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# *Project: Design a Business Card*

**PHASE ONE: FOCUS ON STRUCTURE**



edited by  
**Ellen Lupton**

BLOGS

BOOKS

BUSINESS CARDS

CDS

FLYERS

INVITATIONS

LOGOS

NEWSLETTERS

NOTECARDS

POSTERS

STATIONERY

T-SHIRTS

WEB SITES

WALL GRAPHICS

ZINES

AND MORE...

Some inspirational examples from my book,  
*D.I.Y. Design It Yourself*



## Business Card

The business card remains an indispensable tool in the digital age. Cards are crucial for, well, business, but they are useful for countless other forms of networking as well. Make one for your freelance lawn ornament business, your goat farm, your band, your new baby, or just for you for being you. In fact, remove “business” from the title, and use your card for anything you want. In this chapter, learn how to make a card for every one of your identities. — *Spence Holman and Kristen Spilman*

**HISTORY** Business and calling cards first appeared in 17th-century England. Business cards acted primarily as advertising, while calling cards served as letters of introduction among the middle and upper classes. Etiquette dictated, however, that one type of card could not be substituted for the other. Today, cards are used interchangeably for social and business purposes.

**STANDARD SIZE** Card sizes have varied over the years, but at some point 3 1/2 x 2 inches became the norm. Consider the pros and cons when deciding on whether to deviate from the standard size. Odd shapes and sizes are attractive and memorable; however, you have to consider the needs of the end user. Many people use Rolodexes, business card holders and plastic sheet protectors for filing and storage, and those accessories all utilize the standard size. An odd-size card has a higher chance of ending up in the trash simply because it is inconvenient. Either way you go, there are dozens of options for creating a card that is uniquely your own. Conforming to the standard size does not have to be a limitation; rather, it is just one less decision to be made. You can also use the standard size in a creative way by orienting your card vertically instead of horizontally.

**STANDARD INFORMATION** Cards typically present a company name, person’s name, address, phone number, e-mail, and web address. You decide what content is right for you.



- Think about how you plan to use your card when determining how much contact information to include.
- Maybe you want to go the mysterious route by leaving your name off and just include a Web site or e-mail.
- Consider making a two-sided card, splitting your information between the front and back.
- Maybe your cards will serve primarily as examples of your photographs or artwork, with limited contact information.
- Working out of your home? Consider setting up a mailbox at the local post office for privacy.

Kristen Spilman and Spence Holman,  
chapter from *D.I.Y. Design It Yourself*.

**donna i. young\***

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**Kristen Spilman and Spence Holman,**  
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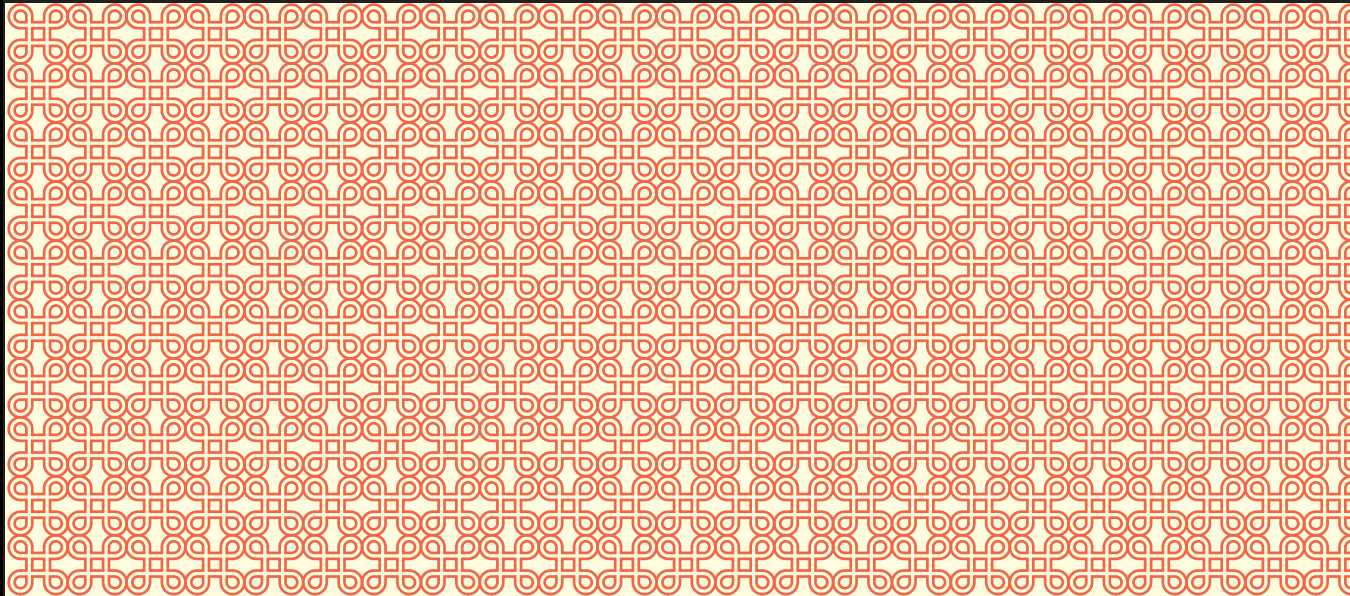
**Kristen Spilman and Spence Holman,**  
*D.I.Y. Design It Yourself.*

donna i. young

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**Kristen Spilman and Spence Holman,**  
*D.I.Y. Design It Yourself.*



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*D.I.Y. Design It Yourself.*



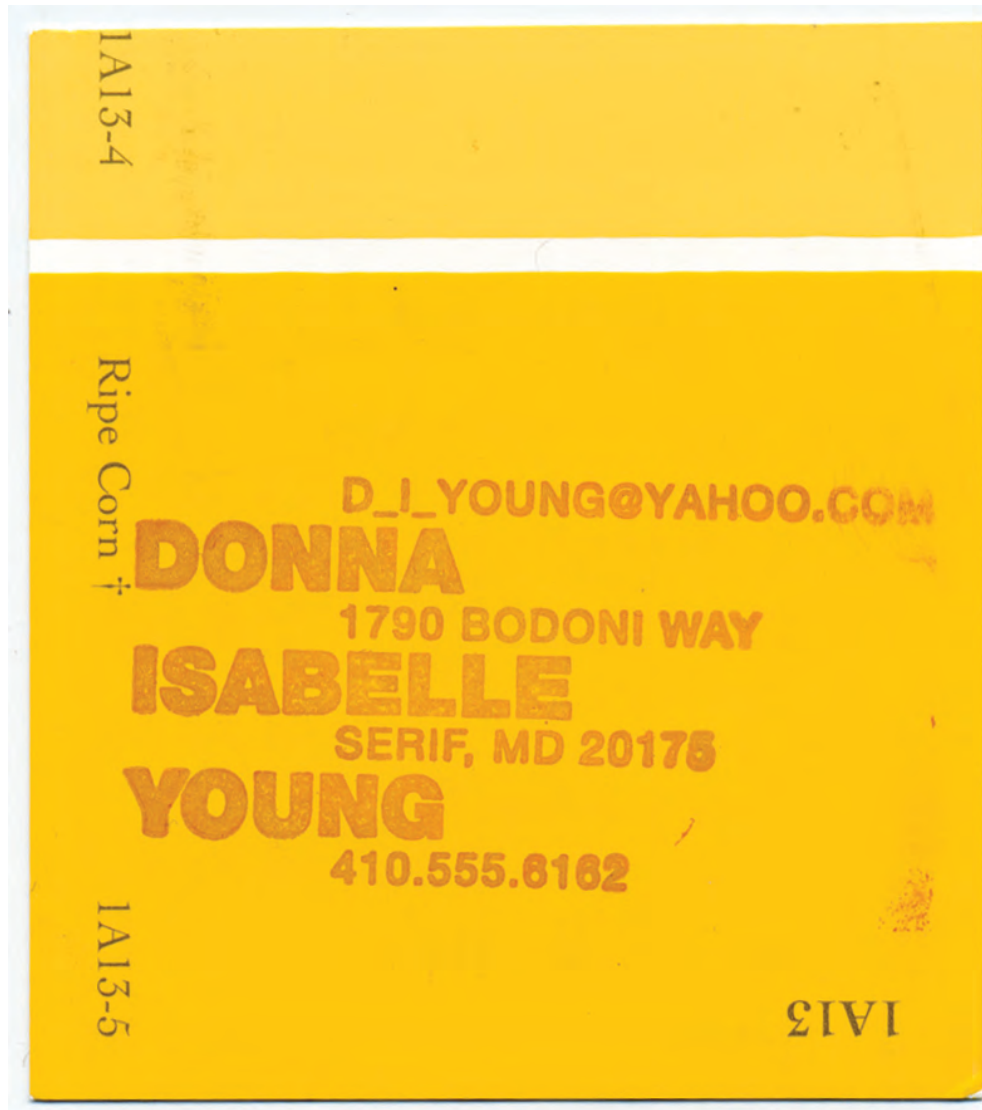
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**Kristen Spilman and Spence Holman,**  
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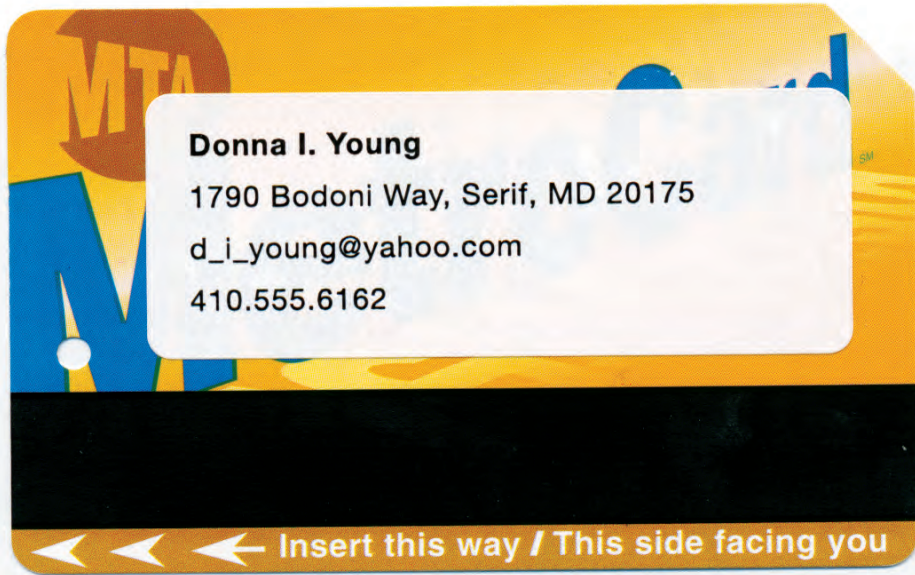




**Kristen Spilman and Spence Holman,**  
*D.I.Y. Design It Yourself.*



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*D.I.Y. Design It Yourself.*



**Kristen Spilman and Spence Holman,**  
*D.I.Y. Design It Yourself.*

*Let's design a business card.*

**8 pt Helvetica Neue Medium**

**Miss Helvetica  
Helen Gloria Stein  
331 St. Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003**

**design, typography, text**

**Standard business card size in U.S. = 3.5 x 2 inches**

Miss Helvetica  
Helen Gloria Stein  
331 St. Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003

design, typography, text

Miss  
Helen  
331  
New

St.  
York,

Gloria  
Marks  
NY

Helvetica  
Stein  
Place  
20003

design,

typography,

text

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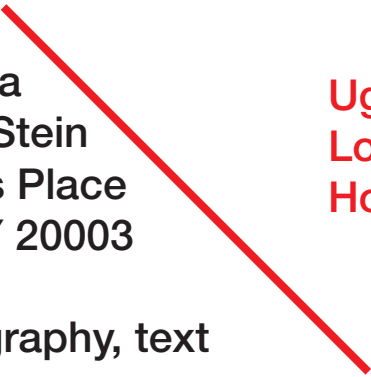
design, typography, text

## 8 pt Helvetica Neue Medium

Miss Helvetica  
Helen Gloria Stein  
331 St. Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003

design, typography, text

Ugly rag!  
Looks like a staircase!  
Horrors!





8 pt Helvetica Neue Medium

Miss Helvetica

Helen Gloria Stein  
331 St. Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003

design, typography, text

8 pt Helvetica Neue Medium

Miss Helvetica

Helen Gloria Stein  
331 St. Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003

design, typography, text

Still ugly!



8 pt Helvetica Neue Medium

Miss Helvetica

Helen Gloria Stein  
331 Saint Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003

design  
typography  
text

# 8 pt Helvetica Neue Medium

Miss Helvetica

Helen Gloria Stein  
331 Saint Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003

design  
typography  
text



top heavy!

8 pt Helvetica Neue Medium

Miss Helvetica

Helen Gloria Stein  
331 Saint Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003

design  
typography  
text

Align text to the top of the x-height!

**Miss Helvetica**

**Helen Gloria Stein  
331 Saint Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003**

**design  
typography  
text**

# 8 pt Helvetica Neue Medium

Miss Helvetica

Helen Gloria Stein  
331 Saint Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003

design  
typography  
text

**bottom  
heavy!**

8 pt Helvetica Neue Medium

design  
typography  
text

Miss Helvetica

Helen Gloria Stein  
331 Saint Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003



## 8 pt Helvetica Neue Thin and Heavy

design  
typography  
text

**Miss Helvetica**

Helen Gloria Stein  
331 Saint Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003

design  
typography  
text

Miss Helvetica

**Helen Gloria Stein**  
331 Saint Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003

**design**  
**typography**  
**text**

Miss Helvetica

Helen Gloria Stein  
331 Saint Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003

design  
typography  
text

**Miss Helvetica**

Helen Gloria Stein  
331 Saint Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003

## 8 pt Helvetica Neue Thin and Heavy

design  
typography  
text

**Miss Helvetica**

Helen Gloria Stein  
331 Saint Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003

design  
typography  
text

Miss Helvetica

**Helen Gloria Stein**  
331 Saint Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003

**design**  
**typography**  
**text**

Miss Helvetica

Helen Gloria Stein  
331 Saint Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003

design  
typography  
text

**Miss Helvetica**

Helen Gloria Stein  
331 Saint Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003

# 8 pt Helvetica Neue Thin and Heavy

**design**  
**typography**  
**text**

miss helvetica

Helen Gloria Stein  
331 Saint Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003

It's all Helvetica Thin, but the weights don't match because the sizes are different.

miss helvetica

Helen Gloria Stein  
331 Saint Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003

(thicker)

(thinner)

miss helvetica

Helen Gloria Stein  
331 Saint Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003

miss helvetica

**Helvetica Ultra Light**  
**Type is sized so that stroke**  
**matches the smaller type**  
**in Helvetica Thin**

Helen Gloria Stein  
331 Saint Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003

# Helvetica Neue Thin, Ultra Light, and Heavy

**design**  
**typography**  
**text**

miss helvetica

Helen Gloria Stein  
331 Saint Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003

18 pt Helvetica Ultra Light

8 pt Helvetica Thin

6 pt Helvetica Heavy

**design**

**typography**

**text**

miss helvetica

Helen Gloria Stein  
331 Saint Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003

18 pt Helvetica Ultra Light

8 pt Helvetica Thin

6 pt Helvetica Heavy

**design**  
**typography**  
**text**

miss helvetica

Helen Gloria Stein  
331 Saint Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003

It feels right with equal distances  
separating main elements



18 pt Helvetica Ultra Light

8 pt Helvetica Thin

6 pt Helvetica Heavy



That same vertical gap becomes the top and bottom margin, too.

We started with simplicity.

Miss Helvetica  
Helen Gloria Stein  
331 St. Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003

design, typography, text

**design**  
**typography**  
**text**

miss helvetica

Helen Gloria Stein  
331 Saint Marks Place  
New York, NY 20003

We added changes and complexity  
from the inside out.

## Summary: Design a Business Card

1. Create a file or artboard in InDesign or Illustrator, in a standard size. (3.5 x 2 inches is the U.S. standard.)
2. Type your content and set it in a base sans serif font, 8pt, with 12pt line spacing.
3. Explore basic alignment (flush left, flush right, centered).
4. Begin breaking up the content. Try composing the elements around a central axis, but don't get stuck with this decision.
5. What content requires emphasis (person's name, company name, service offered, phone number)?
6. How will you create emphasis (scale, placement, weight)? Don't commit to a solution until you have made multiple variations.
7. Look again at the composition. Is it balanced? Is the emphasis appropriate?
8. Print and trim several solutions and lay them out to see and touch.
9. Post four designs as your Phase 1 project outcome.

**Futura**

**Gill Sans**

**News Gothic**

**Franklin Gothic**

**Helvetica**

**Univers**

**Gotham**