

Promotion - Creative Promotion Through Your E-mail Signature

Every e-mail message you send can promote you, your work and activities, automatically, without you having to retype the same information each time. You achieve this by typing your promotional message once, in a Signature file, and instructing your computer to add it automatically to the end of every message you send.

You find the Signature file in your e-mail program. In Outlook Express, for example, you get to it by clicking on Tools on the Toolbar along the top of the screen. Then click on Options, and then you will see a tab for Signature. Click on that and follow the instructions to write and apply your signature.

Just don't limit yourself to giving the basic information that might be on a business card. Go beyond your name, address and telephone, and get creative! Signature files can act as free billboard space that you can customize as often as you want.

Here are some reasons to create a new signature file:

- You're in a show or exhibition
- You have new work in a shop
- You are scheduled to, or have already appeared in the media
- You want participants for a workshop or class
- You won an award
- You're looking to buy or sell something
- You're looking for helpers, assistants or models
- You made a corporate sale (Tip: provide a link to their Web site)

Good signature files will direct readers exactly where you want on the Internet, leading them right to the specific page of information you want them to see. If you're not making it easy for readers to find out more about you, your signature file is not working as well as it should.

Here are some techniques for excellent signature files:

1. Keep your signature file fresh and interesting by changing the content frequently. If it's always the same contact information, readers will skip it.
2. Keep it short. Think of billboard copy! Pique your readers' interest and invite them to go for more information.
3. Include the complete and accurate URL for the precise page that has what you want your readers to see. Make it easy for them to click through to your information. As an example, here's one that has drawn people:

Gloria Hildebrandt orchardhouse@aztec-net.com

Info on my services: <http://hpcaonline.com/glhi.html>

Read my article "The Credible Consultant" at http://www.homebusinessreport.com/Editorial_Features/editorial_11.htm

4. Use your signature file routinely on all your messages for several weeks. You never know where your messages might get forwarded, and who might read your signature.

5. If you know that colleagues and friends have seen your signature file often, do them a favour and cut it out in your messages to them. Over-exposure can be as bad as none!

Finally, get your message out there. Participate in lists and discussion groups for people other than your immediate professional community, and send interesting information to colleagues and friends. When sending messages to discussion lists, be sure to include your e-mail address in your signature. Without it, people can usually only reply to you via the list, letting everyone read the message, which is bad form and may not be permitted on the list. Without giving your own e-mail address, you may end up not receiving important messages intended only for you.

By keeping your signature file interesting, current and convenient for people to find out more about you, you are using it as an excellent promotional tool.