

# How to Create a QR Code for Your Business Card and More

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

QR codes, business cards, dynamic QR, static QR, customization, mobile optimization, implementation tips, testing QR, Google Docs, Canva limitations, analytics, link redirect, print materials, design tips, marketing tools

## SPEAKERS

Monica Pitts

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### **M** Monica Pitts 00:00

Well, hello again, and welcome back to marketing with purpose. My name is Monica Pitts, and for those of you regular marketing with purpose listeners, you might know that I am located in the middle of Missouri, but what you might not know is that my office is actually in a 200 year old building, and I am located directly above a bar. So why am I telling you this? Well, because it's a Friday afternoon and they are bumping downstairs like it is party central, and so there might be a little more ambiance than usual in this episode, but I need to get it recorded, because I have a lot of cross country meets to go to next week, and this is a pretty exciting topic. Now, yes, I know QR codes. Super exciting. QR codes on business cards. Even more exciting. A few weeks ago, I gave some tips on what to include on a business card, and then I briefly mentioned QR codes as an option to include on your content of your business card, promising you that I would dive in deeper later. And so here I am to deliver right. And while the title says QR codes for your business card, what we're going to talk about today these QR codes, they can be used for anything. And at its core, all you really need to get the job done to get a QR code on a business card or a brochure or even, I mean, anything is a QR code generator and a link. But just like anything else, there are things to consider to make sure that you're setting it up the right way, both now and for the future. And so that's what this episode is all about. We are going to talk about what a QR code is, and how it works when you need to use one, how to pick the right QR code generator. We're going to spend a lot of time on that and a comparison of QR code generating tools. I'm going to talk through a few of them. There are links to all of the tools that I'm talking about back on the mayecreate blog, so if you want to hop back over to the blog and get the complete blog post with actual links out to all these different tools, be my guest. It's over at m, a, y, E, C, R, E, A, T, e.com, yes, that's where it lives. And then last but not least, I'm going to talk about some implementation tips and tricks, things I've learned over the years creating QR codes for my clients, okay, friends, let's get to business. You're on a mission, and you just need more people to know about it. And whether you're brand new to marketing or a seasoned pro, we are all looking for answers to make marketing decisions with purpose. I'm Monica Pitts, a techie, crafty business owner, mom and aerial dancer who solves communication challenges through technology. This podcast is all about

digging in and going digital. I'll share my marketing know how and business experience from almost 20 years of misadventures. I'll be your backup dancer so you can stop doubting and get moving towards marketing with purpose. This episode is sponsored by mayecreate design. Yeah, that's right. We sponsor ourselves and brought to you with love by our Marketing on a Shoestring mini course. Now our free beginners mini course is all about marketing on a budget. And contrary to popular opinion, you don't have to spend a million dollars or do something that you hate to market your business. Get ready to challenge traditional marketing assumptions, because this 101, mini course is designed to give you a rock solid foundation so you can make the right decisions for you with total confidence. You can check it out at you mayecreate.com that's Y, o, u, M, a, y, E, C, R, E, A, T, e.com, and the link, of course, will be in the show notes. Okay. Now, back to business. Now, before I dig all the way in, I just want to remind you one more time that there is a beautifully formatted and well written blog post over on the may create.com website where you can get all this information too. Okay, so all the links and everything, they're out there and ready for you to use, so you don't need to take notes while you're driving, like I do when I listen to podcasts. No, you can just go over to the website. They're all there for you. Okay, it's not just a transcript, it's actually a blog post. Okay, so let's start at the top. Remember, we said we were going to cover what a QR code is and how it works when you should use them, how to pick the right code generator, a comparison of QR code generating tools and implementation tricks and tips. So what is a QR code and how does it work? I'm going to keep this so short. Okay, QR code stands for Quick response code. Fun fact, they originated from Japan, and they were used in the automotive industry. And you probably know that QR code. Those are just scannable images that direct users to specific content. When using a smartphone, that's what they do. They send you out online or to some type of online document. Now some older smartphones might require an app to use a QR code, but recent models all just use the camera app, and it kind of works like magic. You open up your camera app, you like, hold it over the top of the QR code, and then it's like, Hey, do you want to go to this spot? And you click it, and it opens up a browser, and you go there, yeah, okay, so with that little slice of magical information out of the way, when do you need to use a QR code? Okay, so let's get this straight. You don't have to have a QR code. They're not meant for everything. Okay, you need to be smart and use it in the right spots. You do not need a QR code on a digital flyer. You can't scan something on your phone with your phone. I the school does this all the time. They send out these beautiful flyers with QR codes on them, and I open it in an app on my phone, because that's where they send it to me through the app. I'm like, why are you doing this? I can't scan it. I have to take a screenshot of it, send it to my husband, and then I have to use his phone displaying the picture so I can open up the link. That is dumb. Do not do that to people. My friends. Just give them a link. That's all they need. They just need something that they can click on. Okay, if someone can click on it, they don't need a QR code. They need a link. Now, that means that there's a lot of instances where you would put a QR code on something that's printed. There are a few things, though, that you would not put a QR code on that are printed. For example, a billboard, nope, people are driving past it. They can't they cannot. When I see billboards with QR codes, I just laugh. I can't scan it. I'm driving. Even if I'm not driving, I can't scan it. It's too far away. Now also, yard signs are kind of

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half and half. If your yard sign is in a spot where people walk past it all the time, then you could put a QR code on it and people can use it. But if it's just in an area where people are driving past it, just treat it like what it is, which is a piece of branding, right? And if you want to put contact information on it, you would put a phone number or a domain name where people can go learn more, and the same would be true of like a vehicle wrap. If all you're doing is driving

around town in your work vehicle, then that's just another instance where you would want to list your phone number and your domain name. Now, places you do want to use a QR code are like business cards that are printed, printed brochures, magazine ads, printed, sign up forms, survey or or review requests. Okay, like a table topper for more information, or like, if your vehicle is actually parked at a job site for long periods of time, or if you have a trailer that you park at job sites for long periods of time, then it actually makes sense to put a QR code on them. Use QR codes for event check ins and donation links, or even just to offer more information on printed materials. So there's lots of places where they make sense, and we just need to be smart and put them in the right spots all right. So now that we know where we should be putting them, let's talk about picking the right QR code generator. Because remember, I said you need two things. You need a QR code generator and you need a link. Well, picking the right QR code generator can actually open up a whole bunch of cool things to enhance both the way that the QR code looks and make it more user friendly while allowing you to track its performance. Okay, so that's why we're going to talk so much in this episode about picking the right one, because that's probably the biggest decision that you have to make. So common features that you would be looking for in your QR code generator are whether it creates dynamic or static. QR codes the level of customization it offers you over the code, the output format, like how it saves it and allows you to use it, and then last, but not least, the analytics that it offers you. All right, so let's start at the top, with static versus dynamic. And since this is my podcast, and I'm allowed to have opinions on it, my advice is, when it comes to picking your QR code generator, always use function over form, my friends, you need a dynamic QR code, which means you need to be able to change it in the future. You need to be able to change that link. Sometimes they call it creating a redirect. So you could redirect it to another URL. This is super important, because it can be beautiful. It can be all nature of colors, sizes. It can have your logo in the middle. But ultimately, if you can't change where it links, ever, ever, it sucks. It's just not functional. Okay? So you don't want a static generator, because you create that QR code in a static generator, and it's forever going to point to one location, and that can lead to problems down the road, like if. QR code is on the side of your trailer, or it could be on a brochure for an event that you want to use year over year, but then the sign up page changes and you can't I mean, what do you do? Right? I mean, like in both of those instances, you could potentially create a redirect on your website to mitigate the problem from one page to another, but that's not always an option, and so we want to plan for the future. So you want a dynamic QR code generator that will let you change the where, where the code links. We're going to call it the URL, because that's what I call it all the time, and then even potentially track the usage. Because, you know, as a marketer, you want to have a little bit of data behind things to make sure that it's worth your time. So the second thing you know, once you are fully on board with this dynamic QR code I want you to consider, is what level of customization do you need out of your code? So QR code generators all have their own take on customization. Some are super simple, and others, especially on the played plans they offer, like the sun, moon and stars, like you can do so many things with them, but you need to consider things like, what type of customization features do you want? Like, for example, a lot of them allow you to change the color, so you can change the color of the QR code itself, or the background. Some generators offer a transparent background, or, like, even an image that you can put behind it. Some of them have different shapes. So you can adjust the pattern of the code. You can, like, make it into boxes, or rounded cornered boxes or dots, like you guys have seen it right now that I'm talking about it. You can see this in your head. You can round the corners of the box. You can even adjust, like, the shape of the code itself, like it could be a circle, or, like, even a more branded shape, like the shape of your logo. Some of them offer logo integration, so you can, like, put your logo in the center of the code, which is really cool. I think that's really cool, especially in a bigger QR code. And then some of them even put cute little frames around them, and, like, calls to action with little arrows. They say, scan me. There's

some fun ones, especially in Bitly. They they have some cool ones on there. Okay, so once you understand how much customization you want, then you're gonna think about what type of output you need from the QR code generator. And what I mean by output is, you know, you're gonna build this thing online, and then it's gonna have to export some type of, you know, file that you can put on your printed materials. So you're going to need one that promises a high resolution, scannable file, like a PNG, an SVG, an EPS or a PDF for print purposes, right? And so to know which one you need. You need to check with your designer, or you can look at your design program to see which one it accepts, and figure out you know which one do you need, because it's going to be different based on your designer and your design program. So I can't answer that for you. Okay, now, last but not least, once you have considered if you want it to be dynamic or static, the level of customization you want and what your preferred output format is, you're gonna think about analytics, right? Because these different services offer all kinds of different tracking now, for some people, you don't even care. You don't care at all about tracking. Some of my clients, they don't care at all about tracking. And it's because we look at it from a hit to the website perspective, right? We're looking at it like it went to the website, and I have a way of putting it into the QR code so that I know the QR code sent it to the website, and then I look at it at the website analytic level to see if it's working or not. But for other people, they want to see it like in the actual QR code generator software, and that's cool, because a lot of them offer analytics, like number of scans, so you could see how many times the QR code was scanned overall, or how many times it was scanned by a unique device, like where people were when they scanned it, like the physical location, you can see the day or the time of day that people scanned it, so then you can kind of see the trends which that can be useful, and then also device information, like, did they scan it on a smartphone or a tablet? Did they open the information on what type of browser, what type of operating system are they using? So that's all great information to have, especially if you're going to analyze it. But as I said, to begin with, with analytics, like, if you don't care, then don't worry about it. You're it's just even simpler for you to make this decision, huh? So then once you understand what you want out of it, like, what are the features you want out of it, using what we just talked about, those four different things, then you can start looking at different QR generators. And, you know, I totally have a list of them for you. Now, the only one that I'm going to talk about that's a static generator, is Canva. Canva is so popular and it's such a cool tool. I use it myself a lot, and I talk about it a lot, too, on the pod. Podcast and creating a QR code in Canva is really easy and it's super streamlined. It does give you some basic customization, like you can choose the background and the foreground colors, and you can set margins on your QR code, but it is static, like I said before, so you can't ever change the link location, and it really doesn't offer much by way of analytics. So if you don't care about those things, and you use Canva, you can literally, just like, use the Canva QR code generator feature, and it works. It totally works. Okay. Now, if you want to still use Canva to design, but you need to have analytics, and you want to make sure that you can change your URL down the road, then you can use a third party generator, like the ones I'm going to talk about next, and just export your QR code and then upload it into Canva and put it in your design. And I cannot tell you how many times I've done that. I've done it time and time again for my clients, so don't be afraid of doing it that way, then you get the best of both worlds, right? You get to have Canva as your design software, and you get to have a QR code with more functionality and like, a longer shelf life. Now, as far as dynamic QR code generators go, there are free, free ones that are really good, and there's paid ones that are really good too. And the biggest difference between the free and the paid dynamic generators are just customization of the graphic itself, the analytics that they offer and the number of QR codes that you can create. Okay, so if you only need a few QR codes, and you don't need them to be super fancy or have a ton of tracking, then you can 100% do it with a free service. I use a free service, and I have for years, and I'll tell you about it in a second, but if you need more, then you're going to want to go with that paid version. And I

mean, just like anything else, they're ranging from like, you know, \$6 a month to \$100 a month. It just depends on what you want out of them. Now, I reviewed a few of these on the blog post. I'm not going to read them all to you, because that is annoying, but I do want to highlight a few of them. One that I found that I think is really cool is Bitly. You know, the link shortener. They offer a QR code generator, and it's pretty slick and it's easy. And if you don't need very many, because they only offer you two a month for free on the free plan,

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it is easy, and you can customize it quite a bit. Like, I mean, not a ton, but enough, right? So I think that's a really good option. One that we use all the time at mayecreate is called Moby bricks. It is old, my friends, it is so old it has been around forever, forever. It is simple, stupid, simple. It does not offer a ton of customization, but I will explain to you why I think that's perfectly fine in just a second. But it does allow us to redirect our QR codes, and there's no expiration on the codes. They're never going anywhere. It doesn't offer a ton of tracking, but we use it because it works, and it has for years, and it suits our purposes, right? Okay. And then the last one that I reviewed, that I thought was cool enough to mention on the podcast, was QR code dynamic. So the free plan, you get three QR codes. That's it. Like, Max not, like two a month or three a month, no, just three total that you can save, but it has all these templates to start off with. So there's 16 templates that you can start with. And I thought that was kind of cool, like, if you only needed a few and you wanted them to be fancier than maybe the bitly ones, then the QR code dynamic one really does have a lot of different design features that make them look really neat. So you might check that one out. And once again, there's links to all these over on the me create blog, all right, so implementation tips and tricks. Let's talk about this, because that that's part of like putting it on your business card or anything right is just making sure that you're doing it the right way. So the first thing is that you have to make sure that it's big enough to scan. I know, but like, how big it needs to be is mostly dependent upon how close people are going to be to it when they scan it. Okay, so almost all the generators say that it should be one inch by one inch, but I don't necessarily think it has to be that big. For example, if you're going to put it on a business card, people are going to hold the business card in their hand and they're going to scan it with their phone so it can be smaller than that, maybe like half that size or even less, right? It doesn't need to be very big. It can't be distorted. It has to be intact enough the picture does for the phone to be able to read it and for it to work, but it doesn't need to be one inch by one inch. Okay. Now, on the other hand, if you're putting it up on, say, a pop up banner, then you would need to have a larger code, right? Because if the pop up banner is going to sit at the back of your trade show booth, and people are going to scan it from the front of your trade show booth, that's like, six, 812, Heat away. So it needs to be big enough that it reads well while scanning. Now the thing you need to do before you decide that your QR code is ready for printing is you need to test it. My first test on a QR code is I set my design program to be 100% zoom, so the actual size that it will be when it's printed. And then I stand the same distance from my screen that the audience would, and this helps ensure that it works at the plan size. And then, obviously you're going to make sure that it takes you to the right place, right so if you can then print a full size version of it and test it again before you send it to your professional for printing, because it really stinks when it's wrong, especially if it's a static one, right? So yeah, there you go. Test it, test it, test it, all right. So you want to make sure that your QR code leads to a mobile optimized page, because let's be real, scanning the code is only the first step in the process. Yeah? Like you made someone get out their phone, open up an app and scan a QR code, and then you're taking them to a page that completely disorganized and grows and you can't even read it on a mobile phone. Yeah, you just blew yourself up. It makes no sense, and I can't tell you half do people do this,

right? Okay, so if you are sending them to your website, make sure that all the information is displayed in the correct order and it's legible on a mobile device. That's super important. And it needs to load quickly if you are sending people to a PDF. Okay, so this is going to sound crazy. It can't be an eight and a half by 11 PDF. They can't read that on their phone. You have to, like, pinch and zoom and scroll horizontally. It's horrible. It's horrible. Don't do that. Okay, so if you're sending them to a PDF, it needs to be like, like, formatted like a phone, right? So it needs to be narrow, like a phone. No, I'm laughing. But people do this. It happens to me. Okay? So just realize that PDFs are not mobile optimized. If you can't send them out to a website, and you now know that your PDF isn't going to work, I would suggest using a Google Doc. Okay? Because Google Docs actually do adjust for mobile display, kind of like a website does. It's really cool. It like the text is about the right size to read, and it narrows everything down, and it's and it's very user friendly. Okay, so use a Google doc instead of a PDF, if you can. But don't use tables in your Google Doc, because those act like a PDF. They don't adjust for mobile display. They just keep everything really wide, and then you have to scroll all over the place, and it sucks again. All right, so now you know Monica's pet peeves about people sending her things that she has to read on her phone. Boom. All right, so just two more tips before I let you go. Okay, first one is kind of obvious, but we need to place the QR code in a visible, easy to scan location. Now, if you are putting it on your business card, you need to put it far enough away from the edge of the business card that the printer isn't going to cut it off on accident, because if that happens, it might not work, and that would stink, right? So, I mean really, a QR code that's hard to find or that's awkward to scan it like defeats the purpose. It's supposed to be there for convenience, but to get that convenience, we're asking people to scan something, click and read. So we don't need to make them hunt for it, or make them think, okay, all right. So the last tip I have for you is keep your design clean and functional, because over designing anything just detracts from the purpose of the message. That's why we don't have fancy QR codes for our clients. We just use really simple ones. We might change the color to match their brand, but we're not making them overly fancy, because it doesn't have to be fancy. It's a QR code. People look at it, they know exactly what it is, and they know what they're supposed to do with it. So we don't need to go overboard with it, just because we can right? It should fit in with your design, yes, and it often stands out naturally, because your design is going to look one way, and then it's got this kind of Cody looking thing that usually the rest of your design doesn't look like that. And so it stands out naturally. So you don't do need to do a bunch of things for it to be seen or add a bunch of flair, right? So keep that in mind while you're designing that's why we use such a simple, simple program. But I see the benefit of having fun branded ones as well. You just don't want them to go over the top. Okay, so that was it. Now, you know what a QR code does, where you should put it. You know how to pick the right code generator for you. We've talked a little bit about tools that I like, and there's links to them over on the make Create Blog. And you know my my pet peeves and implementation tips and tricks. So how do you. Feel Do you like Are you ready? I think you're ready. I think you should go out. Here's the deal. Just don't feel overwhelmed. Go out. You can set up a free account on any of the suggested generators, or try other ones. I would love to hear if you have one that you really love, and just give it a whirl, right? You're not. There's nothing to lose. Spend a few minutes in there. If it's not for you, it's not for you. Once you've got the basics down, this QR code can be a really cool tool for connecting with customers and streamlining your marketing, right? So, yeah, try it out, and just remember to test it and test it and maybe test it again before you send that thing to the printer. Okay? And that ends my QR code rant. Thank you so much for listening and definitely subscribe, so that way you don't miss next week's episode. I'm actually going to talk with Marilyn Jenkins. She is a Google Business Profile expert, and she optimizes Google business profiles to generate leads for businesses. And if you don't know what a Google business profile is. It's the thing that's connected to your map listing, and it's also the thing that creates the Knowledge Graph, which is that kind of box of information on the right that shows

up on search results with like a picture at the top and your business name and all your contact information that's all tied into your business profile. And it's always been important, because Google is the biggest search engine out there, and as soon as they introduced Google business profiles back in the day, and they weren't called that back in the day, but when they introduced them, we saw a big dip in website traffic, because people were getting the information that they wanted right there in the Knowledge Graph from your business profile. But now with generative search rolling out your business profile is actually more important than ever, because 32% of the weight for being placed on Google's map results, for example. So if you search for your business and a map shows up with a list of options, that thing is what my SEO friends, they call a local pack anyway, so 32% of your weight for being placed in those map results is determined by your Google business profile and how it's set up and how often you update it, yeah. And it also weighs into about 9% of your organic search result factors as well. And, oh man, just like everything else in Google, right? There's a trick to getting your profile set up correctly,

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so that way you can really use it to its fullest potential and like, meet new business. And that's why I'm having Marilyn on so that way she can tell us all about it, because my clients are asking me about it, and that's not what I do. I build websites, but I want them to be found, and I want people to get to that website. So come on back over. Subscribe, hang out with me and Marilyn and learn all about beefing up your Google business profile in our next episode. And before I let you go, I want to give one more shout out to our mayecreate resource sponsor Marketing on a Shoestring. It is the free beginners mini course to marketing on a budget. It lays the foundation of creating the right messaging to connect with your potential customer and prime them to buy. It unlocks the four part framework for making confident, budget, conscious marketing decisions so you can stop second guessing and get a clear path forward. And it outlines the highest converting tactics that I know of for new marketers, so you don't have to waste time on strategies that will never reach your goals. Hop on over to you mayecreate.com for instant access. That's y, o, u, M, a, y, E, C, R, E, A, T, e.com, so thank you so much for joining me today. Make sure to subscribe wherever you're listening so you don't miss out on our next episode. And don't be afraid to use that link in the show notes to go over and enjoy the fully formatted blog post with all the pictures broken down, covering every single thing that we talked about today, because your next step is to put this information to action and until next time, go forth and market with purpose.