



ALPACA ADVANTAGE July 2008 Issue

Actionable ideas on growing your alpaca business

July Topics: (How to Create Professional Looking Alpaca Postcards on a Budget/Reducing the Cost of Alpaca Website Creation)

How to Create Professional Looking Alpaca Postcards on a Budget

In the last newsletter we shared 3 postcard marketing tips for alpaca breeders. If you missed the June issue, you can read it at www.WisteriaSuriRanch.com/newsletters.htm .

To make this process as clear as possible, I will write the steps and give my experience as an example. This really is one of the many ways you can create postcards, but the good news is- I paid \$21.32 for 50 very nice oversized color postcard shipped to my house. (The image of the postcard is attached as a separate file as a sample.)

Step 1: Find a few good pictures of your alpacas and have them ready for upload.

I selected 4 pictures of our herdsire since I wanted to market him. I picked pictures of his full body, lock structure, luster, and color spots.

Step 2: Go to www.VistaPrint.com and look for their free product promotions. You can also sign up to their newsletter, and you'll get lots of extra freebies. Click to the free postcards link.

I like Vista Print since they give you lots of freebies to try out new things. I used the "Free 50 Oversized Postcards" promotion they always seem to have going on...so look on their website for it, or sign up on their website.

Step 3: Select the “Start with a blank template” option under “Other Design Options”.

They have nice easier templates, but not much that seems to fit the whole alpaca theme... The blank template allows you to upload pictures and design as you go.

It might take a little trial and error, but considering graphic designers charge at least \$50-75 an hour, it’s worth it to pay the upload fee for the pictures and design.

Step 4: Click on the Add Image button and select the files to upload.

I paid \$3.74 per image uploaded. You won’t be charged until you actually decide to get the postcards you designed. So upload as many as you want and see which ones work well. If you end up not liking it, you have nothing to lose.

Step 5: Arrange them nicely, add some text, adjust some fonts and finish the front side.

This did take some time for me as I’m not a professional designer. I played around with it and ended up resizing the pictures so all four fit perfectly. I used the lightest picture showing luster and added my text over that. You can easily preview your work, so I kept moving things around until I thought it looked nice and clean.

Step 6: Click on the back side button and add lots of text.

You can see in my sample that I didn’t waste any space on the back. For a black and white back side, there is no additional charge. Pictures are nice but adding text with a call to action is very important.

Make sure to add your phone number in bold, your web address, and a call to action such as- “Reserve your introductory breeding today (512) 716-0490.”

If this is a general farm postcard, add something about your farm. For ours, it was about our herdsire.

Step 7: Finish up- select a glossy finish, choose shipping, and check out.

I've found they have rather fast shipping in general, so I always pick the cheapest one. I paid \$6.36 on shipping and processing for this order.

Final note:

I've shopped around quite a bit to get the best price with decent quality- and I keep coming back to VistaPrint.com. I've ordered matching stationary- 250 business cards, 250 letterheads, and 200 envelopes for \$127.54 including shipping. We were rather impressed by the quality and enjoy using them. I paid a graphic designer to help me with my stationary.

Reducing the Cost of Alpaca Website Creation

- ✓ **Did you know you can buy your own domain for \$9.99 or less a year?**
- ✓ **Did you know you can buy monthly hosting service for under \$50 a year?**
- ✓ **Did you know graphic/web designers don't all charge thousands of dollars?**

It didn't occur to me until I talked to one of my copywriting clients that many people think website creation is very costly. She shared with me that she spent thousands on design, and she pays a bundle for hosting every month.

With handy AlpacaNation and other web marketing tools, why would you want your own website? Well, it depends. I built mine because I wanted to eventually have a great educational alpaca website- after all, I'm a former teacher... Also, I wanted to have a reasonable length web address... not www.alpacanation.com/wisteriasuriranch.asp which would just trail off everything. I also wanted an email address- info@wisteriasuriranch.com instead of yahoo, hotmail, etc. And- I sort of enjoy this stuff.

Affordable services and ways to create a website:

1. www.Godaddy.com is one of the most popular and widely used web solutions company. You can buy domains easily and get it hosted for next to nothing. Not everything is intuitive, but their tech support is awesome and can help you through pretty much anything.
2. In the last issue, we mentioned hiring professionals from www.Guru.com. That's a great place to hire people- but when you're not sure what you want, that's tricky. Check out www.dreamtemplate.com for professional web designs. You can browse around and look for something you like- and let your designer know. Or, if you're more adventurous, it's only \$60 or so to have full access to their professional templates worth thousands of dollars! I bought the access mostly so I can communicate with my designer. It's not very easy to manipulate the templates unless you know what you're doing- but this will help you reduce costs since the designer won't have to start from scratch.
3. For the total do-it-yourselfer, buy yourself Dreamweaver and build your own website. I love this program and have been using the old version for a while. I made www.WisteriaSuriRanch.com using this program.
4. As far as prices go for hiring graphic/web designer, the most reasonable lady I know charges about \$400-500 for a 5 page or so website. Of course, you provide the content. If you need someone to write the content, you'll probably find the lowest prices on Guru.com. You'll be looking for an online copywriter/web content copywriter. They can also do edits for you- and that can save a little extra depending on your writing skills. Also- look for the 7 Online Writing Tips in the May issue of Alpaca Advantage.

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