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The hand written note is not dead! Consider personalized stationery.

I recently received a note - a real piece of mail! - from a professional acquaintance. It's still sitting on my desk. The note card was elegant and sophisticated but also vibrant: just like her. And I thought to myself, "Perfect stationery!" Now, if I had received the same note from another work colleague of mine, one who is business-like and quite direct, I would have appreciated the thought but there would have been a disconnect: "Did his wife pick out the stationery? Why is it that color?" The messages we communicate, especially as professionals, matter. Yes, even stationery sends a message. Here are five tips for choosing the stationery product that's right for your brand.

1.

Consider your personal brand before you place the order. My mantra: a brand is consistent, confident and credible. What are your top three strengths? How can you convey those traits through your stationery?

2. **Investigate stationery lines.** Take the time to see what's out there. The big box office supply stores carry different well-known stationery lines that you can check out. Local gift and stationery stores carry many wonderful choices. You can also order unique and personalized sets online. Emily Post has recently partnered with M. Middleton to produce Regards, a high-quality line of personal and business stationery.

3. **Color/logo/font.** When someone receives a note in the mail, the first thing they notice is the color, the second is the logo or monogram and the third is the font. And then they read your note. When choosing these brand indicators, remember what impression you want to make on

the recipient.

4. **Note cards are a personal touch - not a hard sell.** Your letterhead and note cards are two different written communication vehicles. Letterhead is for establishing business, proposals and more complicated communications. Note cards are for thank yous, congratulations ("I just saw you received that promotion. Congratulations!), brief check ins, invitations and seasonal greetings. And do have contact information: your address on the envelope, your e-mail and phone, perhaps at the bottom of the stationery. We generally send notes out with the hope that we will get a response back at some point: make it easy for them.

5. **Consider different types of stationery.** Correspondence cards are flat, heavy cards are slightly more informal than a folded note card. Folded cards are classic. Half sheets are great if your script is large or you tend to write longer notes: these fold in half to fit the envelope.

Looking for advice on how to write notes? Take a look at Lizzie Post's AOL video on " Good old fashioned thank yous.
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