

Growing Leads Through Direct Mail

11 Common Questions About Building and Executing Direct Mail Campaigns

What's Inside?

- Direct mail only makes sense for certain businesses. Find out if yours is one of them.
- We'll help you determine who your audience is and how to find them.
- How to make the most of your direct mail campaign responses.

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Introduction

In today's world of marketing, everyone is looking for a competitive advantage. Now that Internet marketing has cemented itself as a normal part of business marketing, it perhaps has business owners such as yourself wondering:

How do I stand out in my industry?

If you've downloaded this ebook, you're probably already ahead of the curve. You found us online through our website and downloaded what you're hoping will be a valuable resource (and not just a gimmick or click bait download so we can spam you indefinitely).

Not to worry. We've written this ebook to cut through the fluff and get you asking the right questions about direct mail to see where your business fits—and if it does, how to start thinking creatively about your first direct mail campaign. Before we dive in, the good news is that generating leads through direct mail isn't a complicated task, but it can be done more effectively if you start with and continuing using the right tools.

We hope you count this ebook among them.

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1. WHO DOES DIRECT MAIL WORK FOR?

Before you get started with your next direct mail project, step back and make sure this channel is appropriate for your business. Do you have some realistic goals lined up? Direct mail is an excellent channel for driving new leads. If your goal is to nurture existing leads, direct mail is probably not the best way to spend your money since there are less expensive channels such as email, social media and blogging. It could be, but direct mail is most effective when you're trying to get in front of new people.

2. WHO DOES DIRECT MAIL NOT WORK FOR?

Based on the first question we answered, it would naturally make sense that direct mail is not great if your business sells low ticket items or has a low

customer lifetime value. It's also not a great channel if you don't have a firm understanding of who your customer is. For example, if someone asks, "Who is your customer?" and you say, "Everyone!" then direct mail is not for you. As you'll see below, defining your customer allows you to find targeted mail lists to reach that customer. Direct mail is too expensive to mail to just anyone. If

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you are selling consumer products that truly do appeal to most everyone, TV, radio, and other broad brush media might be more appropriate.

3. HOW DO I CHOOSE A CAMPAIGN GOAL?

Sometimes we hear clients say, "We just want to get our name out there." While this a perfectly fine sentiment, it doesn't equip you to measure whether or not your marketing investment is worthwhile. Your campaign goal should be quantifiable in some way.

DIRECT MAIL IS GREAT FOR THESE TYPES OF BUSINESSES:

◆ Businesses that sell a high ticket item (preferably \$10,000+)

◆ Businesses that have a high Lifetime Value of a Customer (maybe you sell something for \$1,000, but your average customer will buy 10 or more times from you)

◆ If your business is targeting particular types of consumers, direct mail can work exceptionally well in terms of targeting.

◆ Direct mail still works extremely well in the B2B sector, but the options for narrowing your list are slightly lower.

◆ Businesses that have a tightly defined market area, such as restaurants, dry cleaners and similar service businesses do well with direct mail because they allow you to target just one market area and avoid paying for reaching out-of-area consumers.

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As you can see on the right, each goal is specific and measurable. Only by having a goal can you determine the success or failure of the campaign.

4. HOW DO I DEFINE MY AUDIENCE?

The beauty of direct mail is the ability to target your audience. So, how do you go about that targeting process? A good place to start is by looking at your best customer. Obviously, you would like more customers like this! What makes them your best customer? Are they a certain age? Do they have children? Do they work at certain businesses? Do they have certain interests or hobbies? Do they make a particular amount of money? We recommend creating a detailed profile of your customers' commonalities.

There are several ways to get this information. First, you can interview your customers. Not only will this provide valuable profile information, it's also an excellent time to dig into why they buy from you as well. This will help you with your market positioning and message. Secondly, you can "reverse engineer" your list. It is possible to take your customer database and, by running it through sophisticated software, produce a profile of your customer database, down to the types of cars they drive. While this sounds expensive, it's actually quite reasonably priced and can provide valuable data about who to target with your direct mail and other campaigns. To find out more [click here](#).

5. HOW DO I CONDUCT LIST RESEARCH?

Knowing who your target audience doesn't mean that it will be easy to find a mailing list that matches your target. This is where list research comes into play. There are numerous lists available to the direct mail marketer from many different sources. Some lists are "compiled" from various public sources. These lists usually can provide geographic targeting, income, gender, age, marital status, homeownership and so on. Other lists are from subscription bases for magazines and other publications. These lists may have some of the same data as compiled lists, but are usually most helpful in targeting the interest of the audience. For instance, subscribers to "Muscle and Fitness" probably have a high degree of interest in fitness and health-related products and services.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF CAMPAIGN GOALS INCLUDE:

- ◆ to get 5 new customers
- ◆ to drive 100 visitors to a landing page that provides more product data
- ◆ to get 30% of expiring customers to renew their subscription
- ◆ to get 15% of lapsed donors to give again to the organization

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Various lists can be combined into one mailing if desired, removing the duplicate names between the lists.

Most lists are rented and not sold. This simply means that you can rent the list for one-time use or rent the list to use for a year. Ownership of the list remains with the list originator. However, if someone responds to an offer on your mail piece, they then belong to you and you can contact them as often as you like. As a matter of note, most lists start to go stale after 90 days due to the highly mobile nature of the American population.

Pricing for list rentals can vary widely depending on how valuable the list owner considers his list. Pricing is typically on a “per thousand” basis, with a minimum order requirement.

6. HOW DO I DEVELOP A DIRECT MAIL OFFER?

Having an offer on your mail piece is critical to its success. As we’ve discussed, direct mail is too expensive to simply use it for branding purposes, though brand recognition is a nice additional benefit.

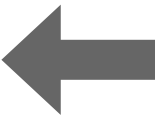
At a basic level, what makes a good direct mail offer? One that elicits a response from the reader of the mail piece. In order to find out what might strengthen your direct mail piece, start by identifying its purpose. Are you trying to have the reader buy from the mail piece? Or do you just need to get them to call so you can engage them in a conversation? Perhaps you are really interested in their email address so you can stay in touch with them over time, in which case you could include a download from your website that requires their email address.

An offer doesn't necessarily mean that we are giving money away in the form of discounts. It could be the addition of more product or services for the price. It could free consultation. It could be a money back guarantee. It could be the ability to receive something that is in scarce supply. As you can see, much thought needs to go into the offer in order to maximize response.

7. HOW SHOULD I CREATE/DESIGN THE PACKAGE?

What sort of mail piece or package will work best when sent to your targeted list? Should it be a 5.5 x 8.5 full color card? a 6 x 11 card? a #10 business envelope with a personalized letter? a 9 x 12 envelope with many inserts? Determining the best package is the job of the creative and design team. A card might work well to advertise a sale this weekend, whereas a letter with a brochure might be more effective in a fundraising setting.

In order to find out what might strengthen your direct mail piece, start by identifying its purpose.



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Graphic design and imagery also play an important role in the effectiveness of the piece. Is the design easy to follow? Is it clear what action the recipient should take? Do the colors and pictures evoke the right emotions?

Good copy is also critical. The goal is to have just the right amount of copy. Too much and it won't get read. Too little, and the recipient won't know what the piece is about or what to do. Good copy will address the recipient's pain points, elicit an emotional response and move the reader to action.

8. HOW SHOULD RECIPIENTS RESPOND?

All direct mail should provide a way for the recipient to respond to you. In the past, the most common ways were 1) making a phone call, 2) replying by mail, and 3) providing a location for respondents to visit. Today, phone and location are still pretty viable options, but reply mail has fallen off in popularity. It's too slow and requires the respondent to take the step of putting something in a mailbox. Consider augmenting your reply card with a dedicated webpage that provides more information about the offer and allows the respondent to fill out a form and submit it to you over the internet. This type of response can trigger follow up emails and other ways to nurture the respondent.

9. HOW OFTEN SHOULD I SEND MY DIRECT MAIL PIECE?

It's been said that the average consumer or buyer needs to hear a marketing message 10 to 14 times in order to start to have an impact. Whether we are talking about direct mail, TV, radio, internet, billboards, or social media, it is important to repeat your message. We are bombarded with hundreds, if not thousands, of messages every day. What does this mean for direct mail? First, direct mail can be part of an integrated campaign that provides additional touches on the consumer. Are there radio and TV spots reinforcing the mail

piece? Email? If not, that means a better strategy would include mailing more often to a smaller, targeted, group instead of sending a larger, one-time mailing. We need to break through the clutter, and sometimes this means someone may not really "see" your piece until they have seen it several times.

Instead of only a reply card, consider a

**dedicated
webpage**



that provides more information about the offer and allows the respondent to fill out a form and submit it to you over the internet.

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10. HOW MUCH TIME DOES A CAMPAIGN REQUIRE?

It's important to allow enough time for the thoughtful development of your campaign. In the chart at right are some of the important steps that all require time. Some rough time frames have also been provided in the right hand column.

1. Identifying the Audience	dependent
2. List Research	1-3 days
3. Offer Development	2 days
4. Graphic Design	5-7 days
5. Printing	5-7 days
6. Mail Production and Sorting	5-7 days
7. Delivery by the United States Postal Service	7-14 days

11. HOW SHOULD I FOLLOW UP?

One of the saddest things that can happen at the end of a direct mail campaign is when prospects respond, but no one follows up with them. It would be like going to a trade show, having people come to your booth, give you their contact information and then never calling or emailing them. So, if you are going to invest in a direct mail campaign, make sure to have your follow up procedure in place:

DIRECT MAIL FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES

- ◆ When someone calls in, make sure there is a designated person the call will go to.
- ◆ If someone emails you, write out a standard email response that can be quickly sent.
- ◆ What happens when a form is filled out on your website? Your sales staff should know details about the offer on the mail piece so they can speak intelligently about it.

Is someone making sure each response is accounted for and whether it turned into a sale?

Only by having good follow up procedures can you determine whether you are getting the ROI you are expecting from your direct mail investment.

NEXT STEPS

We hope this ebook has equipped you with answers you were seeking about direct mail. We've worked with businesses across the country to help them use direct mail in smart, marketing-supportive ways for several decades—and we wouldn't be surprised if there's a question we've overlooked. If that's the case, we'd like to invite you to schedule a Direct Mail Marketing Assessment. We'll gladly brainstorm with you about your potential campaign and help you weigh the pros and cons of investing in direct mail.



About TMR Direct

TMR Direct is an integrated direct marketing company focused on real results and positive ROI. Coming from the background of direct mail, we're passionate about measurement and all of our online marketing efforts are lead and customer driven.

If you're looking for the cheapest marketing solution out there, we likely won't be a good fit for you. But if you're looking for someone who will take your business seriously, take the time to understand your needs, provide you with excellent service and work with you to improve over time, then you should consider working with us. We strongly believe that marketing campaigns are never "one hit wonders." Rather, they're thought-out, well planned and well executed long-term plans. It takes continuous improvement and evolution within a marketing strategy to grow a business

We're not successful unless you are!

If you're looking to take your internet marketing strategy to the next level, start generating leads and converting new customers, you'll want to contact TMR Direct right away.

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