

Assignment 1

Business plan for Greeting Cards Company

By Vicky Kafkaki

Task

Create a pdf with two parts or chapters: research and pitch deck.

The pitch deck should be presentation that will show people what your business idea is all about, along with the strategies you might adopt to make it a reality. Should cover areas such as: problem, solution, market validation, market size, product overview, business model, market adoption, competition and competitive advantage.

My idea - Greeting Cards Company “Special Cards”

When I was a kid (that was many years ago) was no internet and no social media where you can just like an image, click and send it to somebody. Usually that was done by the mail. I remember how happy I was when I use to find in the mail box a card from somebody (back then relatives and friends were sending very often me and my parents greeting cards for birthdays or holidays). I used to collect some of them.

When I moved to USA years ago, I started sending cards for Christmas to all my relatives and friends. I keep this tradition till today. I usually will put in the envelop a small Christmas tree decoration. When I was going to Bulgaria in the summer, I was so happy to see that some of the people have the cards and the toys in display in their house - I could not believe the happiness and excitement that one card can bring to a person.

The last couple years I have been thinking of creating an online business for creating custom greeting cards. I can design them and put whatever message the client wants.

I can also create a message in different language. For example, most of my friends are Bulgarian and Greeks and when I want to send them a greeting card, I want it to be on Greek or Bulgarian - it feels more personal. I can also include something special to the person - maybe a recipe that they like or a poem.

The other service that I can provide is to print the card and mail it to the desired address. Small things in life can bring us a lot of happiness. I think that my business can contribute to bringing so much joy.

This is the logo for the business



Everybody deserves to feel special

HISTORY OF THE GREETING CARDS

Early origins

Two ancient civilizations (Chinese and Egyptians) were the first to use greeting cards. People in China celebrated Chinese New Year with written messages of goodwill given to one another. Egyptians were writing on papyrus, an early writing surface similar to thick paper, and rolled into scrolls.

1400

Around the year 1400, Germans were printing cards using woodcuts, a relief print-making technique where the artist carved the card's design into a wood-block surface. These cards were used to send New Year's greetings.

1415

The oldest existing Valentine card was created by a French nobleman. Charles, Duke of Orléans, Today this card is in the British Museum.

Renaissance

From the 14th to 17th centuries, there was a tremendous growth in the production of art and literature in Europe.

1800s

The very first commercial Christmas card was made in London, England in the Victorian era. A British civil servant named Sir Henry Cole hired his friend John Callcott Horsley, a painter and illustrator, to design the card.

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LEADING COMPANIES IN THE GREETING CARDS MARKET

1. Hallmark Cards

Hallmark is one of the oldest and largest manufacturers of greeting cards in the United States. It was founded in 1910 by Joyce Hall.

In 1916, Hall bought an engraving business and began printing his own cards. In 1928, he began marketing his cards under the Hallmark brand name.

In addition to greeting cards, Hallmark also manufactures such products as party goods, gift wrap, and stationery.

In 1928, the company introduced the brand name Hallmark, after the hallmark symbol used by goldsmiths in London in the 14th century, and began printing the name on the back of every card. In 1917, Hall and his brother Rollie “invented” modern wrapping paper.

In 1973, Hallmark Cards started manufacturing Christmas ornaments.

Hallmark’s creative staff consists of around 900 artists, designers, stylists, writers, editors, and photographers. Together, they generate more than 19,000 new and redesigned greeting cards and related products per year.

The company offers more than 48,000 products.

There is Hallmark’s software for creating and printing customized cards - Hallmark Card Studio. It allows users to personalize thousands of templates with digital photos, clip art, and exclusive messages, and then print them directly from home.

2. American Greetings Corporation

American Greetings Corporation is a privately held American company and is the world’s second largest greeting card producer after Hallmark Cards. The company sells paper greeting cards, electronic greeting cards, gift packaging, stickers and party products.

Hallmark Cards and American Greetings, both U.S.-based companies, are the two most commercially successful producers of greeting cards in the world today.

It started in 1906 by Polish immigrant Jacob Sapirstein. The company is based in Westlake, Ohio and it has a massive portfolio that includes brands like Papyrus, Recycled Paper Greetings, Gibson, and Carlton Cards.

In 1995 they acquired 80% share of SA Greeting Corporation in South Africa.

In 1996 they purchased John Sands (greeting card company in Australia and New Zealand).

3. Archies Limited

Archies Limited is an Indian multinational retailer of greeting cards and gifts, based in New Delhi.

Archies was founded in 1979 by Anil Moolchandani and has a market share of about 50% of India’s greeting cards market.

Beside the cards for new year, birthday and anniversary occasions, they make cards for major Indian festivals such as Holi, Diwali and Rakhi.

4. Avanti Press

Avanti Press is founded in 1980 by Rick Ruffner and his wife. They are creating unique, humorous greeting cards.

They use bold graphics and engaging typography that makes the reader to see what else is inside of the card.

The brand has also expanded into multiple consumer goods categories with licensed products.

“Avanti is really just a small group of crazy card nuts who have managed to make a big splash doing what we do best: making people smile.”

In the beginning, people were telling Rick that this concept will never work but he proved them wrong. That tells us that sometimes we have to believe in ourselves and not listen to the negative taunts of others.



“Avanti Press’s journey showcases the power of innovation, creativity, and resilience in the American business landscape. By pioneering the specialty card market and collaborating with renowned photographers, they have not only captured the hearts of consumers but also become an integral part of American culture. Through its commitment to quality, sustainability, and community engagement, the firm continues to inspire and delight, reminding us that sometimes the smallest things can make the biggest impact.”

5. Budget Greeting Cards

Budget Greeting Cards changed its name in 2024 to Tiger Feet Ltd.

The origins of the company started when brothers Paul and Martin Lavery took over a News Agent in Salford in 1974. They slowly expended selling more items beside greeting cards. This tells us that in the begining we can start small and then slowly we can expnad. As long as we put efforts and love what we are doing, the succes is going to happen.

“For over 35 years, BGC has thrived by listening to our customers. This rebrand to Tiger Feet is our latest step towards better serving the entire market. Our mission is to create a seamless commerce experience tailored to the needs of businesses and professionals, offering an unparalleled product selection, competitive pricing, and exceptional service. We’re excited to build strong relationships with both new and long-standing customers as we move forward.”

The company has eight warehouses across the UK and Ireland.



This is Tiger Feet’s new HQ

LEADING COMPANIES IN THE GREETING CARDS MARKET

4. Carlton Cards

Carlton Cards was founded by Hubert Harry Harshman in Toronto, Ontario, in 1920. They offer traditional greeting cards, digital ecards, stationery, party supplies, plush toys, stickers and gift packaging. The company creates greeting cards that celebrate diverse holidays, relationships, and cultures with more than 1200 DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion)-focused cards. In 1956, Carlton Cards was purchased by American Greetings.



In 2025, Elliot Investment management acquired a majority interest of the American Greetings network. They have offices across North America, UK and Australia.



The company uses recycled materials and soy-based inks to minimize environmental impact. They focus on three pillars - Our Planet, Our People, and Our Policies.



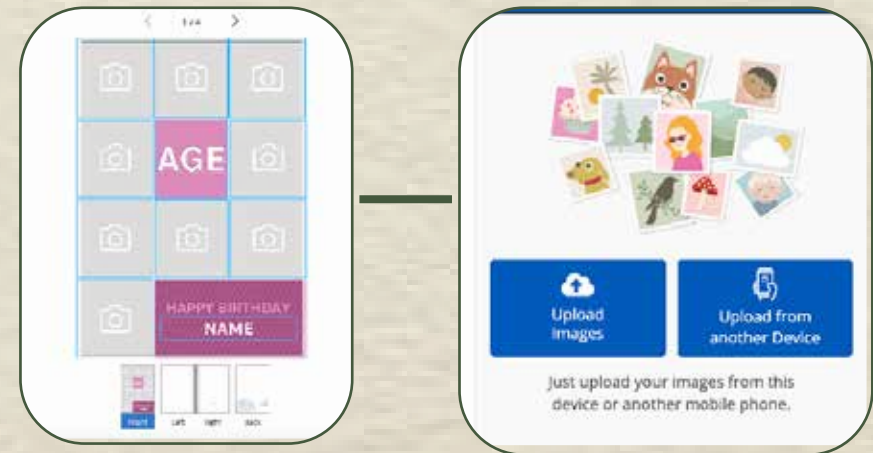
They also increased the use of FSC (Forest Stewardship Council)-certified paper across its production lines.

5. Card Factory

Card Factory was founded in 1997 by Dean and Janet Hoyle. They started by selling wholesale cards from the back of their van at local markets. Today the Card Factory is a leading UK greeting card retailer. By 2020 the company surpassed 1000 locations. They expand not only locally but globally. In 2011, they acquired online personal gift retailer Getting Personal. In 2023, they acquired the South African-based greeting card supplier SA Greetings. In 2024, they acquired Garlanna Holdings in Ireland and Garven Holdings in Minnesota, US.

Card Factory is also creating meaningful impact to people and communities by donating over 5 million to the Card Factory Foundation.

They offer an option where the customer can create a card by uploading its own images. This is actually what I am thinking to include in my business model.



[Link to the video for company's progress.](#)

Carlos Llanso (Director of Strategic Initiatives, The Greeting Card Association) said:

“Millennials and Generation Z consumers are connecting with and supporting their family and friends through cards. ‘They have friends they will text or post happy birthday to, but then they have those who are “card-worthy. For the card-worthy in their lives, they want a card with a design and message that reflects each unique relationship. The idea that social media is killing greeting cards has not happened. Social media is the maintenance of relationships to keep people connected daily while greeting cards help nurture the relationship on a deeper level.”

“Human nature is to want to support and be supported, loved, and remembered, and have people think well of us. That’s what the greeting card industry is all about.”

The global greeting cards market is valued at approximately \$20.61 billion with projection to grow to \$23.8 billion by 2034.

The U.S. Market Value generates between \$7 billion and \$7.5.

The consumers are purchasing around 6.5 to 7 billion greeting cards each year.

E-cards are projected to grow at a CAGR of 4.7% over the forecast period of 2025-2033.

Over 50 % of the cards sold are Birthday cards

Christmas is the largest seasonal event - approximately 1.3 to 1.5 billion cards are sold annually in the US.

Top Occasions are Mother’s Day and Valentine’s Day.

Jeff Peterson in his article “Greeting Card Industry stays strong”, is saying that even in the digital age, the tradition of sending heartfelt paper messages is far from fading. Consumers have realized that digital outreach simply is not personal and, in many cases, not appropriate for occasions.

With the continued popularity of the physical greeting card, the use of special embellishments such as foils, embossing, specialty coatings and laser cutting continue to be very popular. Special processes beyond print grab attention and provide a perceived value to a greeting card. Although younger generations have grown up in the digital age, surprisingly, recent studies and surveys indicate that many still prefer a physical printed greeting card over a digital e-card.

Offline sales of greeting cards accounted for a revenue share of 64.13% in the year 2024. Brick-and-mortar stores, including supermarkets, convenience chains, bookstores, and specialist card shops, offer consumers the experience of selecting a card.

GLOBAL MARKET - TRENDS

Europe Greeting Cards Market Trends

“The greeting cards industry in Europe accounted for a revenue share of around 31.28% in the year 2024, supported by a deeply rooted card-giving tradition and strong cultural emphasis on seasonal and sentiment-based expressions.

Several European markets have seen a rise in demand for premium, artisanal, and eco-friendly cards, reflecting growing consumer preference for sustainably produced paper goods and handcrafted designs.

The region benefits from well-established retail networks, including specialist card shops, bookstores, gift boutiques, and major supermarket chains, which ensure a wide range of product availability.”

In October 2024, **Hallmark** introduced a new greeting-card line called Gift Card Greetings, which embeds a QR code within a physical card that links to a digital gift card. The card’s interior features a peel-away sticker that reveals the QR code, accompanied by a scratch-off code underneath for the recipient to redeem via their smartphone.

Minted partnered with DoorDash for on-demand delivery of premium, artist-designed greeting cards. You can order Minted Everyday & Holiday greeting cards directly through the DoorDash app for delivery as fast as one hour.

Asia Pacific Greeting Cards Market is growing too.

“Countries such as India, China, Japan, and Australia are experiencing a surge in demand for greeting cards, particularly for birthdays, weddings, religious festivals, and Western celebrations like Christmas and Valentine’s Day. The expansion of organized retail, including supermarkets, stationery chains, and lifestyle stores, has improved access to greeting cards across urban and semi-urban markets.

At the same time, online platforms and mobile-based greeting apps are gaining popularity, especially among younger, tech-savvy consumers who value convenience and personalization.”

According to Hannah Dalby the card collection for 2026 to stand out should follow one of those trends:

TRENDS



Handwritten Revival

The appreciation for authentic and human element in the greeting cards design in the digital era that we live in, is making big comeback.

They are making the recipient feel like it was created just for them.

I always prefer a card with nice typography that looks like hand-written.

Bold Geometrics and Tactile Finishes

Bold geometric patterns can help you create visually striking cards, using strong shapes, repeating lines, and high-contrast color palettes. You can also use special finishes - embossing and debossing.



TV Film and Pop Culture Moments

"Greeting cards are tapping into this by featuring clever references, iconic quotes and character-inspired illustrations that fans will instantly recognize and adore."



Earthy, Organic and Moody Palettes

"earthy, organic and moody palettes are taking centre stage in 2026, offering a sense of calm, warmth and elegance. We are seeing deep forest greens, rich terracotta warm mustard yellows and muted slate blues taking the spotlight, alongside standout favourites like burgundy and chocolate brown."



Beyond the Rectangle: Unique & Die-Cut Shapes

"One of the most exciting trends for 2026 is the move towards completely unique, die-cut shapes. This is about literally thinking outside the box and creating a card that has an immediate "wow" factor."



2026 Holiday Card Trends (according to Paper Culture Company)

Personalized holiday cards are more popular than ever

Popular personalization options include:

- Family photos and photo collage layouts
- Custom colors and fonts
- Unique messages and storytelling
- Illustrated or hand-drawn elements

Minimalist Christmas card designs

Key design elements include:

- Neutral color palettes
- Simple layouts with clean lines
- Elegant typography
- Subtle foil accents
-

DIY holiday cards and full creative control

With DIY options, you can:

- Upload your own design
- Customize layouts and spacing
- Add unique artwork or branding
- Create a completely one-of-a-kind card
-

Eco-friendly and sustainable holiday cards Consumers are actively searching for:

- Cards made from 100% recycled paper
- Carbon-neutral production
- Eco-friendly printing practices
-

Bold colors and modern patterns

Popular styles include:

- Deep reds, greens, and golds
- Non-traditional colors like teal and mustard
- Plaids, abstract patterns, and playful layouts

Funny and whimsical Christmas cards

Trending ideas include:

- Funny family photos
- Holiday puns and witty messages
- Lighthearted, playful designs

Modern typography trends

Top trends include:

- Bold sans-serif fonts
- Mixed typography styles combining modern and script
- Statement text layouts

Holiday cards for life announcements

A growing trend in 2026 includes:

- Pregnancy announcement Christmas cards
- Engagement or wedding announcements
- New home or family milestones

QR code holiday cards and digital experiences

I would like to create Greeting cards because they are not just a paper, they are a gesture that can make people happy.

other companies that offer personalization:
<https://www.printed.com/cards-and-invitations/greeting-cards#wizard>
(you have to buy more than 10)

We now have a Greeting Card machine! You can make your very own custom Greeting Card for only \$2.99! @Takes about 15 seconds to print-come check it out.
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1075206007522614>

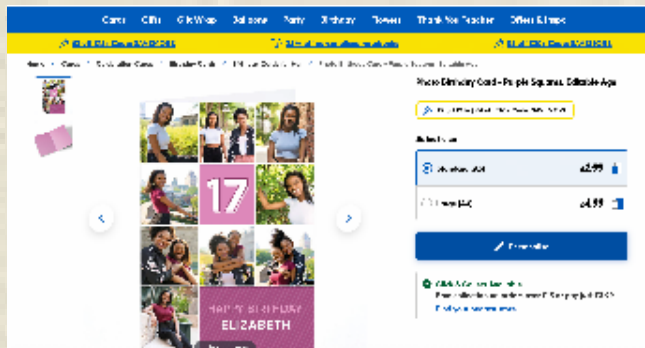
QR code holiday cards and digital experiences
One of the most innovative trends is the use of QR codes.

QR codes can link to:

Photo galleries
Family videos
Holiday messages
Playlists or personalized web pages

<https://www.paperculture.com/holiday-christmas-cards.html>

- encourage human connections via cards
- partnerships







1. <https://www.uschamber.com/co/good-company/launch-pad/greeting-card-next-gen-relevance>
2. <https://northerncards.com/blogs/nc/the-history-of-the-greeting-card>
3. <https://www.charterhouse.co.uk/portfolio/card-factory/>
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18. <https://www.gca.cards/the-2026-sustainability-trends-gca-members-should-know-about/>
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