

## **Direct Mail Works.**

### ***Unless you're a sender of "Junk Mail"...***

Maybe you've tried direct mail before. Have you found success or have you been relegated as a "sender of junk mail" from the recipients?

Most of us receive offers and promotions in the mail each day and like everyone else, most of it ends up in the circular file (trash). What differentiates an effective mail piece from "nuisance"?

### ***It must be easy to read, solves their problem, and offers a discount or incentive to act.***

Many direct mail pieces you'll receive are in a decorated envelope with the discount or call to action on the outside and the details of the offer (the benefits) on the inside. Or worse, there's a huge clump of information stapled together inside that the sender expects us to "dive right into"...as if we have nothing better to do with our time.

The reality is that you only have a few seconds to get your target readers attention. Your mail promotion must address a problem or need, offer a incentive to act (discount or special offer), and a limited time or availability (creating a fear of missing out or losing). Most marketing experts also agree that you need to keep the print a decent size and written on a 5<sup>th</sup> grade reading level (are you smarter than a fifth grader too?)

There really is only one direct mail medium that fits this requirement and that is Direct Mail Postcards. You've probably received them before. Some companies are actually using them now for their billing. They just send the postcard with your amount due on the back and you remit the balance. The reason they're using them is they are affordable, easy to read, and effective.

There is no envelope to throw away either which means that you've just removed one step for getting your target to read your message.

How to structure an effective direct mail campaign and it's components:

- A. **Frontal Design:** Your card must be colorful (on the front at least) and have a catchy theme with a compelling image or phrases to make them turn the card over and read more. Generally, these cards are available in 4X6, 6X9, and 6X11. Naturally, the larger the card, the more it costs to print. Although 4X6 are effective, studies now show that the 6X9 is even more effective because it is larger than a standard envelope and stands apart from the other pieces in the recipients mailbox.
- B. **Rear Design:** The rear of the card does not have to be color, although it can be (and usually costs a little bit more for this). It does, however, need to have a short, yet compelling text blurb about what problem you solve for customers. It also needs to have a call to action (special offer or discount available only for them). Additionally, this call to action must have a limited

- availability or limited time (expiration). This makes the card valuable and something they will keep if the need is there and they wish to do business with you.
- C. **Addressing and postage:** It's best to address these cards with a laser printer so that they can be easily read by the U.S.P.S. Also, if you intend to send these with a bulk mail permit, they must comply with the guidelines set forth by the U.S.P.S. You can send these with normal postage or you can get a discounted rate for using a bulk mail account.
  - D. **Mailing List:** This is one of the most important parts of an effective direct mail campaign. Your list should target the areas you want to mail and the demographic information you require (age, income, etc.).
  - E. **Exposure:** How many times will you mail your list? Studies show that you need to mail your list repeatedly to get a good return or "pull". This is simply the percentage of people who respond and take action related to the promotion you are offering.

**BONUS STRATEGY:** The other component of an effective direct mail postcard campaign that will truly maximize the return you receive is the funnel effect. Most senders of postcards expect a 1% or less return. They feel as if someone makes a purchase, great. If not, no worries...part of the game (and that may be true)

There is an alternative strategy. You should also look at your postcard campaign as an opportunity to funnel traffic to your website. Why? Well, some recipients, regardless of how good the offer is, just aren't ready to buy. They're interested, but are "on the fence" so to speak. By taking them to your web site and providing informative articles or newsletters that educate them instead of just trying to take money out of their pockets establishes credibility. They will see you as an authority on the industry you're in and not just some "vendor". Read our other article entitled "Creating a web site that generates sales" for more details.

**Investment:** You'll pay a small fee (usually a couple of hundred dollars) to design the postcard. Once it's designed, however, you can re-use it and make minor changes at no cost most times. You'll also pay for printing, labeling, and postage. Remember, the more you print per run, the cheaper your total costs per piece become. And, if you print 5000 at a time and only mail 1 or 2 thousand per month, it becomes extremely affordable and effective.

***Your competitors aren't doing these things.  
That's your competitive advantage.***

**Get your message out there, differentiate yourself,  
and make more money!**

***We are a full-service printing and direct mail company.  
Mention this article and receive ½ off design services and 1000 free  
postcards with your first order (minimum print quantities apply).***