

# Creating Custom Business Cards



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## Introduction

There are number of templates available on the Internet for creating business cards. For my purposes, I have a difficult time finding a template that provides the flexibility I would like. After fooling around with a number of different business card creating options, I finally discovered how to create my own custom business cards using the free LibreOffice software.

The technique presented here involves basing the business card on a LibreOffice Label format. The technique also uses the LibreOffice, Frame function to control the placement of text and objects within the card boundaries. If you are not already familiar with the concept of frames and paragraph styles in LibreOffice, by the time you complete this tutorial you will have added these powerful tools to your collection.

**NOTE:** I have evolved a standard format for creating my series of tutorials. You will find **general information** in normal paragraphs, **notes** or important points shaded with the color of this note, and **steps** to be completed in shaded paragraphs.

## Creating a Label Base

- ✓ Open **LibreOffice**.

If LibreOffice has been used previously, thumbnail images of recent files will appear in the opening display. If this is the first time LibreOffice has been opened, a welcome message appears.

- ✓ From the **Menubar**, select **File, New, Labels**.

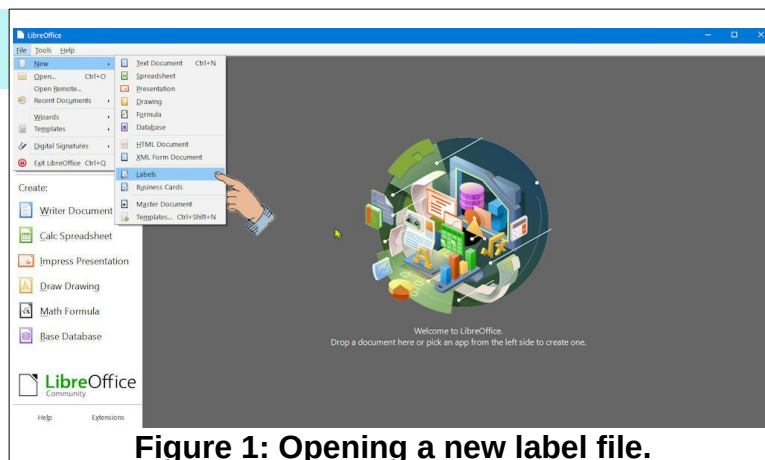


Figure 1: Opening a new label file.



The **Labels** dialog box should now be on your display. There are three tabs on the top of the dialog box. When the **Labels** tab is selected, there are drop down selection boxes for **Brand** and **Type**. You can select from a listing of standard label formats.

In this exercise, the **Labels** dialog box will be used to create custom labels. Once you have formatted and saved the custom label design, the **Brand** and **Type** will appear in this dialog box.

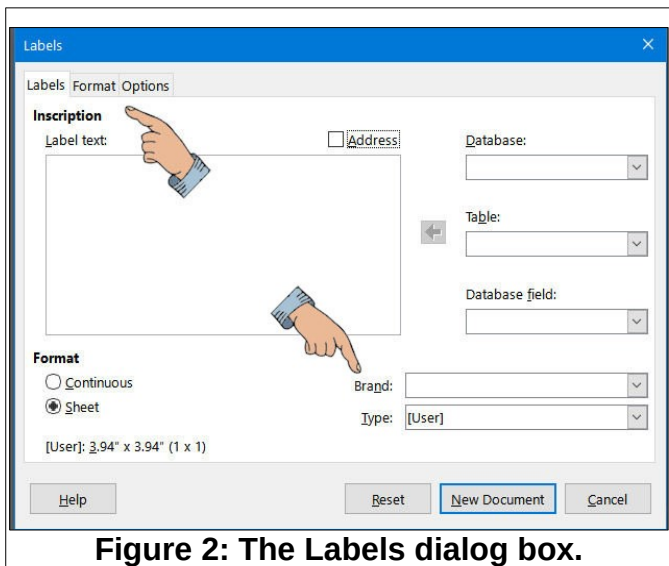


Figure 2: The Labels dialog box.

- ✓ In the **Labels** dialog box, select the **Options** tab.

Before defining the size settings for the business cards, a couple of options will be set.

- ✓ In the **Options** section of the Labels dialog box, toggle the **Entire page** and **Synchronize contents** options **ON**.
- ✓ In the **Options** section of the Labels dialog box, select the **printer Setup** button. Then select the desired printer and select **Properties** to set the paper source and stock weight for your printer.

Many printers have settings for a bypass tray and heavy card stock. I have gotten better results from my printer by manually feeding thick paper such as business card stock rather than using an internal paper tray.

In this project, standard 8 ½ x 11 inch business card stock will be used. Business card stock with laser cut perforations is available from a number of different manufactures. There are ten 3.5 by 2 inch business cards on these pages.

Users outside of the USA can adjust the dimensions to local standards.

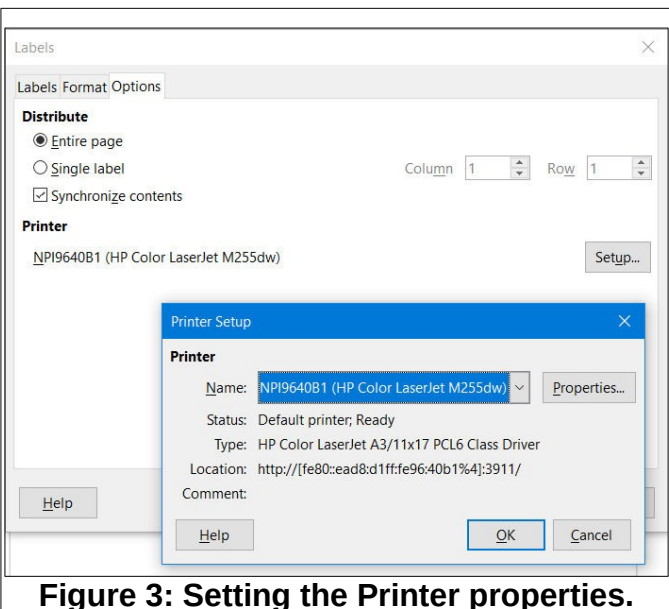


Figure 3: Setting the Printer properties.

- ✓ In the **Labels** dialog box, select the **Format** tab.





- ✓ In the **Format** section of the Labels dialog box, adjust the settings as shown in Figure 4 (1).
- ✓ When the settings have been adjusted, select the **Save** button (2).
- ✓ In the **Save Label Format** dialog box, enter *your label name* as the **Brand**, and *My Business Card* as the **Type** (3).

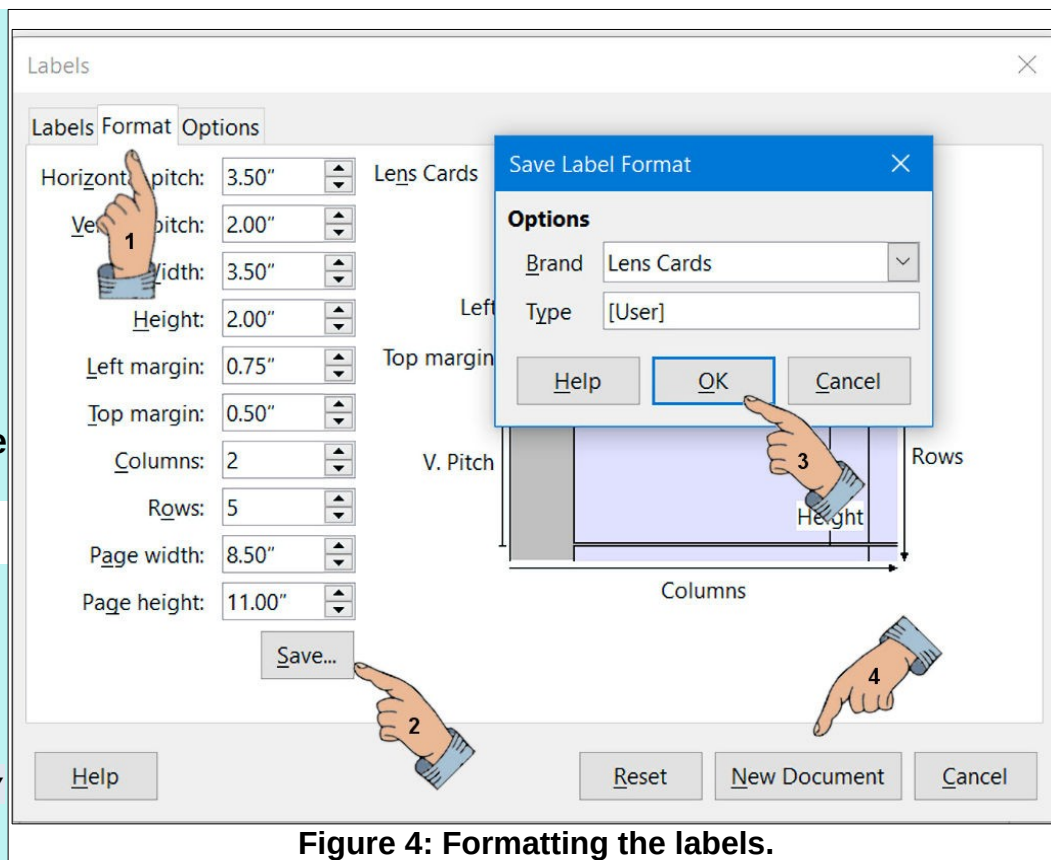


Figure 4: Formatting the labels.

Once you have saved your label definitions, your custom label will be available in the **Brand** list the next time you create a new label.

- ✓ After you have saved the label settings, select the **New Document** button in the Labels, Labels dialog box (4).

This will open a new **Untitled** document in LibreOffice Writer. It is a good habit to immediately save new documents with a file name and known file location.

- ✓ From the **Menubar**, select **File, Save As**, select a **Save In** folder, and enter a **File Name** for your new document.





Your new document should look similar to Figure 5.

Note the floating Synchronize Labels window. This is used to fill all ten spaces on the page with the same contents. More about that later.

Next, we will work on the basic card format. To aid in controlling the various areas of the card, several **Frames** will be created. Also, new **Paragraph Styles** will be added for the different types of text used on the card.

Each of the ten divisions on the page has an initial paragraph in place. To see exactly what is going on with the page formatting, the **Formatting Marks** option should be turned on.

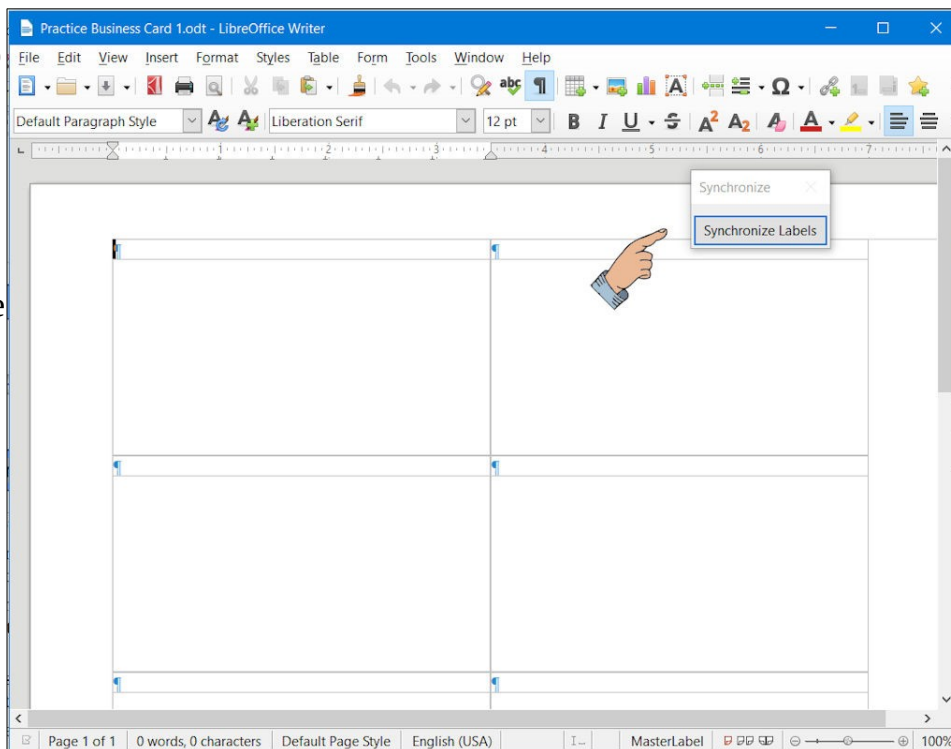


Figure 5: A new Business Card.

✓ If the non printing characters are not already displayed, from the **Menubar**, select **View, Formatting Marks**.

✓ To focus on the card area at the upper left of the page, use the display zoom control slider in the lower right corner of the display to adjust the view factor (or select **View, Zoom** and enter a new percentage).

The first line of each card area will have a paragraph, even if there are no words in the paragraph. This paragraph will make space at the top of the card equal to the size of the paragraph style font. The cards in this design will have all objects and text entries living

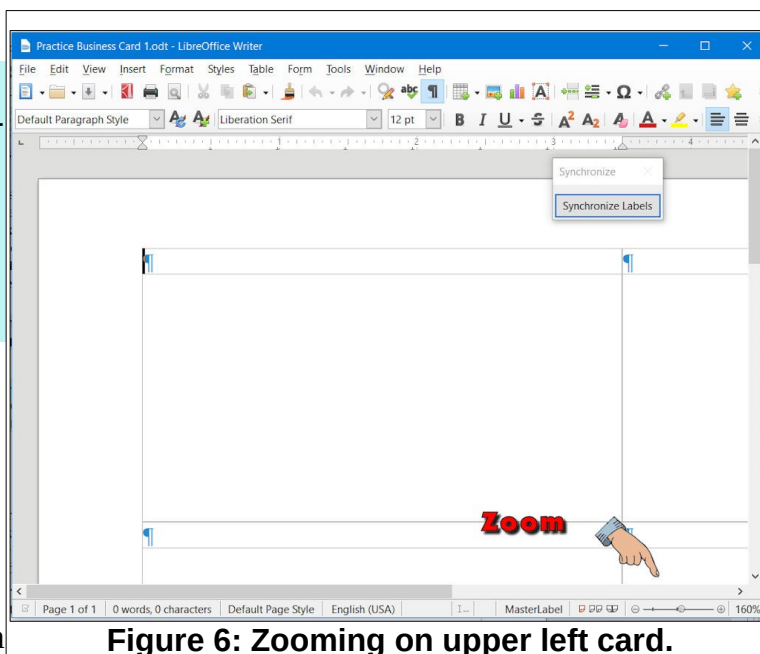


Figure 6: Zooming on upper left card.







inside of frames. To minimize the space between the edge of the card and the first frame, a new paragraph style will be created that is only 6 type points tall.

- ✓ If the **Styles and Formatting** list is not on the display, press **F11**.
- ✓ Select the small arrow near the bottom of the styles list and then select **Custom Styles**.
- ✓ **Right click** in an empty area of the **Custom Styles** and Formatting list and then select **New**.

This opens the **Paragraph Style** dialog box. The first thing is to create a name for the new style, and also the name of the following style.

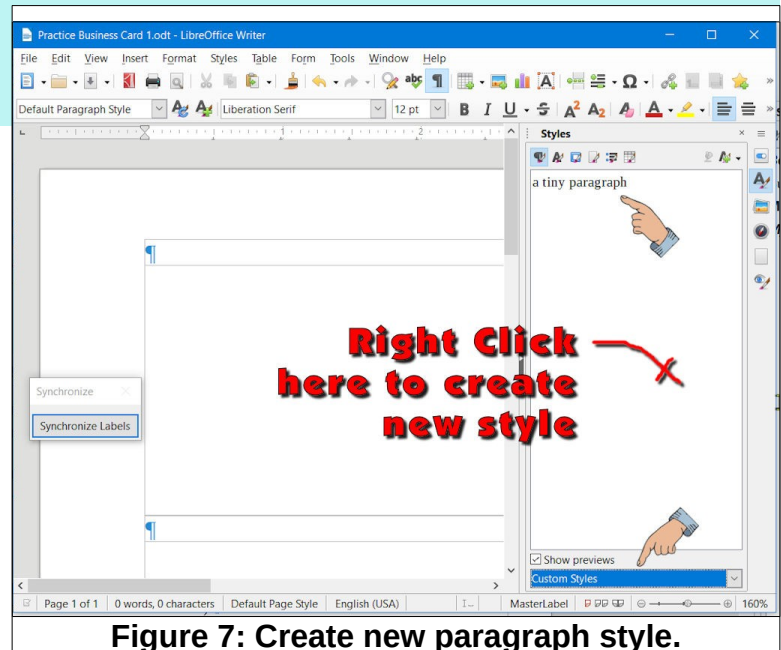


Figure 7: Create new paragraph style.

- ✓ In the Paragraph Style, Organizer dialog box, enter as the Name **a tiny paragraph**.
- ✓ In the Paragraph Style, Organizer dialog box, set the **Next Style** to **a tiny paragraph**.
- ✓ In the Paragraph Style, Organizer dialog box, set **Inherit from** to **None**.

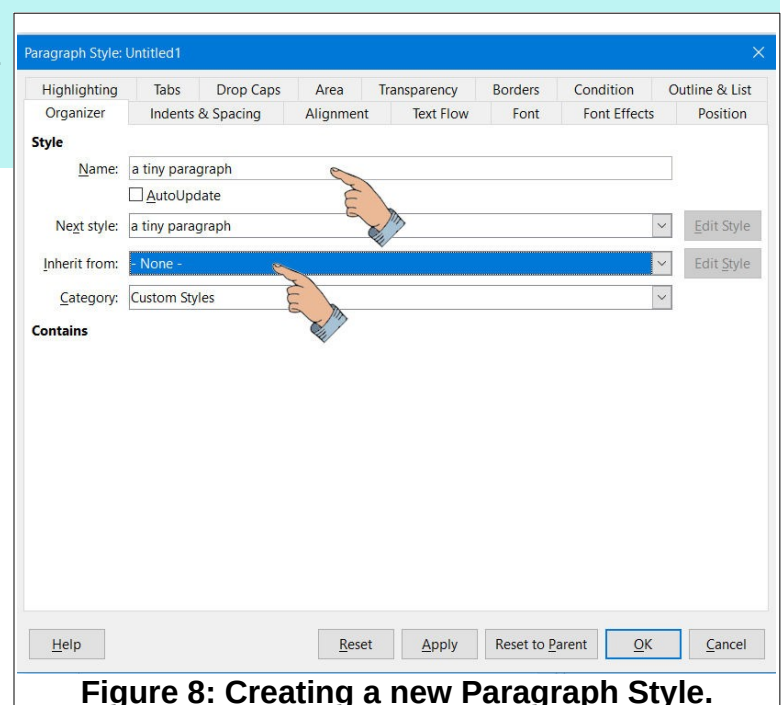


Figure 8: Creating a new Paragraph Style.





- ✓ Select the Paragraph Style, **Font** tab.
- ✓ In the Paragraph Style, **Font** dialog box, set the **Size** to **6pt**.
- ✓ Select **OK** to close the Paragraph Style, dialog box.

Next, the paragraph style for the first paragraph in the card will be set to a tiny paragraph style.

- ✓ Click in the first paragraph in the upper left corner of the card. Then **double click** on the **a tiny paragraph** style in the Styles and Formatting list.

Because the font size is so small, the **a tiny paragraph** style might be hard to see.

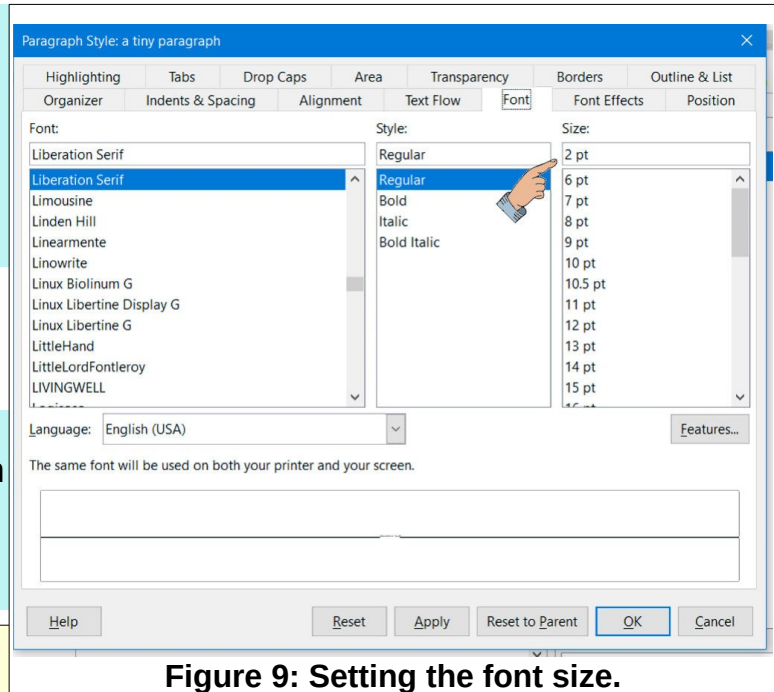


Figure 9: Setting the font size.

- ✓ Select the **Synchronize Labels** button and observe that the paragraph size changes for the first paragraph in all ten cards.





## Adding Frames

Next, a **Frame** will be added to the card.

- ✓ Position the cursor in the first paragraph in the upper left corner of the card, then from the **Menubar**, select **Insert, Frame, Frame**.
- ✓ With the **Type** tab selected in the Frame dialog box, set the **Width** to **1.25** and the **Height** to **1.9**.
- ✓ With the **Type** tab selected in the Frame dialog box, set the **Position Horizontal** to **Left**.

In this exercise, the initial background of the frames will be set to different colors to make it easier to keep track of where the frames are. The background colors can be turned off for the final version of the card.

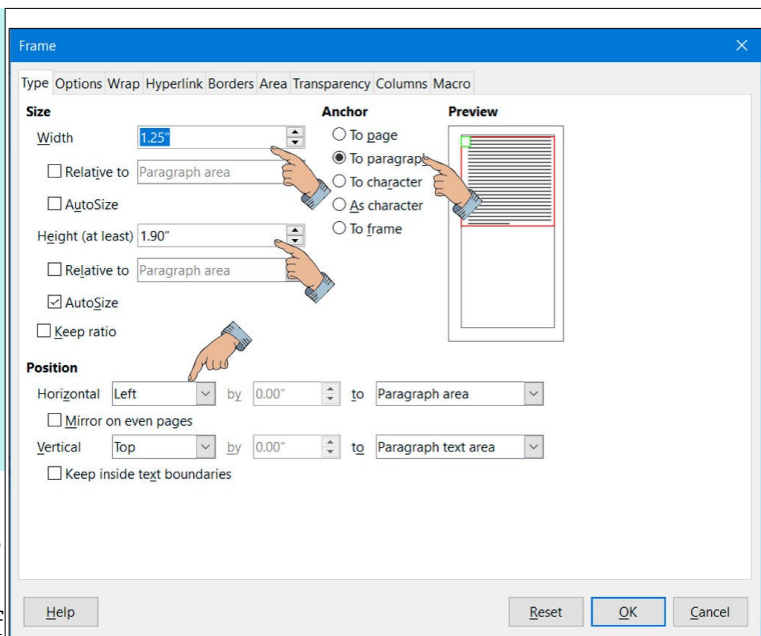


Figure 10: Adding a frame.

- ✓ In the **Frame** dialog box, select the **Area** tab.
- ✓ Select **Color**, then select **Light Blue 4**.
- ✓ Select **OK** to close the dialog box.

Check the size and location of the first frame. Note that the frame contains an initial paragraph. The paragraph style for this is **Frame Contents**, but this can be changed to a custom paragraph style.

**NOTE:** To edit the settings for a frame after it has been inserted, double click on the border of the frame to open the **Frame** dialog box.

As mentioned earlier, frames can contain graphic images or text. For this example, a graphic will be inserted using one of the LibreOffice drawing tools.

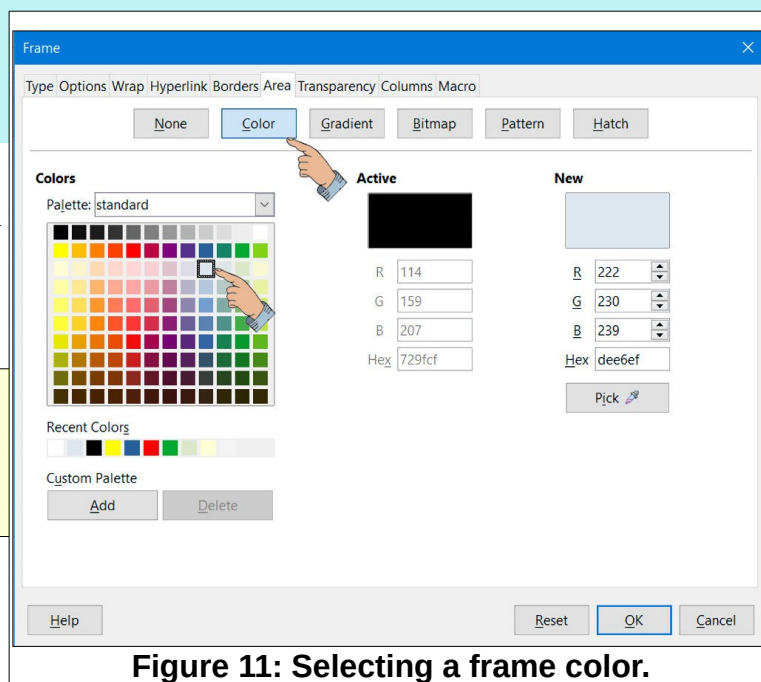


Figure 11: Selecting a frame color.

- ✓ From the **Menubar**, select **View, Toolbars, Drawing**.





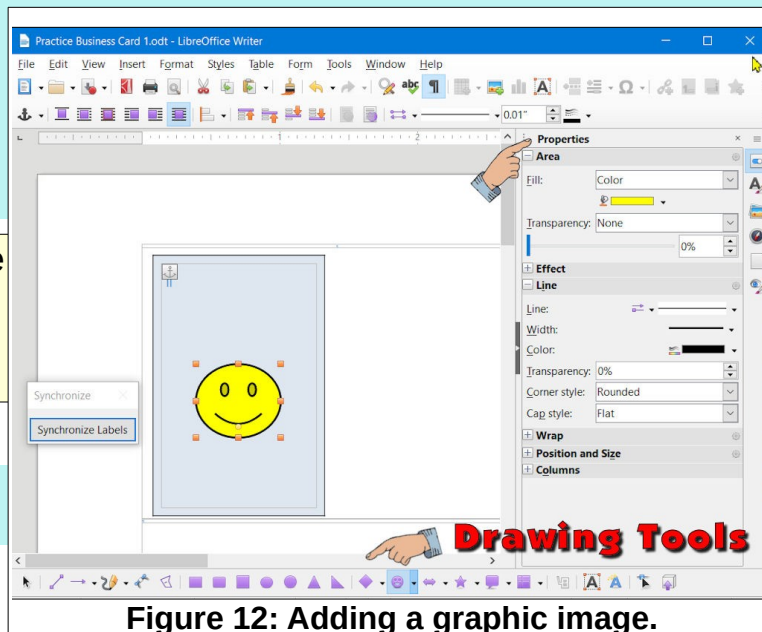
- ✓ If the frame is selected (there will be grab points on the corners) click in an empty area of the display to deselect it.
- ✓ From the **Drawing Toolbar**, select the **Symbol Shapes** tool and then click on the **Smiley Face** option.
- ✓ Click and drag a smiley face into the frame.
- ✓ To change the color of the smiley face object, select a new **Color** from the properties sidebar.

When a graphic object is selected, use the grab points to resize the object. Use the Graphics Toolbar options to change object parameters.

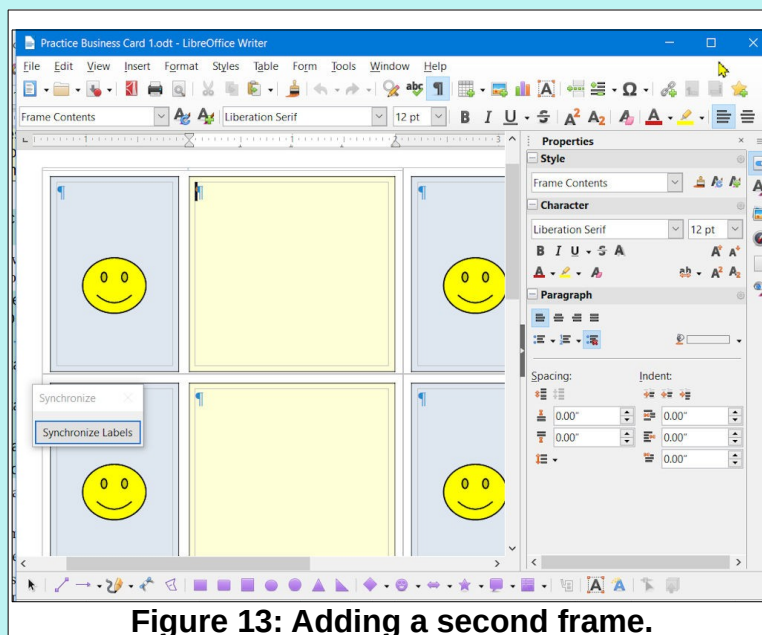
Now for some fun.

- ✓ Select the **Synchronize Labels** button.

OK! enough fun. Next, we will add another frame on the right side of the card.



- ✓ Click outside the frame in the upper left card. (The **a tiny paragraph style** should in the format toolbar.)
- ✓ From the **Menubar**, select **Insert, Frame, Frame**.
- ✓ With the **Type** tab selected in the Frame dialog box, set the **Width** to **2.0** and the **Height** to **1.9**.
- ✓ With the **Type** tab selected in the Frame dialog box, set the **Position Horizontal** to **Right**.
- ✓ With the **Area** tab selected in the Frame dialog box, set the **Color** to **Light Yellow 4**.
- ✓ Select **OK** to close the dialog box.



Next, some text will be added to the new frame, and custom paragraph styles will be created for the text.

- ✓ Click the cursor in an empty area to deselect all objects.







- ✓ Click the cursor in the second frame paragraph.
- ✓ Enter new paragraphs as follows, pressing the Enter key at the end of each paragraph. (Don't worry if the text makes the frame too tall for the card. That will be fixed by defining new paragraph styles.)
- My company name
- My company slogan
- My name
- My street
- My address
- My phone number
- My email

The default paragraph style will probably not be what you would like on the final card. This will be fixed by creating custom paragraph styles.

## Creating Paragraph Styles

- ✓ Right click in an empty area of the Styles and Formatting list and then select **New**.
- ✓ In the Paragraph Style, **Organizer** dialog box, enter as the **Name** an email paragraph.
- ✓ In the Paragraph Style, Organizer dialog box, set the **Next Style** to an email paragraph.
- ✓ In the Paragraph Style, Organizer dialog box, set **Linked with** to **None**.
- ✓ Select the Paragraph Style, **Alignment tab** and set the **Options** to **Center**.
- ✓ Select the Paragraph Style, **Font** tab.
- ✓ In the Paragraph Style, **Font** dialog box, set the **Font** to **Ariel**, **Bold**, **10pt**.
- ✓ In the Paragraph Style, **Font Effects** dialog box, set the Font **Color** to **Blue**.
- ✓ Select **OK** to close the Paragraph Style, dialog box.

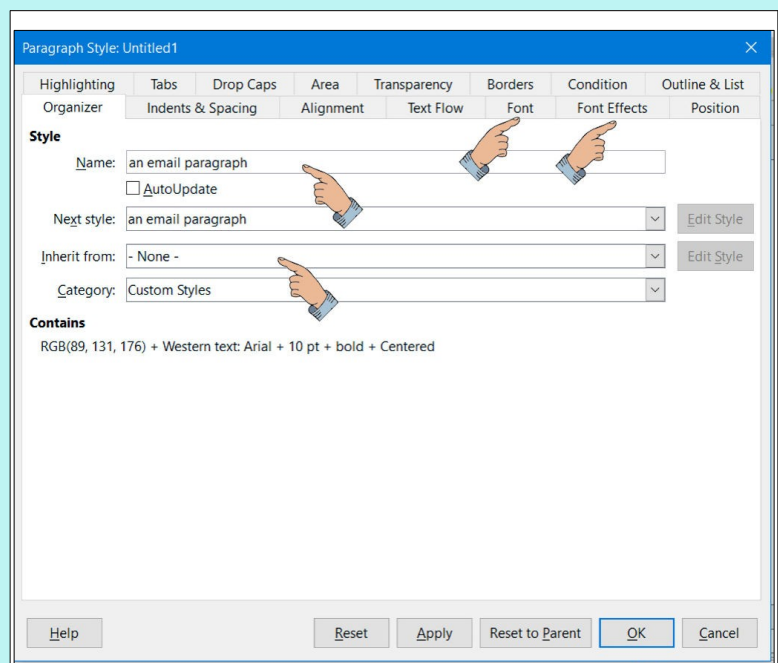


Figure 14: Creating a new paragraph style.



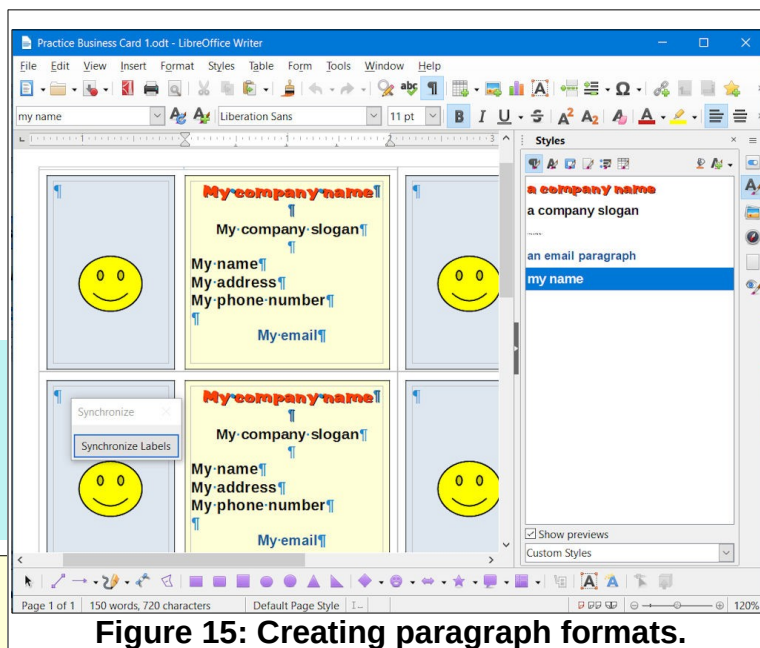


- ✓ Place the cursor somewhere in the **My email** paragraph and then **double click** on the **an email paragraph** style.

Now that you know how to create a new paragraph style for the email address, you should be able to do this for each of the paragraphs on your card. Experiment with font styles and sizes as well as spacing above and below paragraphs (check the tabs in the **Paragraph Style** dialog box) until things fit nicely on your card.

- ✓ Repeat the above process and create new paragraph styles for; my company name, my company slogan, my name, my street, my address, and my phone number.

**Hint:** After you have created and applied a paragraph style, right click on a style in the Styles list and select **Modify**. Change the font size (or whatever) then select the **Apply** button to see how it looks. Different styles can be experimented with before



**Figure 15: Creating paragraph formats.**

The space on a 2 inch tall card is very limited, so you will have to be careful about fitting the desired text on the card without making the font too small for people to read. After a new paragraph style has been created, you can **right click** on it in the paragraph styles list, select **Modify**, and make changes to the style. This will immediately change all paragraphs in the document that use this style.

- ✓ One of the tabs in the Paragraph Style dialog box is **Indents & Spacing**. Use this to adjust the space above or below each paragraph.
- ✓ Adjust your paragraph styles until you are satisfied with the text on the card.
- ✓ **Double click** on the frame borders and remove or modify the **Background** or **Border** for the frames.
- ✓ Select the **Synchronize Labels** button to extend your card design to all cards on the page.
- ✓ **Save** the document.

Now that you have a basic card document, you can simply select **File, Save As**, change the document file name, edit the card, and create a new card from an existing design.

The sizes of the two frames used in this example are probably not optimized for your preferred style card. No problem, you now have the power to use **File, Save As** to create a new variation and then experiment with frame sizes, borders, background colors, paragraph placement, and contents until you are satisfied.





Observe that in the sample shown in Figure 16, the border sizes and background colors have been changed. You have the power to modify your card as you wish.

Frame backgrounds can have solid colors, gradients, or graphic images. Spend some time exploring the various options in the dialog boxes used to create the example. Once you have completed this exercise, go back to the beginning and do the whole thing again. You will be amazed at how many things appear the second time through.

The important part of this exercise was using the **LibreOffice Labels** tool to create the basic card layout. After that is done, the rest of the job is similar to most **LibreOffice** word processing exercises.



Figure 16: A typical card layout.







## Formatting a series of Custom Cards

In my situation here at Bristol Village <<https://bvres.org/>>, there was a need to create custom cards, all with the same basic design, but each customized for the different members of the community.

To make creating each new card even easier, I created **custom fields** for each text entry, and inserted **Fields** in the master card. Here is how it works.

- ✓ With the original practice labels document opened, from the **Menubar** select **File, Save As**, and enter a new file name.
- ✓ From the **Menubar**, select **File, Properties**, then select the **Custom Properties** tab.
- ✓ Select the **Add** button and add an entry **Name** and **Value** for each desired text area on your card. Then select the **OK** button to close the Properties dialog box.

**NOTE:** If the **Custom Properties** dialog box is closed, and then re-opened, the properties list will be sorted by **Name**.

Name	Type	Value
Address City	Text	Card Town, OH, 45690
Address Street	Text	123 First Street
Cell phone	Text	123-456-7890
Company Name	Text	Bristol Village
Company Slogan	Text	Active Retirement at its best!
Email address	Text	webmaster@bvres.org
Email name	Text	Len Nasman
Home Phone	Text	555-555-5555
Name	Text	First Last

**Figure 17: Creating Custom Properties.**

Once the custom properties have been created, the **Insert, Fields** option will be used to replace text with a field that contains the desired information.

- ✓ Remove any paragraphs from the practice card.







- ✓ From the **Menubar**, select **Insert, Fields, More Fields**.
- ✓ In the **Fields** dialog box, select the **DocInformation** tab, then expand the **Custom** option and select **CompanyName**.
- ✓ Select the **Insert** and **Close** buttons.
- ✓ Press the **Enter** key to add a new paragraph.

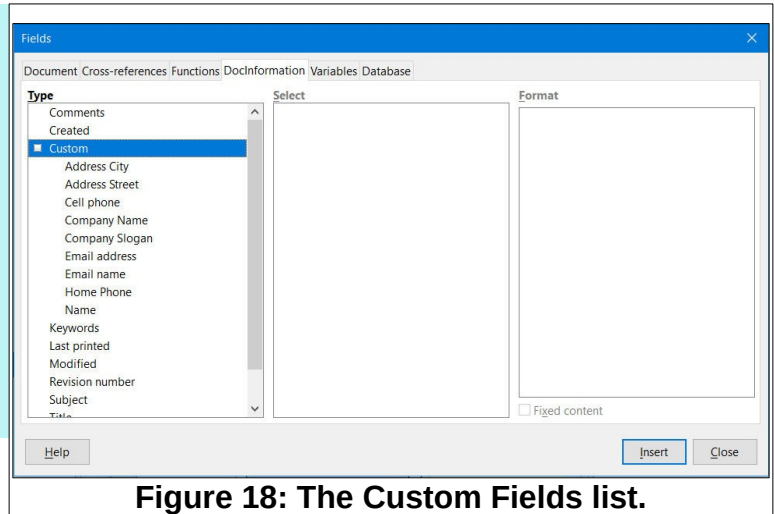


Figure 18: The Custom Fields list.

The **Company Name** text will now appear as a shaded text area. The shading shows that it is contents from an **inserted field** and cannot be edited as normal text.

- ✓ Repeat the above process for the other text items in your card.
- ✓ Select the **Synchronize Labels** button to extend your card design to all cards on the page.
- ✓ Be sure to **save** this version of the card.

Figure 19 shows a card with inserted fields. It also shows that custom paragraph styles have been created and applied to the different fields.

Now that you have replaced the text on the card with the contents of **Fields**, you can generate new cards by simply modifying the **Custom Properties** of each new card document.

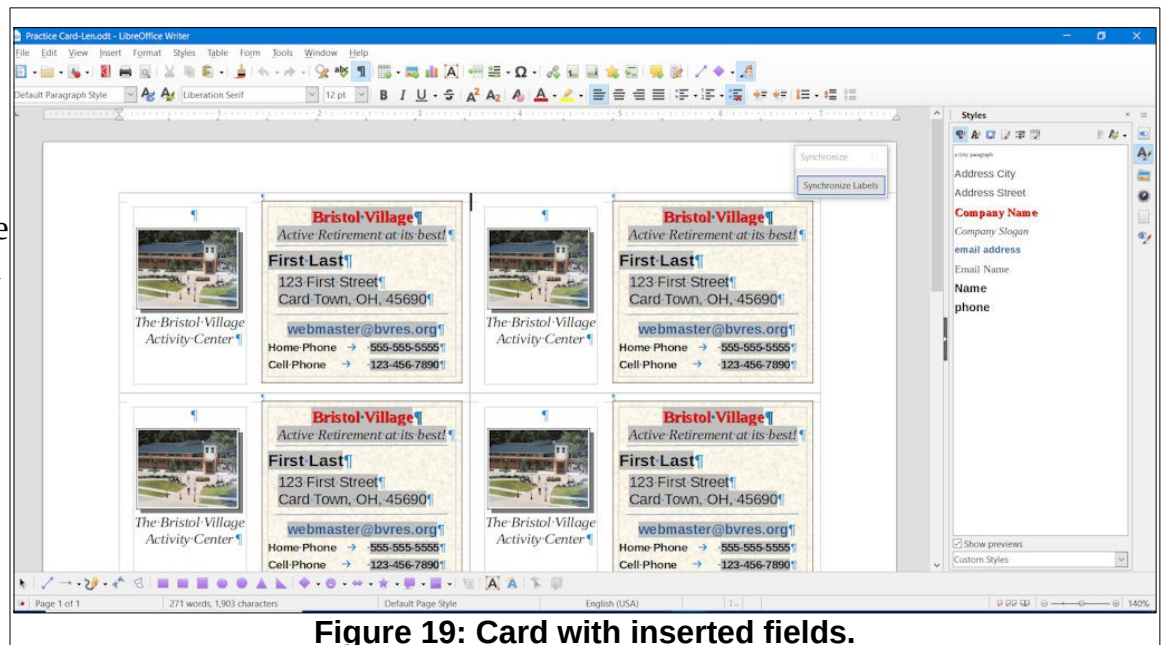


Figure 19: Card with inserted fields.

- ✓ Open the card with the inserted fields and use **File, Save As** to create a new card.





- ✓ Select **File, Properties**, and edit the fields you want to change.

To change the card text contents do the following.

- ✓ Select **File, Properties**, open the **Custom Properties** tab, and edit the **Value** of each text field to be changed.

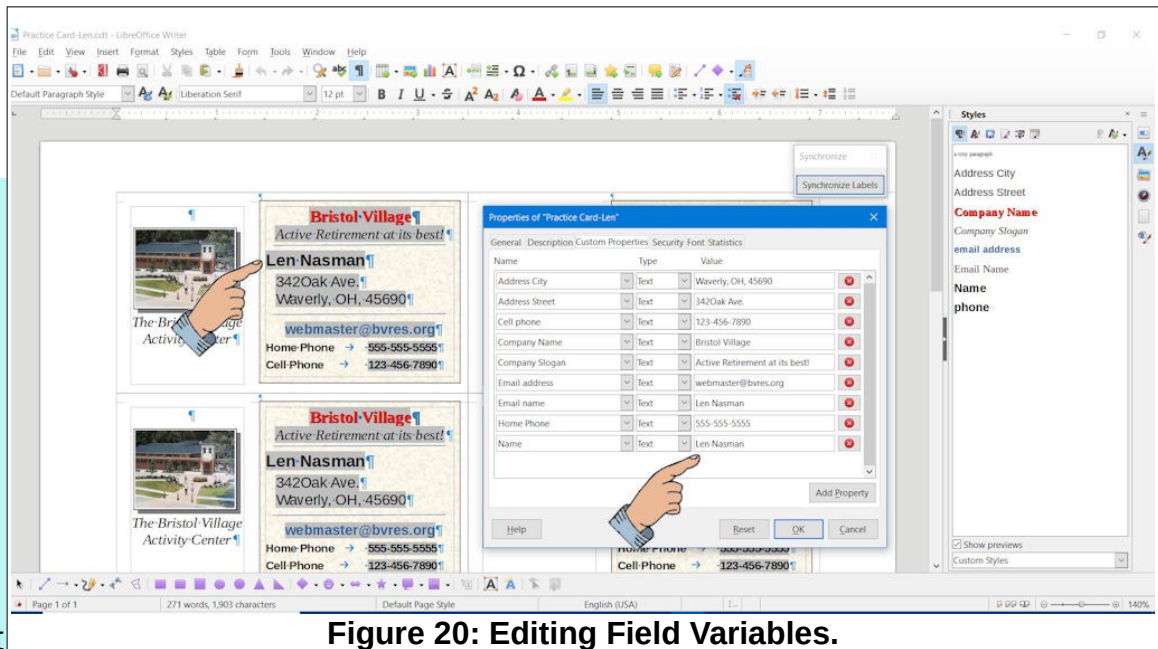


Figure 20: Editing Field Variables.

When you select **OK**, all of the text on the page will automatically be updated. You now have the power to generate your own customized business cards.

Here is a trick to protect the original card design from accidentally making changes.

- ✓ Open the folder that contains the file to protect and select that file.
- ✓ **Right click** on the file and select **Properties**.
- ✓ In the **Properties** dialog box, toggle the **Read Only** option **ON**.

Now if you edit the custom properties and try to save it, the system will not allow it unless you use the **File, Save As** option to save the file with a different name.

*This version was edited September 9, 2021*

