

What Can You Do With ID Cards?



ID cards can be used for a wide variety of purposes, typically fulfilling more than one need at once. In this overview, you'll be introduced to some of the many ways your organization can benefit from ID card systems along with modern-day card features to choose from.



Common Uses for ID Cards

How do you maximize the use of your ID cards? There are several ways to take advantage of your ID badges, so you're never limited to just one use.



Photo ID

Photo identification cards are frequently seen on employees, students, club members, and volunteers, and are often displayed via a lanyard or badge clip. Photo IDs ensure the person displaying the card can be easily identified wherever they are, and typically contain a clear image of the cardholder as well as other unique information such as their legal name, ID number, address, job title, or other data denoting restrictions or special authorizations.



Visitor & Temporary Badges

Security should always start at your facility's front door entrance. By registering and issuing visitor badges to all incoming guests — including workmen and contractors — you'll be able to maintain an accurate record of who is on the premises at all times. Upper management or the company's security personnel can quickly spot which visitors have and have not registered at the front desk simply by seeing the badge displayed on that person.



Access Control

ID cards are used for access control by many companies, particularly in high-security environments where permission to enter or exit an area is restricted to a core group of individuals. The visual component of access control cards also lets others know that you have permission to access the restricted area.



Membership Cards

Membership cards are often used in gyms and at various clubs to measure member activity and show proof of membership. For example, most gyms will have its members scan a membership card at a front desk, so they know how many members were at the gym on a specific day. This type of information can help a business set and meet expectations, and make decisions based on what their members are doing.





Time & Attendance

Companies and organizations in need of an efficient and streamlined method of logging employee and volunteer hours will find PVC badges the perfect solution. Integrated with time and attendance software systems, time badges make certain that no errors are made.



Cashless Payment

Corporate campuses, medium- to large-sized businesses, and universities often make cashless payment cards available to their employees for purchasing food and other on-site amenities. Typically, the cardholder is able to load money onto their card throughout the year, which is extremely convenient as they do not have to carry cash all the time.



Loyalty Cards

Loyalty cards are especially common at retail stores, restaurants, and hotels, and typically reward the customer with free or discounted prices once they've accrued a certain number of points. The number of points usually reflects the number of purchases the customer has made or the amount they've spent. When integrated successfully with a company's own internal software, loyalty card programs are an extremely popular and effective marketing strategy, and help generate word of mouth.



Conference & Event Badges

Most events and conferences nowadays require attendees and exhibitors to display ID badges. ID cards for workshops, conferences, and events are used to enhance overall security and distinguish the exhibitors from the spectators.



Other Uses

In addition, ID cards systems can be used to create business cards, gift cards, promotional announcements, coupons, ski passes, sports team game schedules, and even business holiday greeting tags. The professional quality of ID cards paired with their durability makes them ideal for virtually any badge or card program.



ID Card Options

When looking at the ways to use your ID card system, it's important to consider all the available ID card features and options. Below, you'll find a comprehensive list of ID card options:

Card Size

The size of a standard CR80 ID card has a length of 3.375 inches and width of 2.125 inches (credit card size). Alternatively, you can opt for keytag-sized cards to increase convenience for your customers or members. Keytags are a popular choice for membership and loyalty card programs and are available in two dimensions: 2.875" x 1.0625" and 1.100" x 2.125".

Card Thickness

ID cards offer varying levels of thickness, including 10 mil on up to 30 mil, the latter of which is often used for applications that require stronger, longer-lasting badges.

Card Material

What do you want your card to be made out of? Standard PVC plastic is typically the material used in ID cards, but there are other materials to choose from. Other choices include biodegradable, recycled, and composite blend PVC cards.

Card Color

If your ID cards do not contain images or photos, then colored cards might be an excellent option especially for card programs that require highly visible badges. Colored cards come in just about every color of the rainbow and are often used in membership, loyalty, and gift card programs.

Adhesive Back

An adhesive back is an optimal choice for personalizing thick technology badges such as proximity cards. Also referred to as sticky-back cards, you can print customized information on them and then affix to the thicker technology card.

Visual Security

Instantly boost visual security by adding a security element such as HoloKote, hologram lamination, hologram stickers, or foil holographic card patches to your ID cards. These various types of watermark features—from basic to advanced visual security—protect against counterfeit cards, allowing security personnel to immediately determine the card's validity.



Data Storage

Data can be easily encrypted onto an ID card with such technologies as barcodes, magnetic stripes, and smart cards.

BARCODES

Barcodes are the most affordable option for storing data, and appear as a collection of patterned spaces and bars that can be read by a barcode scanner. The amount of information a barcode can hold is limited, making them better suited for programs like membership and rewards cards, which use the stored member account number to pull up further information using software.

MAGNETIC STRIPES

Magnetic stripe encoding stores information in patterns of positive and negative magnetic fields, and requires a magnetic stripe upgrade for the printer and a magnetic stripe reader to use. These types of cards are often used for loyalty and membership cards, cashless payment cards including gift cards, and access control including hotel room key cards.

SMART CARDS

There are many types of smart cards, including contactless or contact cards. Each type of card uses an embedded chip or technology to store encoded data, and a card reader to scan and read the card. Contact cards must physically touch the scanner to be read, and are often used for access control on office buildings and public transit. Contactless cards only have to come within the range of a reader to be read, making them better suited for access control in buildings or offices where you cannot easily take out a card and scan it.



Re-Writeable

The front white side of re-writable cards can be erased and rewritten, helping to reduce card and maintenance-related waste. Re-writable printers print monochrome only (not full color), so no ribbons are required. Since cards are re-used and no ribbons are needed, this can be a very economical choice for temporary cards like visitor badges. Organizations also looking to engage in more eco-friendly practices may find re-writable card technology to be the right fit.

Biometrics

In environments where security is paramount, biometric ID cards are highly recommended. ID Cards can include biometrics such as signatures (scanned & printed onto the card or manually signed on signature panel) or fingerprints to help authenticate someone's identity.

Lamination

Lamination is a smart way to increase the life span of your ID cards, as it protects the photo, text, logo, and graphics from wear and tear. Not only does an overlaminated safeguard against deterioration and color fading, but it can also be used to enhance security when a holographic is applied. You'll need a laminating ID card printer in order to take advantage of this feature.

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