Why Not Accessorize Your Printed Project With a QR Code?

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These strange little QR squares have been around for a while, but they're not getting the recognition they deserve. So let's take the mystery out of these cubes and show you the value they bring to the digital experience.

First things first - what are QR codes? QR is short for quick response and isn't that what most people want today? In a nutshell, it's a machine readable code (read by your smartphone) that contains information. The information it holds, is whatever you want someone to explore. QR codes are like teleportation devices, they instantly transport the user to a brand new land of opportunity where they can discover all you have to offer.

So how do they actually work? It's very simple. Let's say you want your customers to visit your website store, simply enter the URL for your store, select create QR code and it will produce a cute little downloadable QR code. Imbedded within this code is the link to your store, and when the customer scans the code it will instantly take them to your store page. Perhaps your client has multiple locations, in this application you could link the URL for their webpage with the list of locations and immediately their customer can find a store near them. Furthermore, the app stores the link so customers can revisit it more than one time.

The other great feature of QR codes is that unlike augmented reality (AR), where you need to download the corresponding app to make AR work; you can simply download any QR reader and be able to scan any QR code.

QR codes are versatile and can be put on any substrate that you can print on. Not only can they go on paper products such as brochures, rack cards, business cards, letterhead, magazines, catalogues, sell sheets, etc.; they can go on vinyl, film, magnetic sheets, pressure sensitive, window, wall and floor graphics, foam board, corrugated and more.

QR codes can also be generated for a number of other things such as VCard, text, email, SMS, social media, and PDFs. They can be customized and created in colours, shapes and even include your company logo.

The important thing to consider before incorporating them into your marketing collateral is where and when they will be seen. A QR code is another name for a link, so don't put it on a website or in an email, nor does it make sense to put it on something where there's no internet connection. It's also not a good idea to put one on a billboard that's so far away that you can't scan it or on something that's moving. There's an excellent video by author, Scott Stratten of Unmarketing, about the incorrect use of QR codes. Check it out!

Now that you know the tips and tricks to properly using a QR code, try it out, get creative and see how a well-executed QR code can engage customers and grow your business!

Lynda has been in the graphic arts industry for over 30 years. She started in the family business, and was trained in typesetting, graphic design, film, plates, and bindery. After the family business was sold, Lynda took the knowledge she had learned on the floor of the print shop and went into print sales. Later, she moved over to the merchant side where she has spent the past 20 years. During this time, she has worked as an Outside Sales Representative, Business Development Representative (working with designers, agencies and end users), and is currently the Contracts and Tenders Manager. In addition to this role, Lynda is our Paper and Media Educator, providing training workshops to both our external and internal customers.