

Navigating Holiday Cards in 2021

Is your firm considering sending a holiday card this year? If the answer is yes, the next question you need to answer is whether to do a printed card or a digital card. While we have moved away from the strange and difficult year of 2020, we still have a long way to go. Some offices have brought back staff while others have continued the work-from-home model, and some are in a hybrid mode. Here are some thoughts to help you decide which direction would be best for your firm's holiday card this year.

Printed law firm holiday cards

If you are thinking of doing the traditional print card, you need to determine if your clients are back in the office or are they still working from home. Sending a card to an empty office can mean that the client sees the card late, or never. Can you find out if the client's office will forward mail to their home? Or does the client come in periodically to sort through piles of mail? Add to these considerations the potential delays in USPS deliveries.

What is the status of your office? Have your attorneys returned to the office or are they still working from home? You will need to allow time to get cards in employees' hands for personalizing or signing cards before sending them out.

The advantage of a print card is that it offers a human touch, especially if signed or with a personal note, which goes a long way to showing you have an interest in your client. Not signing a card is a missed opportunity. With so many people lacking face-to-face interactions, a personalized holiday card can bring back some closeness with the client. Also, recipients often showcase cards in their offices to add some holiday cheer to their workspaces, so your print card could get noticed by more than just the one recipient.

Creating, producing and sending printed cards can be time-consuming, though. And a long list of personal messages to include means hand cramps. If more than one person works with the client, you need to coordinate getting multiple signatures (a logistical nightmare for work-from-home offices), or decide who from the team will be the primary sender so a recipient only gets one card from the firm. With this year's possible post office delivery delays, you also have to send cards earlier to ensure the card reaches the client before the holiday and not after. Finally, having a long list can be expensive, since printing and postage can add up.

Animated digital cards

This process can be simpler. If your employees are working remotely, the ease of coordinating and sending an [electronic holiday card](#) can be a huge benefit to you and your law firm. Ecards are sent out through an email delivery system like MailChimp or ConstantContact (to name a few). Once a list is merged for a final send, the system will purge any duplicate email addresses, so each client gets only one message.



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The option of animation in digital cards adds an element of fun and can enhance the personal feel of the card.

Another advantage of a digital card is a wider reach. By creating an [email marketing campaign](#) with your animation hosted on a video or web server, the firm can share the card through multiple social sites and encourage individuals to share the link on their accounts too, increasing the overall reach and views.

[Sending animated cards via email](#) allows for longer messages and a more playful approach, but be aware of short attention spans. Shorter animations have the best chance of being viewed all the way through. Past 30 seconds, you'll lose your audience's interest quickly, so keep it short.

Some of the downsides of the electronic option are email overload and potential delivery issues. Working from home, our inboxes are more stuffed with messages. Your holiday greetings could fall down the list in the recipient's inbox. And no delivery system is failproof. With spam filters monitoring all incoming messages, your holiday message may fall into a spam/junk folder. Plus, an ecard can feel impersonal, and with an automated delivery system, it is more difficult or impossible to personalize or add a note to the message.

Season's greetings

Many of us are still in a social distancing mode and have limited our in-person interactions, so it is important that your clients and contacts don't feel forgotten. A print card can go a long way toward conveying a warmer feel. You could take a hybrid approach with your holiday card; send an ecard to a longer list and a signed paper card to your top clients.

Do not rule out taking a few minutes to pick up the phone and call some of your top clients. Checking in with a short (five-minute or less) call on the personal level will let your clients know you value them.

Have questions about holiday cards? Reach out to me, Alan E. Singles at asingles@jaffepr.com.