

DIRECT MAIL Best Practices



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PRINTING**



Direct Mail Still an Economical Medium

According to the Direct Mail Association (DMA) Factbook for 2013¹, 65% of consumers of all ages have made a purchase as a result of direct mail.

Also, 73% of U.S. consumers said they prefer the convenience of direct mail for brand communications according to Epsilon's 2012 Channel Preference Study².

A 2012 report in the Direct Mail News³, indicated that the average response rate for direct mail was 4.4% for both business-to-business and business to consumer mailing. This was considerably higher than industry expectations, and surging past electronic mail's response rate of just 0.12%.

The DMA reports that the cost per lead of direct mail is in line with print and pay-per-click, and significantly less than telemarketing (See Table Right).

The Print on Demand

Institute (PODI)⁴ found that direct mail out-pulled all other channels tested in terms of conversion rates, both for lead-generating "free" offers and one-step "buy now" offers.

"According to DMA, Four-fifths (79%) of consumers will act on direct mail immediately compared to only 45% who say they deal with email straightaway." 1



PODI also suggested that direct mail's edge becomes even more dramatic when it is optimized with personalization and other factors, and combined with personalized landing pages.

“This information tells us that Direct Mail is alive and kicking.”

Many people believe that electronic messaging is cheap or even free. This can not be farther from the truth. You must consider the list acquisition cost as well as the increasingly low response rate.

Campaign Format — Direct mail doesn't have to be large and expensive to be effective. According to a study by the U.S. Postal Service⁵, postcards are the mail format most likely to be scanned and read. They are also less expensive than other print materials.

Mail read by product.

- Postcards: 53%
- Large envelope packages: 43.5%
- Newspapers & Magazines: 40.8%
- Catalogs: 39.2%
- Flyers: 38.1%
- Letter size envelopes: 35.9%



List Quality — Direct Mail list quality has improved in recent years. This means that a direct mail list from a good vendor will be more tightly targeted to the desired customer segment.

Shelf Life — Direct mail also enjoys longer “shelf life” than email - as many people will “file” them a way for future reference.

Data from the DMA's “2012 Response Rate Report” indicates that even though postage and printing costs for direct mail seem higher, cost per lead and cost per sale across direct mail, email, and paid search are roughly equal. Cost per order or lead for acquisition campaigns stood at \$51.40 for direct mail, slightly less than for paid search (\$52.58), post card (\$54.10), and email (\$55.24). Of course these number vary greatly depending on the size and depth of the campaign. Regardless of size, dollar for dollar, direct mail may be the most effective means for increasing sales and /or awareness.

Now that you have decided to give Direct Mail a try, here are some guidelines to get the most bang for your buck.

Following a few simple guidelines will assure you success with your next direct mail program.

- 1. Develop a strategy that is simple and clear.** Ask yourself what you want to accomplish with your campaign?
 - Sell more to existing customers?
 - Acquire new customers?
 - Build awareness?
 - Invite potential customers to an event?
- 2. Determine your budget.** How much money do you want to budget for your campaign?
- 3. Frequency.** What is the number of times you plan to mail to the same group of prospects/customers over a period of time?
- 4. Determine the best direct mail format:**
 - Every Door Direct Mail (postcards mailed to every household in a selected neighborhood)
 - Traditional Direct Mail (postcards, letters or self-mailers mailed to your targeted customer/prospect mailing list)
- 5. Choose the right mailing list.** (A highly targeted mailing list of individuals or businesses, who meet the criteria of your star customer, increases your success).

6. Follow the 10 elements of postcard design. Write clear, compelling copy that will illicit and emotion.

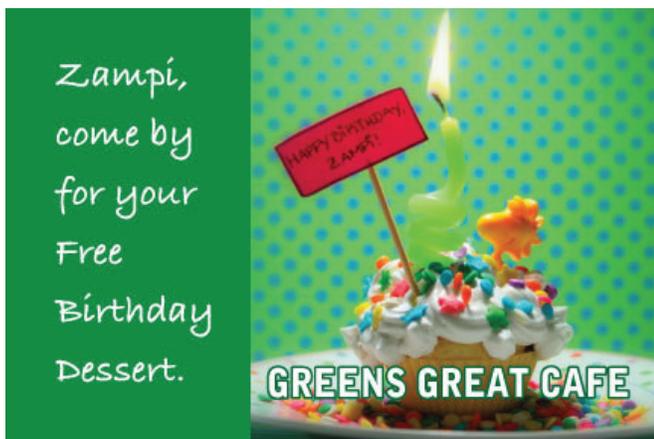
7. Choose a reliable Direct Mail Service Provider. Gossett Printing can save you a lot of time and money

by providing a one stop shop to handle all the printing, mailing list, inserting/sealing into envelopes, address printing, mailing and save you money on postage.

Getting Down to the Creative

Get Personal — Personalized communications continue to out-perform generic pitches in all categories.

“Personalization almost always pays for itself. Name personalization alone won’t net positive results. Offers, messages and images must be personalized as well.”



Variable Data Print technology allows you to integrate the person’s name on the image. However using a person’s name is just the beginning — the content needs to be personalized as well. For example, if you are marketing high tech products that run on different platforms, users will have different hot buttons. A generic message that focuses on only one platform will not be relevant to other customers. Wording that tries to cover issues for all platforms will be cumbersome and uninteresting to most recipients. It’s worth the extra time and small expense to assure that your piece says the right thing to the right people.

For example, a real estate agent wanted to send out postcards to get new listings. She was able to target the specific neighborhoods she wanted to be in and change the image on the front to show a home “just sold” in the same neighborhood. Not only was she able to personalize the image, but the copy as well. Because she was able to show how much a property sold for in the same neighborhood, she received more requests for market valuations than with her standard postcard.

Timing Is Everything — Direct mail campaigns used to take weeks to execute because of the time it took to develop concepts, print, etc. That can still be true of large and elaborate campaigns, but now marketers can take advantage of digital print-on-demand. Gossett Printing offers amazing turnaround times on postcards. This allows you to be far more flexible in how you use direct mail.

The ability to time an offer at the point of maximum interest, coordinate with lifecycle events (e.g. births, marriages and moving), seasonal developments (holidays), purchasing behavior, etc. heightens the chances a recipient will find immediate value in a marketing communication. For example: retailers will want to send mailings out in advance of major holidays or clearance sales. Pool services schedule mailings for early spring, HVAC service professionals before the hot summer or cold weather and so on.

Integrated Marketing — Use direct mail as an adjunct to other sales and promotion efforts. Use the same message from the postcard in your e-mail promotion. If you are running banner ads or Adwords, replicate the same message. Outside sales people can use the postcard as a follow-up to a sales call, including a thank you note for their time.

Go Dimensional — 3D or dimensional mailings, whether they take the form of a box with a teaser on the outside or a tube, outperform standard formats by 250%, according to the DMA, but increase the cost per lead by only 50%.

Remember you can add dimensions with postcards too. Add die cuts, embossing and folds for added dimensions.

Test it — Test your direct mail campaign by using your best performing promotions to measure the response. Try experimenting with different offers, colors and placement of the “call to action”. Use a vanity URL, QR Code, or deep link to your website for your action. By doing so, you are able to track the effectiveness of the mailing.

Make sure that the pages and offers are active for a longer period or time — or put a firm deadline on response time, since people will hang on to post cards for a longer period of time.

Layout and Copy — Follow the 10 elements for successful direct mail.



5. Body Copy - Copy trumps art. Direct marketing is more about selling and less about creating an impression or being memorable. So, great direct marketing communications must focus on persuasive copy. The rule of the illustration and the design is to deliver the message clearly.

Copy should be clear and simple – a short paragraph or list bullet points. This should support your headline and explain why your product or service is better than the competition.

Avoid vague claims, like “we are the best”, or “we have great service”.

Use friendly “me-to-you tone”. Avoid formality. Avoid jargon. Write the way you speak – one person speaking to another.

Be credible. People won’t respond to someone they don’t trust. So, your offer must be believable. And your messaging must be warm and personable. Eliminate risk by adding testimonials and guarantees.

Stress benefits versus the features. Explain why the customer should care. Talk about what the product or service can do for the customer.

6. The Offer - This needs to be something compelling. Limited time offers are great enticers.

7. Call to Action - Instill a sense of immediacy...“Call Now!”

8. Company name and logo.

9. Contact information - phone, address, URL, e-mail. (You would think this is a no brainer, but you would be surprised at how often it gets left off).

10. Return address.

Know Their Buying Triggers

You have your promotion, so how do you get the conversions? Knowing what triggers the purchase is the key to success. These tips will help you find the words to make the sale.

1. Stimulate Interest – Topic should be relevant. Know your audience. What issues affect your audience? How does your product or service solve that problem? Copy should provoke curiosity.

1. Headline - Clear, simple and bold. Grab their attention by addressing a basic need or desire.

2. Graphic - Your image should support your headline. Be sure to use professional images taken by a professional photographer or good quality stock photography. Gossett Printing offers some standard postcard images designed to get attention.

3. Color - Use colors that pop! Colors evoke emotions⁶, so if you want to create a sense of urgency, you might want to go with orange; calm, green; speed, red.

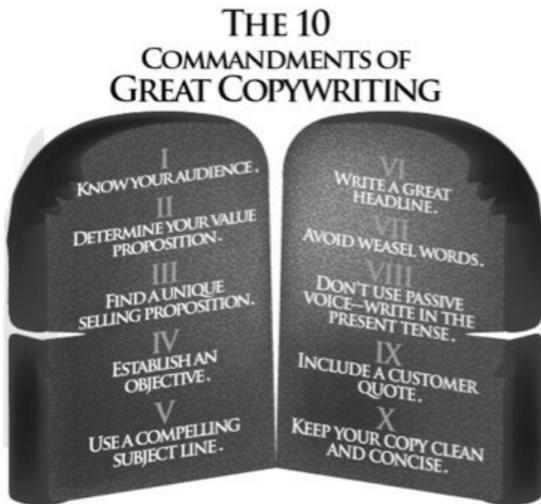


Source: The Logo Company

4. Subhead - This should lead into the body copy.

2. Get the reader involved – Ask questions, Teach something new. Know pressing needs and understand problems. Exacerbate problems, emphasize what they are going through.

3. Get them motivated – Avoid using negative statements. Address obstacles head on and provide reasons they will accept to overcome these obstacles. Present what you sell as an immediate, as well as long term solution. Be the bright ray of sunshine - sell optimism.



4. Be compelling - Tell your story. The goal should be to overcome the most difficult obstacles preventing the reader from making the purchase. Your claims should be specific. Avoid vague claims such as “Best Service”, “Quality Products”, “Lowest Price.” These can be hard to prove and harder to believe. Be credible. Be Believable. End or lead with an irresistible offer.

5. Make your buyer excited - Be excited yourself. Provoke curiosity and resolve it in their best interest. Unique offers such as scarcity, rare occurrence or experience, one time offer, affordability.

6. Make your buyers curious. Show empathy, and interest in their problem. Offer “little known secret”

to solve their problem.

7. Make them thirsty. Leave them wanting more. Tantalize.

8. Radiate optimism. “We are 100% positive you will love our product!”.

9. Educate your buyer. Provide them with the necessary information to help them make the decision to purchase. Making a major purchase can be a daunting task. The buyer doesn’t want to have buyers remorse. If they are educated about your product or service, they will feel more comfortable making the buying decision.

Following these tips will make your next campaign a huge success. Remember that Gossett Printing has the experience & know how to ensure your campaign is successful. Don’t hesitate to ask for assistance. 972-256-1234 or visit us on the web at www.gossettprinting.com.

Gossett Printing is located in Salem, IL. Our central location enables us to provide convenient service to Salem, Centralia, Mt. Vernon and surrounding areas.

Gossett Printing is a full service commercial print shop. We offer both traditional offset printing and state of the art digital printing. Complete fulfillment services are available as well creative and design services.

**Contact us Today
to Get Started!**



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¹ Direct Marketing Association (DMA) 2012 Statistical Fact Book

² Epsilon.com

³ Direct Market News (DMA) 2012 Statistical Fact Book

⁴ Direct Marketing Association (PODI) 2012 Statistical Fact Book

⁵ United States Postal Service (USPS)

⁶ The Logo Company

⁷ <http://visual.ly/copywriting-101-how-craft-compelling-copy>