

An eloquent send

CARDS CONTAINING WORDS AND SENTIMENT ARE ARGUABLY THE MOST TRADITIONAL CARDS OF THEM ALL. IN TODAY'S MARKET IT'S ALL ABOUT STRIKING THE RIGHT TONE OF VOICE.

Wordy cards have going through a kind of re-birth over the decades.

There has been somewhat of a backlash to the 'gushy, over sentimentality' of verse and sentiment cards, with more contemporary card companies spurning the long prose in favour of shorter, snappier linguistics and bolder statements.

No doubt about it, verse and sentiment cards are an emotional send. They offer an avenue to express our feelings to the ones we love and care about. But whatever your take on it, there will always be a market for verse and sentiment and times when no other card will do.

As sure as babies are born, people will pass away. In respect for the loved ones left behind, the only appropriate card is one that contains a heartfelt message of sympathy from the sender, at a time when it's often difficult to find the right thing to say.

A number of card publishers are diversifying their offer to incorporate more verse and sentiment. Pigment Productions, most notable for its humour cards, launched two new verse and sentiment ranges at Home and Gift, Harrogate. They included 'Hearts and Flowers', a floral photography and 'Hand on Heart' which is aimed at younger audience containing contemporary verse.

So the war of the words is not black and white. Within the mix are various shades of grey. Many card publishers, such as UK Greetings, have developed products that offer something for everyone, whether it be understated and contemporary or

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Richard Belford

traditional and heartfelt.

UK Greetings think it is important to look at the market and create ranges that cater for all tastes. The young shopper might look for a chatty voice or 'slang', the modern consumer seeks out simplicity and the traditional buyer remains faithful to the verse.

Laura Hirst, UKG Editorial Manager explains that when creating a verse it's important never to compromise content for the sake of rhyme.

"The verse should always make a connection between the sender and recipient, as well as be appropriate for the occasion.

"For example in a sympathy card it's about setting a tone that isn't too light, then striking the balance between offering understanding and support without suggesting that you can identify with what the recipient is going through".

By sending a card, you are making an emotional connection with the recipient, so the words must speak to the consumer. When a consumer has a specific recipient in mind it's essential that the sentiment is just right.

Laura adds, "We have to make sure we say it how she wants to say it...but better".

Anecdotal evidence suggests that people's desire for verse and sentiment has some regional and cultural differences. Pigment Productions MD, Ian O'Brian said: "The North West really go for verse, sentiment and gushy! Our reps sell Well in the South West too, but not the South East."

The comparison with music and lyrics are vast too. Verse writer Richard Belford, said: "A good sentiment or verse is born from true emotion and are like songs for those

of us who cannot sing." And a press release from Simon Elvin hums, 'It's only words...' but in the words of the song, 'words are all I have'.

Simon Elvin Cards has been very successful in the areas of sentiment and sympathy. As Simon Elvin himself explains, "Sentiment is a vital element of the card-sending impulse, and we work on it continuously. Whether long or short verse, the words must be meaningful and modern; after all, we are trying to help real people express themselves. It can be hard to find the right words sometimes, so many people look for a card that does this for them, or simply add a card to a personal note to accentuate the message they are sending."

Writer, Richard Belford, says that his primary audience is anyone who has or will experience the loss of a loved one. He said: "I feel [that verse] is intended to appeal to anyone looking for hope, feeling loss or experiencing regret."

He refers to his work as parables which are by definition an allegory or symbolic story with a moral lesson. He added: "There is more relevance for faith-based verses in today's society than ever; given that a generation of aging baby boomer's are increasingly looking to celebrate a life well lived, through encouraging words."

With all things considered, one thing is certain. Ensuring the message strikes the right tone has never been more important. A good verse and sentiment card will say what you want to say most eloquently. And with so many ways to communicate today, the medium is equally as important. A text message is cheap, though the giving of a greeting card is anything but.

Hambledon always in stock

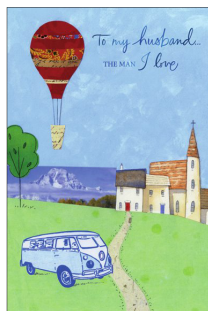
Centrestage Instock - The range is constantly refreshed and updated with new traditional verse and sentiment designs. This card is a code 150, with jewel attachments and full colour reverse.

Selective Grid - Selective Grid has a modern style sympathy, with meaningful sentiment and delicate foil finish. This design mixes an alternative palette of colours with gold foil, to produce a modern, sentimental Mum card.

Reflections - The Arnold Barton collection offers code 75 cards with full-colour inserts, and code 90 cards which are our 8-page verse-books. Both sizes offer plenty of complimentary editorial offering words of love, support, celebration and congratulations, to mention just a few of the many everyday occasions they cover. High quality finishes make these cards a perfect sentimental send.

Gold by Arnold Barton - This is another In-stock line by Arnold Barton, offering cards in price codes 35, 50, 72, 75, 90, 125. The sympathy card pictured features delicate hand-painted artwork, highlighted by silver foil, and complimented by simple editorial.

T: 01282 686002



Sentiment from Ling Design

For an exceptional selection of sympathy cards look no further than Ling Design, who continue to bring out new designs to keep it looking fresh.

Their fine art and beautifully hand painted ranges adapt perfectly to the delicate sending situation of sympathy. Within the caption they offer a wide variety of styles, from delicate watercolour florals to more contemporary graphic images, appealing to a wide audience.

Their sentiment range 'Heartfelt', which is included within the sympathy caption, is a slightly more contemporary option within this category and is a popular choice for when the consumer is looking for something with a few words, but nothing too heavy.

www.lingdesign.co.uk

T: 01892 838574

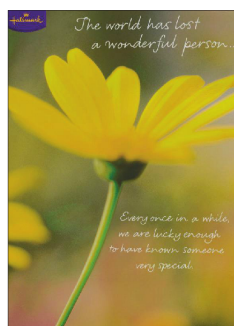


Emotional response

Hallmark Cards sympathy cards have been designed to reflect the true emotions that people feel, experience and wish to express to one another during that difficult time following the loss of a loved one.

In the past, death and funerals have been very sombre and traditional occasions but nowadays there are a variety of different approaches that individuals have towards death and Hallmark's sympathy cards reflect this.

For those wishing to send something traditional, Hallmark produces a number of cards which feature comforting messages of support and mentions and images of angels. For individuals wishing to take a more modern approach, Hallmark also has a selection of sympathy cards which have a celebratory approach towards life in their messaging and are more colourful in their design.



Deeper connections

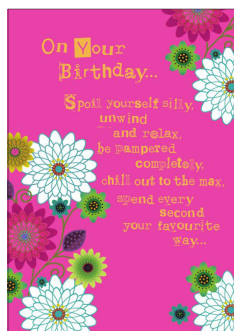
Hallmark Cards has also launched two brand-new verse ranges, Classic Verse and Modern Verse.

The Classic Verse range uses a combination of traditional imagery and highly sentimental, extended verses. The range of 12 designs has a warm colour palette as well as foil and pearl finishes, giving them presence in store and making them easy to find.

The Modern Verse range has eight designs and are more light hearted aimed at both female and male recipients. Editorial content is focussed around real-life situations, conveyed in a modern and relevant tone of voice and the design-led cards use brighter colours.

www.hallmark.co.uk

T: 01274 252000



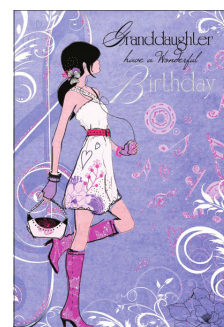
Chic new cards from Jonny Javelin

Popular verse and sentiment card publisher Jonny Javelin has given a brand new look to its latest set of designs launched this summer, which have a chic, contemporary style.

The range is called Manhattan and the cards are 9 x 6 in size and are set to retail at £1.99. The cards feature strong silver foil elements and are intricately embossed.

www.jonnyjavelin.co.uk

T: 01423 563740



A passion for poetry

Canadian poet Richard Belford specialises in writing heartfelt sentiments which he illustrates with his own photography for a variety of purposes, from publications to memorial products and plaques.

On his motivation to write, Richard said: "We all have life experiences that make us who and what we are, mine have been neither more extraordinary nor less engaging than anyone else's, but have included universally heartfelt sentiments that I feel should be shared."

One of his poems 'A Mother's Work is Never Done' was sent to the Duke of Cambridge Prince William, during his recent Royal tour to mark the country's 144th birthday in Richards home town of Ottawa, Ontario in Canada on what would have would of been his late mother Diana's 50th Birthday. A letter returned from St James Palace said that His Royal Highness's was deeply touched by my words of support and encouragement and includes his warmest thanks and heartfelt best wishes.

www.richardlawrencebelford.ca

