

## 10 Ways to Maximize Your Direct Mail Campaign

Direct Mail is all about measurement. Unlike Space advertising or Radio or TV/Cable advertising, with direct mail you can and should know exactly how effective your marketing efforts are. The old axiom that 50% of my marketing works, I just don't know which 50% doesn't fly with direct mail. Why? Because direct mail is the measurable medium.

If you have a small direct mail marketing budget, you will need to pick and choose what variables you want to test. The basics are list(s), offer, and package. If you are doing postcard marketing, then you might have more than one variation of the postcard to test.

Here are 10 direct mail marketing criteria to consider if you want to maximize your direct mail campaigns.

### 1. Carefully Target your Audience.

It is rule number one to determine who your customers are, or will be. If you don't know who they are, how can you hope to replicate them in a mailing list to market to?

Questions to ask when determining target audience include:

For Consumers: Who is your buyer—Gender? What is the demographic make-up of your customers—Age, Household Income, Marital Status, Gender, Is there a *seasonality* to your customers? *How do they buy*—credit card, check, by phone, by fax, online?

For Businesses: Type of companies, size (either employees and/or sales volume) Job Function or Job Title of the person responsible for ordering, same for the person responsible for specifying and approving the purchase.

### 2. Buy Relevant Mailing Lists.

What are you trying to accomplish with your mailing? Are you looking to derive an outright sale? Are you looking to create store traffic—either on or off line? Are you looking to cultivate a relationship to convert to buyers down the road?

You need to have a goal in order to find the right list or lists to help you achieve your goal. For example, if you are trying to sell gym memberships, make sure you are targeting people who are exercise enthusiasts. Don't decide that a peripheral category like "Dieters" is who you want to reach if you are looking to build a base of long-term memberships. Dieters are notorious for joining but not following thru. While you might achieve a temporary spike in new joiners, people who are interested in exercise and fitness and enjoy working out are much better prospects.

### 3. Always Stress Benefits.

Concentrate on how your product or service will benefit the person reading your piece. Focus on how it will benefit the prospective customer from both a logical and an emotional level. The key is to have done your homework so you know what "hot" buttons to push. Some marketers do focus groups, other with tighter budgets ask friends and family to imagine they are your target audience and provide you with input.

Repeat your key benefits. If you're doing Postcard Marketing, mention the key benefits twice. If you are developing a letter or more substantial direct mail package, make sure

to mention your key benefits in the beginning, in the middle and near the end of your letter or brochure.

**4. Feature the Offer.**

Everyone loves a good deal. Design an irresistible offer and make it a key focal point of your letter. A strong offer can be the difference between converting and not converting the “fence sitters”. Make sure to state the offer at least twice in your letter or brochure. And make sure to list it on your order form or response vehicle.

**5. Offer a Guarantee.**

People like guarantees, it makes them feel confident that you stand behind your product or service. But make sure it is a strong guarantee, if it seems flimsy, then the opposite effect will happen. People won't have confidence. You need to demonstrate that you have complete faith in your product. I've heard that 90 days and one year guarantees have strong impact, for example.

**6. Call to Action.**

Without a strong call to action, there is no reason to mail in the first place. If you don't tell your readers clearly and succinctly what you want them to do—they won't. Tell them more than once what you want to do “buy now”, “subscribe now”. Give your prospects an incentive to take action NOW. “Save 30% on orders placed today” Offer discounts, free merchandise, upgrades, whatever you think it might take to overcome hesitation to commit.

**7. The Litmus Test.**

Ask yourself this critical question. Based only on your direct mail package or postcard, would you buy your product or service? If the answer is “no”, then keep tweaking your copy until you can answer “yes.”

**8. Always Include a Reply Vehicle.**

Postage paid business reply cards or envelopes boost response. Period. If you have an online presence, make sure to list your website URL on every page of your marketing piece. Don't put in a long fancy URL to take the prospect to an order page, 99 times out of 100 the prospect is going to type your simple URL into the search engine, so don't confuse them. Make sure it is easy to find the order now page on your Home page though. The use of email marketing can keep your costs down and offers possible easy contact with your audience.

If you don't give your customer a specific way to respond, many of them won't, and then you've lost a sales and a customer.

**9. Teaser Copy.**

If you are doing a postcard mailing, then skip this point. But if you are mailing a letter or some other type of “package”, how do you differentiate yourself in the mailbox to get opened? Teaser copy! Use a teaser on your envelope. It must be a strong incentive to open the envelope.

**10. Make sure to Key every Mailing.**

Remember how I started off this white paper by saying that direct mail is all about measurement. Well if you don't include a unique identifier for each package type tested, for each list used, you won't be able to measure anything other than your expenditure to create and mail your campaign. There are many simple ways to create a unique code without spending lots of time or money. The simplest way is to add a “key code” on to

each mailing label. You can do this a number of ways. You can add a "middle initial" to each record IE John B. Smith, 123 Main Street, Anywhere, USA 12345. The "B" in the name is a code for XYZ List. And a "C" is for LMN List. Etc...Or you can print a key code on the top of a label.

IE        ABC  
          John B. Smith  
          123 Main Street  
          Anywhere, USA 12345

CAUTION: Whatever you DO NOT print the actual name of the list you rented from unless you receive written permission ahead of time to do so. This can open up a can of worms best left closed. Most List Owners don't like to flaunt to their buyers that they rent their mailing list and some will require a surcharge for a third party endorsement.

Many fine books have been written on the subject of writing and designing an effective direct marketing campaign. To learn more, I would suggest visiting the National Mail Order Association Book Store (<http://www.nmoa.org/catalog/index.htm>) for excellent books by leading industry experts.

## GREAT MAILING LISTS.COM

**GreatMailingLists.com** is a website developed to provide superior general interest and niche market mailing and email lists to small and mid-sized businesses. Because these lists are available direct online, we are able to keep costs down--which we pass on to you, the end user. A comparison of list costs between us and almost any of the major national providers will confirm our cost benefit to users.

Our parent company, DCS Marketing Solutions, LLC is run by Doug Sauerhaft, who has over 28 years experience buying, selling, developing and formulating successful mailing solutions for direct marketers large and small.



**DCS Marketing Solutions, LLC** was founded in 2007 by long-time Direct Marketing Industry veteran, Doug Sauerhaft. With over 28 years experience in the list management, list brokerage, list database and e-marketing list services marketplaces, Doug's knowledge, expertise and innovative approach to marketing solutions has directly helped such notable national marketers as: ADVO, Inc., Checks In The Mail, Eddie Bauer, Grolier Enterprises, Newport News, Rodale Press, Spiegel, TV Guide, U.S News & World Report, Working Mother, Working Woman, York Photo, and others achieve their marketing goals over the years.

Today, Doug works with clients large and small to help them develop a marketing strategy, and exceed it. His success is his client's success.

DCS Marketing Solutions, LLC offers clients state-of-the-art postal and e-list selection, segmentation and multi-channel campaign development and execution.

Success starts one satisfied customer at a time.

**28 Ironworks Hill Road, Brookfield, CT 06804**  
**phone: (203) 546-8551**  
**email: [dcslistguy@greatmailinglists.com](mailto:dcslistguy@greatmailinglists.com)**

