

How To Master the Art of Direct Mail Lead Generation

By

Allyn Kramer
Kramer Direct

“Ten Tested Tips”

Part IV of IV

The ideas that follow are not found in any text book on marketing or lead generation. They are not theory or hypothesis.

The ideas are the result of trial and testing... learned over many years and thousands of mailings. Learning these basics will improve your lead generation results and make you more sales, more profit, faster.

1. *Emotion always wins over logic.* Many mailers site statistic after statistic assuming the reader will identify themselves with the numbers. We've learned people don't respond to a logical approach. Many individuals don't think about being "average" and assume statistics don't apply to them.

So tell real stories rather than stating numbers. Get prospects emotionally involved, rather than presenting a logical approach to which they don't relate.

2. *Saving money out pulls making money.* Prospects respond better to offers that talk about saving money rather than making money. Maybe people have heard so many claims about how they can make a great return on an investment that they don't believe it anymore.

Saving money seems to resonate in lead generation. And saving on taxes seems to be especially important to prospects. Talk about how you can save people tax dollars and they will respond.

3. *Repetition is okay.* Drip marketing works because repetition works. The first time someone sees your promotion, they may ignore it. The second time, they may read it. Third time they may respond.

One insurance company mails the same prospects up to seven times before stopping. They've found it can still be profitable for them to repeat their offer that many times. So remember, repetition is okay.

4. *“Combo offer” leads don't pull as well as “single offer” leads.* Combo mailers have check-off boxes to offer information on a variety of subjects or products. This approach may seem advantageous because you think you're getting multiple leads for each response.

But tests have shown promoting one item at a time pulls a better response. Maybe when there are numerous choices, prospects are unsure about what to select. Maybe too many options cause the mailer to be set aside to be reviewed later and later never comes.

When the promotion is on one particular item, prospects can easily make a decision. You're likely to get more leads when you focus on one offer rather than a "combo" approach with numerous offers.

5. *Income accuracy varies.* When your list includes income criteria, understand income must be estimated. The Internal Revenue Service does not release individual information. The best public information from the government is median income from the Census Bureau. This works fairly well because people tend to live in neighborhoods with others who have similar incomes.

Urban areas are more accurate for estimating income than rural areas. The population concentration in city areas creates a more valid sample on which to base the estimate.

6. *Target female prospects for certain products.* Lists normally use the name of the head of the household. By definition, that is normally the husband. But certain products have proven to be more receptive to the wife.

Final expense insurance and long term care insurance, for example, pull more response from females. Since women are traditionally the care-givers in our society and they usually outlive their husbands, they probably have more interest in the product than their spouse and are more responsible when considering final expense or long term care.

7. *Blank envelopes pull better.* Outside envelopes can be overprinted with your return address and even "teaser copy" to entice readers to open the envelope. Obviously opening the envelope is half the battle in direct mail. If unopened, you don't have any chance at getting a response.

After testing many envelope versions, the best response has always come from a plain, blank envelope. Maybe the curiosity factor gets blank envelopes opened. Or maybe teaser copy looks too commercial.

In direct mail you know what happens, but not necessarily why it happens. Blank envelopes pull better.

8. *Use pastel colors for best response.* Soft colors tend to out-pull bold and bright colors. Studies have shown this to be true and results of mailing programs support it. When using colored paper, stick with pastel blues, greens, yellows, or pinks.
9. *Phone numbers lower response.* Putting a phone number on your mailer should improve results, right? By giving prospects the option to call back for information as well as mail back a reply card makes sense, doesn't it? Logic would make you assume so.

But test after test shows that adding a phone number as a second reply option lowers response. Prospects may see a phone number as having to talk to someone and that lowers the response.

Don't believe it? Test it yourself. You'll get more total leads without adding a phone number for prospects to call.

10. *Five extra tips that will improve your lead generation.*

- a. Use white space liberally. Many marketers think they must fill all available space with words. By doing that, the mailer becomes uninviting and hard to read.
- b. Use "serif" type. That's the type you are reading right now. It has little hooks on the ends of the letters. Grade school books use "serif" type. Since people learned to read with "serif" type, they find it easier than non-serif type.
- c. Use quotes in headlines. Quotation marks bring attention to words. Studies show headlines with quotations draw almost 30% more attention.
- d. Use a "P.S." to end your letter. The three most read parts of a letter are the salutation (who it's to), the closing (who it's from) and the "P.S." So always use a "P.S." Use it to re-enforce your offer and call to action.
- e. Use bullets and indent. An easy way to draw attention to important items is to set them apart by indenting and listing with bullet points. This technique strongly emphasizes your key focus.

These ten tested tips will improve your lead generation response and make you stand out from the competition rather than dissolve into the mainstream. Good luck and good prospecting!

Allyn Kramer, founder of Kramer Direct, is a veteran of 25 years in direct marketing. He is an INC 500 award winner, guest lecturer at SMU's Cox School of Business, and author of two books on lead generation. He can be reached at 888-572-6373 or allyn@kramerdirect.com.