



MARKETING WITH DIRECT MAIL



Direct marketing via direct mail has been an effective form of advertising for years. What may surprise you is how the growing trend toward digital marketing methods has paved the way for a revival in the impact mail has on consumers. Once perceived as junk mail, recent studies indicate that consumers consider their traditional mail channel a valuable means of learning about new offers and products.

Think about the last time you responded to a direct mail piece in your own mailbox. What compelled you? Why did you pay attention? After your initial purchase did you return to that company, or did they drop off your radar? Reflecting on your own experience is a good place to start. As a consumer, you have knowledge and should trust your own insight when developing a direct mail campaign. Talk with your team and discuss any remarkable pieces you have seen in your own mail. Analyze what you think will work for your business and your target audience, what will your customers like?

This PFL white paper will help you learn about the best practices for direct mail and review ideas and concepts you may not have considered. When you are ready to get started, our custom solutions experts can assist you in developing and executing a compelling direct mail campaign. Call 800-930-6040.

#1. Direct mail 101: The Basics

Effective direct mail campaigns have some basic elements in common. The best practices listed below are a good foundation for building your strategy.

Your value proposition also should clearly communicate what your company does and the unique benefits you have over the competition.

1 Start with a Good List

The mailing list is the framework for your entire campaign. You can have the most amazing direct mail piece, but if the list is decayed, you are just spinning your wheels. Lists that are fresh, accurate and targeted by geography and other important demographics perform the best. Investing in a good list makes the difference between success and failure. Lists traditionally decay at an average rate of around 2% per month. So make sure that you are ready to mail when you get your list.

2 Convey One Message

You've got 15 seconds to engage the customer and communicate the crux of your message. Confusing your audience with unclear messages or too many points will stop the communication before it starts. Take time to select one clear point and use all of the space to target that single message.



3 State a Single, Specific Call to Action

Be clear. If you want them to bring that coupon in before January 1st, tell them. If you want them to call you before the end of the month tell them. A good call to action is a single step, simple to understand, has a deadline, and moves them toward the sell.

4 Include an Offer or Incentive

Coupons, new terms, free shipping, and exclusive deals are proven to have higher response rates than an advertisement alone. These can also double as a mechanism to measure results. Track response times and numbers with specific codes that are a part of the offer.

5 Invest in Great Design

Design is a vital element of your piece. A combination of unique messaging, engaging special effects and professional design will yield the best results. Special effects make your piece a “keeper” that recipients will be hesitant to toss out. Some original ideas to consider include scratch-off foils, glow-in-the-dark inks, scratch-n-sniff inks, perforations, full bleed custom envelopes, and pull-tab reveals.



#2. Direct mail 201: Increasing Your ROI

Get better results as you incorporate one or more of the following practices.

1 Know Your Audience

Before you invest in design and mailing of any direct mail piece, be specific about whom you are targeting. Which markets are important to you? Can you divide your market into segments that are more likely to be interested in your message? Demographics are an extremely important part of every direct mail campaign. The more you know and narrow down your audience, the more targeted and personal your message can be.

2 Build Your Credibility

You're the subject matter expert, but does your audience know that? Incorporate information that demonstrates your expertise. Showcase any certifications, licensing, or experience that sets you apart from and above your competitors. Build trust with your prospects through proof points, customer testimonials and confidence in the products and services you provide.



3 Convey Your Value Proposition

Be clear about how your business or your offer will solve a problem or improve the life of your customer. Reduce perceived risk with a guarantee and be clear about what the customer can expect from your product or service. Focus on what sets you apart from the competition. Do you have hands on service? Do you have the best price? Maybe you offer little “extras” no one else does. Whatever your strength, focus on communicating that to the customer.

4 Follow Up Campaigns Get Better Results

Incorporating follow-up mailers is an excellent way to drive your message home. Often, a customer may want to take action on an offer, but becomes distracted or accidentally disposes of the piece. Give them another opportunity to connect with you. Review the cross-channel marketing strategy in the Direct mail 301, section 3 of this white paper to learn how to build customer engagement.

5 EDDM® (Every Door Direct Mail®)

This option is cost effective and eliminates the need for a good list. EDDM® service targets addresses based on geography and USPS routes with a flat rate per address point. These rates are simple and divided into residential and commercial. EDDM® is ideal when you need to target a neighborhood area or larger region and specific demographics are irrelevant. This is also ideal if you are looking to saturate a market area with your message. No postage permit is required for EDDM® and no extra fees are charged by USPS, further reducing the hassle involved in your direct marketing efforts.

PFL has developed SmartMail®, our route selection and tracking system that makes EDDM® easy for you. PFL will handle everything for you, including design review, route selection, bundling, and all USPS paperwork.

#3. Direct mail 301: Going the Distance

Direct mail can be a single mailing, or an ongoing campaign that is skillfully designed to coincide with your marketing, sales, and expansion goals. You will yield the best results when you employ all the tactics reviewed in this white paper. Listed below are a few more advanced options for your Direct mail efforts.

1 Test Your Mailings

3.1 | A/B split testing speaks volumes. This tactic can be used in both traditional Direct mail and Every Door Direct Mail® campaigns and is a great way to test copy, offers, design, and the call to action. The key to useful results is to test only one of these elements at a time. The entire piece should be identical in both test groups except for the element you are testing. For example, half of your audience may receive an offer for 20% off if they make a purchase within a two-week time period and the other half may receive an offer for a free gift when they purchase within the next two weeks. Track redemptions and you will know which version is a better motivator for future mailings. Testing doesn't need to be complex to provide valuable data for your next mailing.

Anytime you choose to run a test ask yourself the following questions:

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- What is my objective with this mailing?
 - What am I testing or measuring with this mailing?
 - What do I hope to learn?
 - What are the variables that may affect the test? Do I have control over these?
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Remember that testing is primarily about gaining knowledge. This knowledge will in turn help you gain better ROI on your next mailing. If you are just starting, test the “big” things, like the product itself, offers, prices, and copy. Once you have established what works with the big-picture items, you can begin experimenting with more complex tests. The important thing is to always be testing something. It is a waste of resources to send a mailing that you will learn nothing from. Methodical tests that answer key questions are the best way to execute on a direct mail strategy. Both positive and negative results can be influenced by countless factors, so consistent testing is the best bet for gaining accurate, long-term knowledge that helps to improve your response rates and sales.

3.2 | Measure ROI (Return on Investment) on every mailing. Create a spreadsheet that includes all costs, design, postage, printing, and labor costs, for each mailer. Track redemptions of the special offer, incentive, or dedicated coupon codes you receive. This is invaluable in helping your company know what works for future projects.

2 Cross-Channel Marketing Boosts Engagement

Integrate your mailing with e-mail, website, mobile, and text initiatives to further your reach. Direct mail is an excellent catalyst in driving customers to your other marketing enterprises and increases the odds of gaining a loyal customer. The tips below will help you determine how much cross-channel integration you are able to employ.

Create a specific landing page on your site that is directly aimed at the Direct mail audience you are reaching. You can use a QR code to get them to the page, or simply include the URL.

The landing page should complement the look and design of the direct mail piece with a cohesive message. The call to action should be exactly the same as the call on the mailed piece and be the prominent focal point at the top of the page.

If you want to capture their email, include a free download that provides pertinent information they will find valuable. Do not ask for more than their email address when the download prompts. They need a low barrier to entry. The download should move them further down your lead funnel, be relevant to the specific offer, and reiterate the call to action.

3 Personalize the Piece for Each Customer

Leverage Variable Data Printing by targeting your potential customers with campaigns that demonstrate a higher relevancy to their wants and needs. You can personalize more than mere names and addresses. PFL's industry-leading software capabilities use your database to target images, backgrounds, colors, text and artwork based on individual customer demographics and recorded behaviors. The customer name, color, and offer change based on predetermined set of criteria.

4 Utilize Staggered and Repeat Mailing Strategies

Location may be vital to your business, but timing is vital to your Direct mail piece. Response is significantly increased when a mailing is followed-up and the offer is presented more than once, gauge the frequency based on your offer, product and what seems appropriate for your campaign. You want to make sure the second mailing doesn't arrive too early or too late. A second mailing can introduce a sense of urgency with language like "Last Chance" or "Act Now Before This Offer Ends."

Staggered mailings are another great way to time out your campaign and make sure you are not getting more leads than your sales force can handle.

Consider splitting your list up into three parts and target each segment about a month apart. You can also save hassle and money by printing large quantities, which PFL will house for you and ship on demand.

5 Invest in Great Design

Everyone wants to feel important. An appeal to ego is never a bad idea. The key to exclusivity is not just tailoring the offer, but building the entire campaign and copy around the elite status of the recipient. Exclusivity will not work with EDDM®, but is a perfect solution for targeted lists. Groups that have shared skills, interests, and values make good exclusivity lists. Industry and professional groupings like electricians, plumbers, lawyers, teachers, or hair stylists are a good place to start. You can also look at exclusivity offers for lists that are grouped based on common interests, like fitness enthusiasts, parents, or bicyclists.

Exclusive Offer

REACH YOUR GOALS

Whether you are keeping it simple or need to incorporate advanced direct mail strategies, our team of print, marketing and mailing experts are at your disposal. We will come along beside you and support your campaign efforts to help you yield the best ROI possible. Call 800.930.6040

ABOUT PFL.COM

PFL is a marketing technology company that provides sales enablement and marketing automation solutions, as well as printing, mailing, and fulfillment services. We directly connect B2B and B2C organizations to cutting-edge solutions that accelerate productivity and drive business forward.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION VISIT
OUR SITE OR CALL 800.930.6040

**Call Our Marketing
Experts Today**

Our marketing
advisors are on
call weekdays,
7am - 7pm Mountain

