluate your current situation and answer any of your queries. Anne Levitch & Kimberley Ward can be contacted at: info@levitch.com.au or + 6 12 9880 9300.



Anne Levitch, LDA’s Design Director, is a specialist designer with more than 25 years experience in healthcare design projects. A Fellow of the Design Institute of Australia, Anne has lectured on the Faculty of the Built Environment at UNSW and has presented in Australia and New Zealand on Dental Practice Presentation and Design.



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Levitch Design Associates (LDA) has been providing innovative design solutions to healthcare professionals for over 25 years. Offering architectural, building and interior design, through to graphic design and marketing solutions, LDA provides an integrated design approach; from the look of the building to that of your business card. For more information about LDA, please visit www.levitch.com.au