THE ULTIMATE GUIDE
to Direct Mail Marketing

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Welcome to this ultimate guide on direct mail marketing. We hope you'll use the information in this free e-book as a valuable addition to your direct mail marketing library. Smart marketers are adding direct mail as an integral part of their modern-day marketing strategy. If you apply the tips and advice in this guide, you'll be well on your way to direct mail marketing success.

If you have any questions, please reach out to us anytime:

🌐 msp-pgh.com

✉ info@msp-pgh.com

📞 800.876.3211

Definition of Direct Mail Marketing

Direct mail is a channel of direct marketing where printed, physical promotional materials are sent via postal mail to prospective or existing customers. Ultimately, the goal is to earn their business or develop an ongoing business relationship with them.

In addition to direct mail, other methods of direct marketing include email, phone (telemarketing), text (short message service - SMS), event, and direct response TV (infomercials), to name some of the most popular channels.

Direct Marketing

Direct Mail
Telemarketing
Email
Mobile Ads
Display and Search Ads
Social Media Ads
In-Person Sales Meetings
Print Ads

Indirect Marketing

Search Engine Optimization
Press Releases
News Coverage
Sponsorships
Influencer Marketing
Referrals

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History of Direct Mail Marketing

You've probably always received mail at your home. Whether you placed an order for a product or you received a handwritten letter or birthday card—or less excitedly a bill—mail was and likely still is a part of your life. Even with the influx of electronic communication, the physical mail we receive, including direct mail marketing, is still evident.

The Printing Press

German blacksmith/goldsmith Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press around 1440. Naturally, with this discovery, he became more widely known as a printer and publisher. His introduction of mechanical, moveable type (aka the printing press) started a printing revolution in Europe. The technology quickly caught on.

Enter William Caxton, an English merchant and writer. Caxton was the first English retailer of printed books. He had a printing press (believed to be the first of its kind in England) set up in the Westminster Abbey Church, where he created pamphlets to order his books. He also produced the books there, including Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Canterbury Tales" and an English translation of the Bible.

Did You Know?
It took Gutenberg 19 years from the time he first started working on his printing press to the time he had his first widely known output. This is due partially to the fact that he had to invent three entirely separate things for the whole system to work: The press itself, moveable type, and oil-based ink.

Direct Mail Marketing Catalogs

Naturally, the technology improved over the years, allowing for faster production. By the 18th century, garden and seed catalogs were appearing in the American colonies. This was prior to the Revolutionary War, meaning catalog mailings were happening before the United States was a country.

In 1872, American entrepreneur Aaron Montgomery Ward founded Montgomery Ward and Company. He established the first mail-order business and made a fortune through retail sales, beginning with a simple one-page "catalog" that featured 163 items. By 1904, the company was mailing catalogs to three-million customers.

Soon after, Richard Warren Sears began mailing flyers for watches to rural customers. These flyers evolved into 500-page catalogs that were sent to more than 300,000 homes. This process revolutionized how goods could be purchased. Customers were now being contacted directly to buy products, no matter where they lived.

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Computers and Desktop Publishing

The industry continued to grow and just as the printing press revolutionized the 15th century, computers changed the game in the 1950s and 60s. By the 1970s, customers were attracted to the bold colors and eye-catching designs of direct mail marketing. Ads were also becoming customized to appeal to specific target markets – like businessmen and children – and bank credit cards were introduced as a new payment option for direct mail marketing.

Direct Mail Marketing Today

Modern-day technology allows for an almost endless number of possibilities in regards to the innovative designs of direct mail marketing pieces. There's really no limit to what you can do with a direct mail marketing campaign. By combining print with mobile technology, you can launch an interactive experience from a mail piece. This helps your message connect with more customers. After all, direct mail is about understanding a target market and using creative ways to reach targeted consumers and appeal to their needs.

How Does Direct Mail Marketing Work?

On the surface, direct mail marketing may appear like a simple process, but successful direct mail campaigns are created strategically, over a period of time. Before getting your marketing piece out the door, there are a number of steps to follow to achieve maximum results. Follow this process and you'll understand how direct mail marketing works.

A Direct Mail Marketing 101 Class would begin with three main components:

the list, the offer, and the creative. Let's look at these ABCs, if you will, of direct mail marketing campaigns.

Targeted List

Your list is responsible for more than half your marketing campaign's success or failure, so find one that targets an audience that would be interested in your product or service. A direct response list will typically give you better results than a list you compile from various sources. The more targeted your list, the more likely your chances of a good response.

Promotional Offer

Once your list is set, you need to focus on the offer, not the product or service itself. Think of it as a process. You're more likely to close a sale when you focus on the steps that lead to that sale, rather than the sale itself. Some examples of popular offers include BOGO, discounts, free trials, free gifts, and limited time, to name a few.

Compelling Creative

The better looking your direct mail piece, the better response you'll get. You need to get people's attention, so consider color and copy on the outside of the envelope. Once they open it, be sure to follow up with the message from the outside of the envelope and make it easy (and obvious) for the them to respond.

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Now that you know the three primary components of direct mail marketing, let's dive in deeper.

Identify Your Target Market

For direct mail to be successful, you need to know who you're selling to. Understanding the wants and needs of your target market is vital, but first you need to identify a target market. Here's how to go about doing that.

LIAM / 26

DEMOGRAPHICS

Rents a 2 bedroom apartment in uptown Charlotte, NC with old teammates from lacrosse.

Currently an intern for a large sports management company and a bartender at a high end cocktail bar on the weekends.

Recently single and using dating apps. An only child and rescued a puppy 4 months ago.

Graduated with a 3.8 in Health Sciences from UNCW. Owes $28,000 in private loans.

BEHAVIORAL IDENTIFIERS

Hobbies include eating out, lifting weights, playing club lacrosse, drinking draft beer, tailgating for UNC, and watching live music.

Prefers chat systems for customer service and support. Values quick responses and 24 hour availability.

Wants fast shipping. Values a low price. Prefers online marketing, light colors, and simple websites.

Shops online between 7pm-3am. Buys during pay periods at the end of the month and often uses promo codes.

Owns an Android and shops on mobile with referrals from social media such as Instagram and Facebook.

Studied abroad in Chile. Can speak Spanish and some Italian. Travels on a budget and prefers hostels to hotels.

Personal goals to be out of debt by 2024, to be engaged in 4 years, and to work in a university sports medicine department.

Very fit and active but has a bad diet due to eating on a budget and drinking often. Seeks out health information daily.

OLIVIA / 58

DEMOGRAPHICS

Owns a 4 bedroom home in coastal NC and 2 high end cars. Lives in a suburban gated neighborhood.

Human Resource Director of a small media company for 5 years with a $88,000 salary.

Happily married for 12 years with 2 sons and a house hold income of above $220,000.

Well educated with an HR degree from a state university. Graduated without debt.

BEHAVIORAL IDENTIFIERS

Hobbies include reading, playing tennis, networking at the country club, being involved in youth groups and visiting the beach.

Strong need for customer service and support. Values face to face communication and rewards systems.

Wants a simple product. Values quantity and brand image. Prefers print marketing and bold graphics.

Shops in department stores after 5pm. Buys in bulk on sale items. Referred by a previous client.

Owns an iPhone but makes purchases online with a desktop Mac computer. Needs a simple check out system.

Well traveled in Europe. Prefers traveling in off-peak times in chain hotels and loves pre-planned travel like cruises.

Personal goals to retire by age 65, to own a vacation home on the Spanish Riviera and for her sons to attend an ivy league university.

In very good health but very busy and often stressed. Visits group exercise programs.

JAMES / 32

DEMOGRAPHICS

Rents a 1 bedroom apartment in uptown Atlanta with his partner. Saving to buy a home next year.

Works 40 hours a week in a 5 star hotel as a superintendent with a net income of $120,000.

Recently engaged to his boyfriend of 5 years with plans to marry in NYC in the winter.

Graduated from a community college with honors and held office in 3 on-campus clubs.

BEHAVIORAL IDENTIFIERS

Hobbies include vegan cooking, yoga, monthly massages, playing the drums, volunteering, drinking cocktails and watching local plays.

Prefers to call for customer service and support. Values follow up summary emails and easy to read directions.

Wants free shipping on large orders. Values quality and privacy. Extremely brand loyal. Prefers email marketing.

Shops online between 9am-3pm and makes multiple returns. Uses Paypal at checkout.

Owns an iPhone and tablet. Shops on this tablet with referrals from email marketing and promotions.

Travels in the USA twice a year to visit family in Maine and California. Prefers long road trips and holiday travel.

Personal goals to become a general manager within 4 years and to purchase a suburban home after his wedding and honeymoon.

Cooks very healthy and with local products. Has great self care and is very active.

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1. Look at Your Current Customers

If you already have a database of names, look at them to determine why they buy from you. Examine their similarities. Who among them brings in the most business? It stands to reason that others similar to them (who are not currently customers) would also benefit from your product or service.

2. Identify Your Competition

Check out your competitors. See who they're targeting and who their current customers are. You don't necessarily need to go after the exact same market. Rather, consider finding a niche market they may not have already tapped into.

3. Evaluate Your Product/Service

Look at the features of your product or service and compile the benefits. Once the benefits are determined, make a list of the types of people that would need your product/service. Ask yourself, "What problem does my product solve?"

"Now give us your spontaneous response."

4. Choose Demographics to Target

It's not only about who has a need for your product/service, but also who's most likely to buy it. Consider things like age, location, gender, income, education, occupation, marital status, and ethnic background, too.

5. Don't Forget Psychographics

Psychographics are a consumer's more personal characteristics. Consider how your product or service will fit into your target market's lifestyle, using traits like personality, attitude, values, interests, and hobbies. Answer questions like:

When will they will use the product or service?

What features will they will find most appealing?

Where do they "hang out" online?

What types of media do they consult for information?

What kinds of things do they shop for and buy?

Do they attend particular events?

How do they react to marketing and media messaging?

What are their everyday habits?

What are their goals and problems?

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So maybe you're thinking, "Those are great questions, but where am I going to find the answers?" There are a number of ways.

You can try looking online for research that others have done on your target market. You can also check for magazine articles, blogs and forums, and survey results. Alternatively, you can conduct your own survey by asking your current customers for their feedback.

- Create forms on your website.

- Conduct interviews (in person or on the phone).

- Look at the data you already have in your contact list (if you have one).

- Get feedback from your sales team about your different types of customers.

- Monitor organic search rankings and visitor paths on your website.

Here are some attributes to consider to determine your buyer persona. Consider naming your persona with their industry in mind. An example would be Marketing Mike.

Name: Marketing Mike

Demographics
- Age range: 35-44
- Highest Level of Education: Bachelor's Degree

Business
- Industry: Marketing
- Organization Size: 51-200 employees

Career
- Job Title: Marketing Manager
- Their job is measured by: Leads generated
- Reports to: Marketing Director

Job Characteristics
- Goals/Objectives: Leads
- Biggest Challenges: Communications
- Job Responsibilities: Managing people, creating content, measuring results, strategic planning to generate leads

How They Work
- Tools: CMS, Project Management, Word Processing, Reporting Software
- Communications Preferences: Email, Text

Where They Consume Content
- Educational Resources: Online courses, onferences
- Social Networks: Twitter, LinkedIn

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Target Market Finer Points

Keep in mind that you can have more than one target market. If you're able to reach two different markets with the same message, however, you need to reconsider how you segment. Also, if your target market is too small, you should reevaluate it. You need enough people to fit the criteria you established. If you have more than one target market, be clear about the type of person or business you want to reach.

Defining your target market is the difficult part, but your direct mail marketing campaign will be more successful when it's delivered to a targeted mailing list.

Let's say most of your current customers are married men over the age of 45 who make more than $50,000 per year. You also know they have a college degree and they like to watch baseball. With this information, you can immediately determine that this is a good target audience to send your direct mail marketing campaign. Your chances for success are much greater than that of a less-focused, compiled list.

Decide on Your Marketing Campaign Message

What would you like to say to your target market with a particular campaign? Are you introducing yourself to a new geographic region or are you trying to improve your numbers in familiar territory?

Create a message that reaches your intended audience with the impact you desire. You'll achieve this by having a solid understanding of who your audience is. As long as you've identified your target market, you're well on your way.

Here's an example. If your product is expensive B2B software, a direct mail marketing piece wouldn't work as well as a series of convincing, lead-generation steps. Invite them to a seminar. Ask them to stop by your booth at a trade show. Convince them to download your white paper for more information. This process works better than coming right out and asking for the sale.

Also, don't forget the tried-and-true methods of successful sales such as discounts, money-back guarantees, and risk-free trials.

Finally, don't forget multiple calls to action with a deadline to respond. Be specific with both. Make it very clear what you want them to do and give them a limited amount of time as motivation to respond quickly.

Note: Whatever message you decide to send, plan on follow-up mailings over a period of time rather than one all-encompassing send off. (More on this topic forthcoming.)

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Write and Design Your Direct Mail

After you've established your target market and the message you want to convey over a series of mailings, it's time to decide what type of direct mail piece you're going to use. As a precursor, assume people are busy and that they get a lot of mail. Your direct mail piece needs to capture their attention right out of the mailbox. So you need to get creative with your design. That's not to say a standard-sized self-mailer won't do the trick, but there are other ways to get your recipients interested.
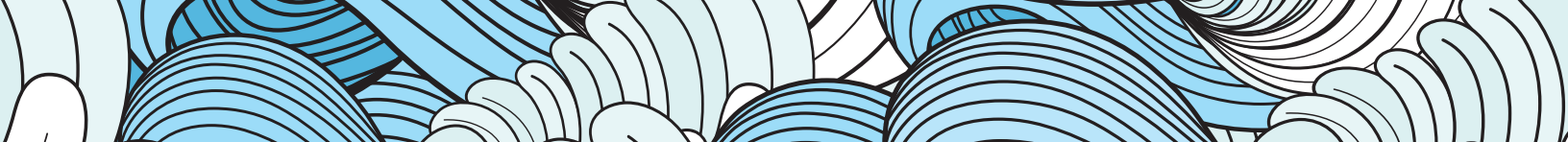
Consider your options.

If you're going to go with a self-mailer, use a unique size and add an eye-catching design. Here are some other ideas:

- **Oversized envelopes.** According to the Direct Marketing Association, they have the best response rate.

- **Add bulk inside the envelope.** If you add something lumpy inside the envelope, it creates intrigue. That leads to more opens.

- **Design for a quick read.** Make your design easy to skim. If there's a lot of confusion with your direct mail, it's more likely to be thrown away. Create a powerful message with words and images, but make it easy to look at.

- **Think in 3D.** If you send something in a box or tube, it's almost guaranteed to be opened. After all, who doesn't like to get a package in the mail? Yes, it's more expensive, but weigh the potential return on your increased investment. Then decide if it's right for you.

The more valuable the direct mail piece appears, the less likely it will be tossed aside. Which means you're on the right path to achieving your desired goal with the mailing. (Remember, if you're using an envelope, the top priority is getting it opened.)

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The more senses you appeal to, the better the message will be received. The result is increased response rates.

Innovative marketers are testing sensory devices with their printed materials. Use "embodied cognition" by incorporating smell, touch, taste, sound, and video into your mailers.

For example, thanks to advanced inks, varnishings, coatings, and other printing techniques, you can turn ordinary paper into a stunning, multi-sensory experience. When you add the right texture to any ordinary surface, you truly grab your readers' attention. Here are a few other examples of embodied cognition:

- Cinemax used a sound module of Darth Vader's iconic breathing to promote their showing of the complete Star Wars saga.

- Italian scooter manufacturers Vespa used augmented reality (AR*) to put a fully customizable scooter in the hands of potential customers via advertising. Readers scan the ad with an app on their smartphones or tablets. The result is a 3D visual of a scooter.

- Video in print is another option. When you embed video content into a mailing, you increase product awareness and understanding. Additionally, you provide a wow factor that's sure to impress the recipient.

*Augmented reality (AR) adds digital elements to a live view, oftentimes by using a smartphone camera. This is somewhat different from virtual reality, which shuts out the physical world with a complete immersion experience.

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Check Your Response Rates and ROI

In order to measure the results of your direct mail campaign, you need to know the response rate. This refers to the percentage of people that respond to a mailing. To determine this, use a simple formula. Just count the number of responses and divide by the quantity mailed.

A response can be defined as the completion of a desired action. Let's say the goal of your direct mail piece was to get people to do one of the following things:

1. Fill out a form and mail it back to you with some information.

2. Call a phone number with an offer code.

3. Visit a special website URL.

You would track those responses. If the recipient did any of those things, it's a response.

For example, if you mailed 10,000 pieces and got 200 responses, you have a 2% response rate. Congratulations, that's right around the average response rate for direct mail. Before you pat yourself on the back, however, consider a few variables. That's a good response rate for a new list of contacts. That means you've never sent anything to them before.

You should expect more from a mailing to your contact list, though. After all, they've responded to you before and they've already shown an interest in your product and/or service.

Calculating ROI, on the other hand, is a bit trickier. There are three elements you need to be concerned with:

1. **Total cost of your campaign.** What did you spend on your campaign? This would include things like data cleansing, mailing list acquisition, packaging, printing, and postage costs.

2. **Marketing ROI earned from your campaign.** You'll want to figure out what income you earned that was specific to the campaign. Use analytics that capture responses from specific sources, like an exclusive code, website, telephone number, or promotional offer.

3. **Intangible campaign benefits.** You'll likely reap some additional rewards (other than income) from the campaign, like customer satisfaction, new prospects, and clean, updated data.

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A/B Testing

One of the best practices of direct mail marketing is A/B testing. Don't guess when it comes to results. You've got a golden opportunity to test your messaging, a creative element, the type of packaging you use, the type of offer, etc. Be sure to take advantage of that opportunity.

A mailing of 10-million pieces can contain a subset of one million pieces with different imagery or messaging. Regardless of how many people you're sending your direct mail to, run some A/B tests and take note of the results.

Repeat the Process

When it comes to direct mail marketing, consistency is key. Don't expect to send out one mailing, then sit back and watch the orders pour in. If only it were that easy. Consistency is an essential part of the direct mail marketing process. If you follow the aforementioned steps, over time, you're likely to see great results.

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U.S. households received 121.2-billion pieces of direct mail in 2017. That's a staggering figure for those who thought the long-running direct response marketing channel was dead.

Direct mail still works, even in a digital age where mobile ad spending is expected to reach $247 billion by 2020. It's kind of an urban legend for marketers and business owners—that direct mail is an antiquated marketing medium. There are too many statistics to back up its validity, though. In fact, direct mail response rates have been consistently on the rise over the past 10 years.

Let's take a look at the proof behind the case for direct mail marketing.

43%
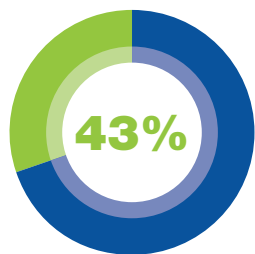
of people say print is less annoying than the internet

77%

of people sort through their mail immediately upon pulling it from their mailboxes

56%
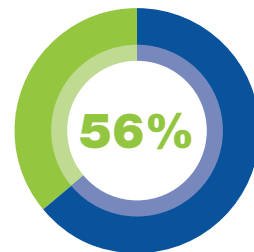
of Americans consider it a real joy to receive mail

According to PrintIsBig.com, (via a survey from Cornell University and the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research)
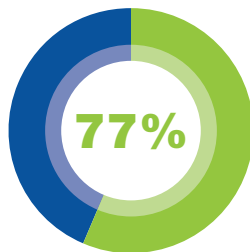
U.S. households received
121.2 BILLION
pieces of direct mail in 2017

Financial services are the heaviest users of direct mail

insurance industry ($5.8 billion)

credit cards ($5 billion)

mortgage and loans ($4.8 billion)

banking ($1.3 billion)

investment sectors ($208 million)
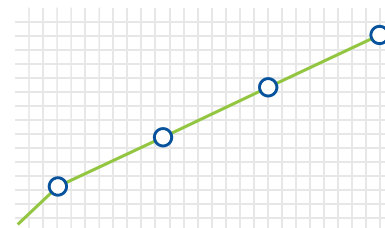
Direct mail response rates have been consistently on the rise over the

PAST 10 YEARS

BY 2020
mobile ad spending will reach
$247 BILLION

FOR EVERY $167 THAT WAS SPENT on direct mail in the U.S., an average of $2,095 in products or services was sold. That's a **1,300% ROI**

Nonprofits find that direct mail increases donations by

40%

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Average Open, Response, and Redemption Rates

In the past decade, print has enjoyed a resurgence of increased conversion rates and marketing ROI. According to PrintIsBig.com, (via a survey from Cornell University and the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research), print is 43% less annoying than the internet. The U.S. Postal Service confirms that people generally enjoy receiving a postcard, attractive catalog, or a personal thank-you note in the mail.

According to the USPS, 77% of people sort through their mail immediately upon pulling it from their mailboxes. No other media channel provides this kind of opportunity to get your message noticed.

Those are not surprising figures to savvy marketers who utilize this direct marketing channel. Plus, the Direct Marketing Association (DMA) reports that 56% of Americans consider it a real joy to receive mail.

So we know a high percentage of people like to get direct mail, and they're sorting through and opening it quickly, but are they responding? The DMA Response Rate Report says that 5.1% of U.S. households responded. Businesses are responding to direct mail, too. In a recent response rate report, the DMA found that 4.4% of B2B recipients responded. This was based on transactional data from Epsilon and B2B marketing platform Bizo.

Those are all promising figures, but beyond getting responses to your direct mail marketing efforts, you ultimately want to turn those interested parties into paying customers. Those are the recipients that took advantage of the offer in your mailer. What kind of ROI can you expect? According to the DMA, direct mail median household return on investment is 29%.
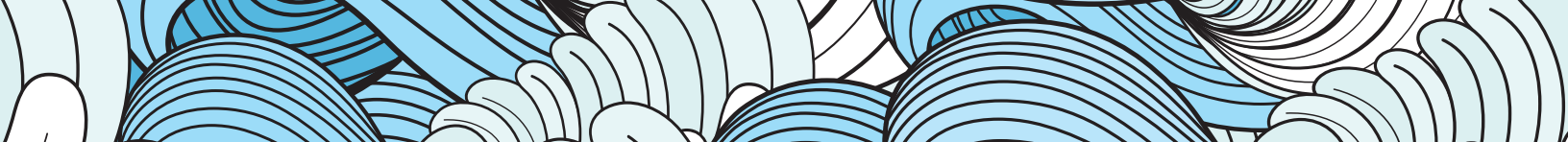
An online display ad might be cheaper, but even if you spend more than what you would on a banner ad, you could receive a bigger return with direct mail.

Comparisons to Other Forms of Marketing

As a marketing professional, you want to create a marketing strategy that incorporates a combination of both online and offline channels. Direct mail marketing makes a strong case as a method you should be taking advantage of, especially when you compare it to the other available channels, like email, paid search, social media, online display advertising, and more.

As previously mentioned, the direct mail B2B response rate is 4.4% (with a household response rate of 5.1%). By comparison, the most popular online channels fall short. Email receives only a 0.1% response rate. Paid search has a 0.6% response rate, while social media is at 0.4%, and online display advertising is 0.2%.

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Let's take a look at the proof behind the case for direct mail marketing.

Investments Across Industries

The Direct Marketing Association reports that direct mail is a $44.2-billion industry. It's the second largest ad spend in the country (teleservices is first at $45 billion) and it's growing by billions of dollars each year.

For every $167 that was spent on direct mail in the U.S., an average of $2,095 in products or services was sold. That's a 1,300% return on investment. Naturally, your results will vary depending on how much you spend on the design and copy of your marketing piece, plus the purchase of a mailing list (if applicable), and the printing and mailing. It also depends on the size and type of direct mail you're delivering (a simple postcard will cost a lot less than a more extravagant piece) and how many you send.

So, where are the direct mail marketing dollars being spent? Direct mail is relevant to any industry, but there are a few, in particular, that have thrived using it. For instance, financial services are the heaviest users of direct mail. This includes the insurance industry ($5.8 billion), credit cards ($5 billion), mortgage and loans ($4.8 billion), banking ($1.3 billion), and investment sectors ($208 million).

Furthermore, nonprofits find that direct mail increases donations by 40%.

Direct mail is a proven way to get advertising messages into consumers' hands. Thus, it's a viable option for marketing professionals who want results without allocating their entire budget to one channel.

When you factor in the design of your direct mail marketing campaign, plus the printing and postage costs, it may seem like an expensive endeavor, but it doesn't have to be. Partner with a knowledgeable direct mail provider to better manage your spending while delivering targeted direct mail campaigns.

Contact MSP for a free consultation.

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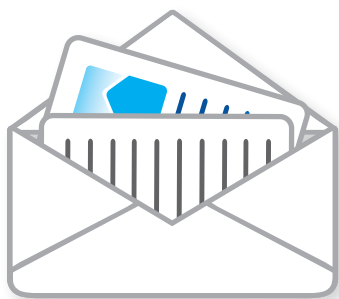
The type of direct mail piece you choose is a crucial part of your integrated marketing process.

With such a wide variety of possibilities (depending upon your target market and budget), you can select the format that works best for your business to attract attention, increase sales, and build customer relationships.

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Letters / Envelopes

Letters are the most personal form of direct mail communication. They provide a cost-effective way to introduce your business to a target market or to start a fundraising campaign. A well-written letter creates a valuable one-on-one connection with your customer and according to the DMA, it typically results in a 4.3% direct mail marketing response rate. Here are the most popular sizes:

- #10 business and correspondence envelopes (4.125" x 9.5")

- Monarch envelope (3.875" x 7.5")

- Announcement envelopes are known as A-style envelopes and they come in a wide variety of sizes, from A-2 (4.375" x 5.75") to A-10 (6" x 9.5"). They're popular for mailing pictures, greeting cards, small booklets, and more.

- 6" x 9" envelopes are typically ideal for folded letters accompanied by printed materials like brochures and other sales materials.

- Larger envelopes, like 9"x 12", are suitable for sending proposals or booklets that can't be folded. Remember that this size is susceptible to higher postal rates from the USPS. These oversized letters (AKA flats), however, have the greatest household response rates (6.6%), so if you're going to send a letter, consider going big for (potentially) the best result. How big? According to the USPS, the word "flats" refers to large envelopes, newsletters, and magazines. However you choose to label them, they must have one dimension larger than 6.125" high or 11.5" long or 0.25" thick.

Self-Mailers

If you want to send letter-sized marketing mail, but you don't want to use an envelope, consider a self-mailer. With a self-mailer, you'll save on the cost of an envelope, and you'll have more room for your copy. You can also implement a perforated reply card or coupon as part of the design.

To get the recipient more engaged, use a unique fold (multi-panel gatefold, roll fold, or Z-fold) and get creative with the way you organize your information. Other popular options include a sleeve, Snap Pak, or booklet mailer.

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Postcards

Postcards are a cost-effective way to send direct mail. If you want to make an announcement or drive customers to a store, website, or event, a postcard is a sensible choice. Here are the most popular postcard sizes:

- Standard postcard (4¼" x 6")
- Double postcard
- Oversize postcard (9" x 6")
- Jumbo postcard (11" x 6")

Catalogs

For the past 100 years or so, catalogs have been a proven way to generate sales. In fact, the DMA reports that 91% of merchants list catalogs as one of their primary marketing tools. More recently, of course, catalogs have been proven to drive website traffic. They're an important branding tool that can offer your business a host of benefits. You can showcase multiple product lines under one cover, and allow recipients to browse and discover new products at their leisure.

Depending on the number of pages you want to feature, the size and thickness will vary.
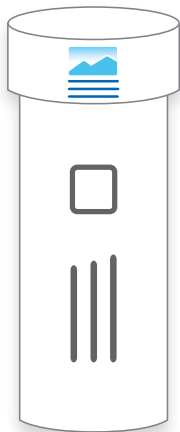
Dimensional Mailers

When you really want to grab the attention of your recipients, a dimensional mailer is an exciting choice. Naturally, a pop-up or three-dimensional format like a box, tube, bag, or other container is going to be more expensive to produce and ship. To a targeted audience, however, it's money well spent. Dimensional mailers have an almost perfect open rate with the best response rate of any direct mailer, according to the DMA's annual Response Rate Report.

Furthermore, you increase the "pass-along" value as this type of direct mail is more likely to be shared with family and friends.

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Benjamin Franklin has been credited with the saying: "If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail."

That famous quote has served as an inspiration for people from all walks of life, and it can be associated with your direct mail marketing efforts, too. If you don't take the time to develop a strategy, you're likely diminishing your best chances for success. Here are some best practice areas to pay particular attention to.

Timing

It matters when you send your direct mail message. It's one of the easiest, but also one of the most important parts of any campaign. You want your mail to arrive in mailboxes at a specific time for maximum effect, so here are a few tips to make that happen.

Get Time-Sensitive Material Out Immediately

If you're running a timed promotion or you're including coupons with expiration dates, timing is critical. Anticipate any potential problems in the campaign process and get your direct mail piece on its way with plenty of time for customers to consider your offer.

Be the 'First to Market' if You Use a Purchased List

If you're sending your direct mail marketing campaign to a purchased list, keep in mind you might not be the only company sending direct mail to that same list. That means you need to get to their mailbox first. Does it really make that much of a difference? Research shows that it does. So you need to streamline your entire process in order to be the "first to market."

Get Your Mail Delivered on a Specific Day

If you want your mail delivered on a specific day, Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) is a great option. Not only can you select the exact day your direct mail piece is delivered, you can also choose the zip code and carrier route, and target your audience by age, income, or size of household.

EDDM doesn't include personalized mail, so response rates may suffer as a result. MSP can help you dial in the mail drops to tight delivery windows by consolidating the mail and planning the deliveries to specific Network Distribution Centers and Sectional Center Facilities.

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Prepare for Your Busy Seasons

If you have certain times of the year that are busier than others, send your direct mail messages well in advance.

For example, if you're busier during the summer months (let's say you own a lawn care business), plan some late winter and spring campaigns to help people prepare for the upcoming season. If you're running a fitness center, think about those New Year's resolutions to get fit and get a mailing to your target market in December.

Focus on the Best Days to Send Mail

If you really want to narrow your mailing down to an exact day of the week, try Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday. Avoid Mondays and Fridays. Those are generally the days when people receive the greatest amount of mail. By targeting your direct mail message to arrive mid-week, you're increasing your chances of a successful direct mail marketing campaign.

Use Frequency to Your Advantage

Did you know that repetition in marketing works? The "Rule of 7" states that a potential customer needs to see your message at least seven times before they'll seriously take steps to buy your product or service. You can use a combination of traditional and digital marketing methods, but plan a series of messages for the best results.

Put a Real Stamp on Your Letter

It only takes eight seconds for someone to evaluate their mail, and it can be categorized into one of three groups. It's either a bill, a personal letter, or marketing mail. To avoid having your direct mail piece mistaken for that four-letter word (junk) mail, apply a real stamp to the envelope rather than a metered stamp or permit. This makes your marketing mail look more personal, like a piece of first-class mail. Research shows it's more likely to be opened, too.

Talk to an Expert Direct Mail Provider

To make sure you get your direct mail delivered on time and on budget, you need a direct mail provider who's prepared to help you. MSP can help you get the most from your next direct mail marketing campaign. We have competitive rates on the digital print and mail services you need. Contact us for a free consultation.

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Creating Compelling Content

When it comes to your direct mail campaign, you can do everything right, but if your content is lacking, it's all for naught. Here are some tips to help you create compelling content that not only gets noticed (meaning recipients open it), but it also gets the results (ROI) you're looking for.

Formatting Your Direct Mail Letter

Let's start with the common direct mail letter. There's a proven formula that works for your content, time and time again.

- Headline. You have about eight seconds to get the attention of your customer, so provide a headline that will pique their interest – or flat out shock them. Use a clear headline that reflects your goal.

- Body. People tend to spend more time with a printed letter than an electronic one, so don't worry about including more information than you would in an email.

- Call to Action. Make it very clear what you want your reader to do, and for those skimmers, repeat the CTA several times throughout the letter.

- P.S. According to the National Mail Order Association, 79% of people who open your direct mail will read the P.S. first. Be sure to craft a compelling P.S. that includes a CTA.

Tell a Story

Direct mail is a great time to put your storytelling skills to work, as opposed to email where people are quickly scanning to get the gist of the message as quickly as possible. Tell a story that details the reasons your company exists, while providing important information about a product or service and how it helped customers solve a problem. Get to the point, though. You're telling a story, not writing a book.

Write Direct Mail Copy That Converts

By using the AIDA model of marketing, you'll have a better chance of getting your audience to respond to you. AIDA stands for attention, interest, desire, and action, and it will help you write copy that appeals to your readers.

Attention. A great way to capture the attention of your readers is with an image that's relevant to your message. Most people are visual by nature, so deferring to the popular phrase "a picture is worth 1,000 words" is a good place to start.

Interest. Capture your reader's interest with an irresistible headline that identifies their problem and provides a solution. Your readers will likely scan the page, so create a headline that really stands out.

Desire. This is your sales pitch. Don't worry about the features of your product or service as much as the benefits. And don't forget to be empathetic. Put yourself into your reader's shoes and let them know how their life will be better by purchasing your solution.

Action. This is your call to action, or CTA. What do you want the reader to do? This is not the place to get cute with wording. Make it crystal clear so there's no confusion. You want to get your reader to react.

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Include Promotional Content

There are some unique things you can accomplish with a direct mail campaign that you can't with email. Consider including a sample of your product or a promotional item of some sort. By making it obvious the package has something interesting inside, you're creating intrigue for the recipient.

Naturally, this will affect the size and weight of the direct mail piece, so factor in the cost before making a decision to include anything extra. Keep in mind; however, that the more appealing the package, the more likely you'll receive a favorable result.

Appeal to the Senses

When you incorporate a sense of smell, touch, taste, sound, or sight (video) into your mailers, you're incorporating what's known as "embodied cognition." The more senses you appeal to, the better the message will be understood and retained. The result will likely be an increase in your response rate.

Some examples might be:

- Virtual Reality. According to Forbes, the VR industry is likely to become a $150-billion market by 2020. It's infiltrating the direct mail market, too. Consider what a mailable headset (made from cardboard, with space to insert your smartphone) can do to take your customers on a journey into your product or service.

- Textures. Advanced printing techniques allow you to add textures, varnishes, and inks that delight your customers. Canadian telecommunications company Telus sent avid sports fans a card made from the artificial turf from a football field. It featured the catch phrase: "The Greatest Show on Turf" stenciled on the front. Their plan was to get more people to subscribe to their NFL Sunday Ticket channel. The result? There were 150% higher sales in an A/B test with a turf-less mailer.

- Format. Consider taking ordinary (or extraordinary) paper to new levels with unique folds and die cuts that give your direct mail a 3D look. One study revealed that companies that used unique formats tripled their ROI over traditional mail.

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Personalization

People love to see their name in print. That's a fact. In a Forbes article on direct mail marketing, over 84% of consumers said they'd be more likely to open a piece of personalized mail. Plus, it creates a connection with your customer. When you call a customer by their preferred name, you're showing them that they have a place of importance in your business.

There are other ways to personalize, though.

1. If your mailing is built around one franchise location, include a local angle by focusing on the business address and hours of operation.

2. If you have a return element built into your mailing, fill in the customer's mailing address to save time. The easier you make the process, the more likely you'll get a response.

3. Within your copy, create a personalized URL, or PURL, where the customer can find content personalized just for them. It also makes it easy for you to track what they do. Try using a QR code or AR (augmented reality) for an interactive experience.

Variable Data Printing

Personalization sounds like an enormous undertaking, but it doesn't have to be time consuming. With variable data printing, you can create multiple pieces of mail at mass-production rates. You can reap the benefits of personalization without sacrificing your valuable time.

For example, rather than creating a sales brochure and then sending the exact same brochure to every one of your customers, you can customize it for each recipient. Thankfully, there's variable data printing. VDP comes to the rescue with a convenient form of personalization.

You could include each recipient's name on each piece. That's an effective form of personalization. Another option; however, is to include location-specific information. Everyone would receive the same piece of direct mail marketing, but the location information would change based on a store that's closest to the recipient. Furthermore, you could include a coupon that's only good at that specific location.

Perhaps the best part of variable data printing is that it doesn't take any more time to run than if there were no personalization.

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There are a number of steps involved to optimize your direct mail marketing efforts.

Postal Optimization

Your direct mail marketing campaigns are designed to capture the attention of your recipients and produce results. But you also have a budget to work with, so you need to watch what you're spending. That's where postal optimization comes in. It serves to balance everything involved with your direct mail marketing campaign while also reducing postage costs.

Data Hygiene

The first place to start is to make sure you have clean data. This will save money on postage, but it will also reduce the waste caused by incorrect or duplicate addresses. The average B2B company experiences data errors with their customer and prospect mailing lists up to 25% of the time. Whether it's flawed demographic data or information that's been entered improperly, bad data needs to be cleaned up before a mailing goes out.

It's difficult to achieve a 100% accurate list (mistakes are inevitable and names and addresses change), but you want to limit them as much as possible.

The best practice is to clean your data on a regular basis rather than "once in a while." Keep in mind that if you rent a list, you should merge, purge, and check for duplicates. The National Change of Address database includes everyone (individuals and businesses) who filled out a change of address form in the past four years. Use it to your advantage. Send your database to the NCOA, and you'll have your list's latest addresses.

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Watch for USPS Size Standards

The USPS has specific preferences when it comes to the size of envelopes and mailings. If you abide by these guidelines, you'll make their lives easier and you'll be rewarded for it by saving money. Let's look at some of the postal preferences for envelopes, postcards, and flats.

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Envelopes

So you decided to use an envelope for your direct mail marketing campaign. You may be tempted to go a little crazy with your design to stand out. There's nothing wrong with that, but if it affects the size of the envelope, it comes at a price.

If you stay within optimal USPS standards, you'll get the best rate on your postage costs. Optimal envelope sizes are:

- Up to 5" long x 3.5" wide x 0.007" thick
- No greater than 11.5" long x 6.125" wide x 0.25" thick

If your mail piece is bigger than this, it's likely to qualify as a flat. (Keep reading for more on flats.)

Don't let size limitations stifle your creativity, though. One option is to use a colored envelope. Statistics show that colored envelopes lead to increased response rates. Once a consumer reaches into their mailbox, you have three seconds to make an impression. A plain white envelope might not do the trick, so add some color to generate interest.

Postcards

You can save some money with a first-class postcard. It features the same benefits as a standard envelope (forwarding and return services) and your message is already visible without the recipient having to open anything. Optimal postcard sizes are:

- Up to 5" long x 3.5" wide x 0.007" thick
- No greater than 6" long x 4.25" wide x 0.016" thick

Flats

If you go above and beyond the standard envelope or postcard, you might be sending a flat. According to the USPS, a flat is a large envelope, newsletter, or magazine. Optimal flat sizes are:

- One dimension must be greater than 11.5" long or 6.125" wide or 0.25" thick
- Not more than 15" long x 12" wide x 0.75" thick

If you have any questions about postal optimization for your direct mail marketing strategy, **contact an MSP representative** to discuss your options. A direct mail marketing partner like MSP can help you find the perfect balance between price and speed.

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Presort Your Direct Mail

By presorting your direct mail marketing campaign, you're grouping the mail according to zip code in a bundle or tray. This creates less work for the post office—which means lower prices for you. Here's a detailed explanation of how it works.

1. CASS software (aka Coding Accuracy Support System) verifies each mailing address. This adds the +4 numbers to any zip codes that are missing it. It also serves as a fix for bad zip codes and includes a unique two-digit code that identifies a particular mailbox.

2. Let's talk automation. Your direct mail must match precise size specifications to be compatible. The most popular sizes for direct mail are letters, postcards, and flats. Please refer back to the USPS size standards.

3. All addresses must include an Intelligent Mail barcode. This USPS code is used to sort and track your mailing, which provides a better overall view of where your mail is and where it's going.

4. Finally, the mail is sorted and bundled. Then each tray is wrapped and tagged according to its zip code. Every container of mail has to have a label and documentation.

You need to have at least 200 pieces to qualify as presorted marketing mail. If your mailing is large enough (over 500 pieces), you'll get a substantial discount and a guaranteed delivery time.

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Commingle Your Direct Mail

Another way to save money (and delivery time) is to mix your mailing with other businesses to get the best possible USPS discounts. It's called commingling. Your mail and the mail from other companies is combined and sorted according to zip code. Then it's bundled together and delivered to a USPS Network Distribution Center (NDC) or a Sectional Center Facility (SCF). This is based on single pieces. You don't need to form trays or pallets to send this combination of mail to a destination.

Let's look at an example. Company A has a 40,000-piece mailing. Company B only has 500 pieces in their mailing. And Company C has a 2,500-piece campaign to send. All the mail is bundled together. Commingling helps all three companies get lower mailing costs.

Here's a quick rundown of how the process works. The mail is:

1. Combined from multiple companies.
2. Sorted according to zip code.
3. Tagged with Intelligent Mail barcodes.
4. Bundled into trays according to zip code group.
5. Delivered to a USPS NDC or SCF.

When mail is pre-sorted before arriving at a USPS facility, the Postal Service grants a discount because they didn't have to do the sorting and transporting.

Letter rate first-class and standard-class mailings can both be commingled, but not together. Letters, postcards, and self-mailers can be commingled, as long as they can be processed automatically. Also, if you send a for-profit mailing, you can commingle your mail with a non-profit.

Co-Palletization

This is another way to achieve postal optimization for your next direct mail campaign. Co-palletization (aka CoPAL) is similar to commingling, but instead of sharing pieces of mail in a tray, you're sharing trays of mail on a pallet.

The CoPAL process drops your mail deeper into the mail stream. By reducing the number of times the USPS handles your mail, CoPAL mail results in faster shipping and reduced postal expense.

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You can spend all the time you want on your direct mail marketing strategy, but if you aren't sending your campaigns to the right people, you're likely wasting a lot of time and money.

According to the Data and Marketing Association, you'll have a favorable return on your investment when your direct mail efforts are delivered to a well-targeted audience. To make sure you're getting your marketing materials to your target market, you need to know who your audience is.

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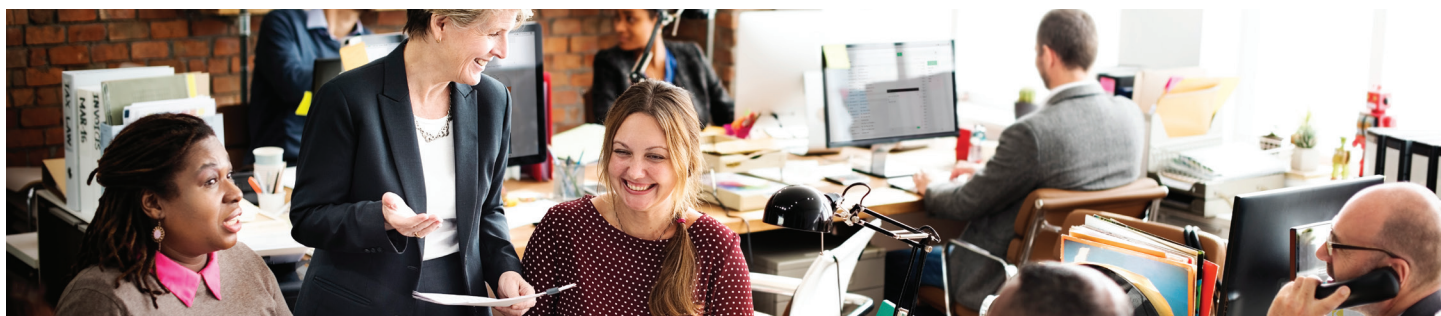
Mailing Lists, Creation and Maintenance

According to a Harvard Business Review article, it's up to 25x more expensive to get new customers than it is to keep the customers you already have. It's the age-old customer acquisition vs. customer retention debate—an argument about which strategy offers more value.

The first objective for any business should be to keep its current customers. Global management consultancy Bain & Company, Inc. conducted a study, "Prescription for Cutting Costs," that confirmed the success of that thinking. A business that boosts their customer retention rates by 5% increases their profits by up to 95%.

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Judging by these statistics, it pays to retain your current customers. But what if you're just starting out and you don't have a customer base yet? Here's how to get a mailing list going.

How to Start a Mailing List

If you want to build a mailing list for your target market, find one that fits the profile you're looking for. The best list will include your ideal prospects, so the more particular you are in critiquing and selecting this list, the better the chance you'll have success with it. When you're looking around for a mailing list that fits your targeted customer base, consider these three types:

Speciality. With a speciality list, you can identify your target audience. For instance, you could request the female buyers of a facial beauty product, or people that bought tickets to travel to a foreign country.

Custom. With a custom list, you can select specific customer information that meets your needs, like age, distance from a location, income, occupation, etc. The goal here is to find more customers that are like your current customers.

Cloned. With a cloned list, you find customers that are similar to your best customers.

There are many ways to add new customers to a mailing list. With a website form, you can automatically add potential customers to new or existing lists by asking for as much or as little information as you need. A general recommendation is to keep the form simple, however. The less information you ask for, the higher the conversion rate.

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Digital marketing has become a critical component of any modern-day marketing plan. Email, websites, search engines, pay-per-click ads, social media, and mobile apps are all familiar digital channels to the smart marketer, and you should use them along with your "traditional" marketing methods.
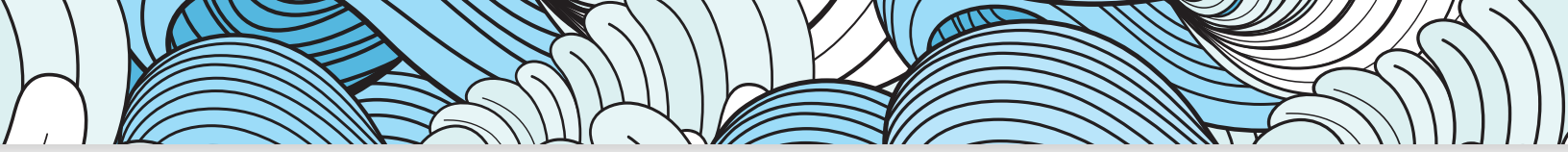
Print marketing and digital marketing are strategic partners. There's no need to separate the two. To get the most out of your marketing efforts, you need an integrated approach that combines both. The practice is so successful that 50% of multichannel marketers say they typically reach their financial goals with it.

Multichannel Marketing

Multichannel marketing refers to the practice by which companies connect with customers via multiple channels (digital and traditional). The goal, of course, is to sell them their goods and services.

To get the most out of your direct mail campaign, add a variety of digital marketing methods. For example, before you send a direct mail campaign, you might send an email telling the recipient to watch their mailbox in the coming days or weeks. This kind of integrated effort is especially effective when you keep the brand's image, tone, and customer experience consistent.

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Omnichannel is all about making the customer experience as seamless and convenient as possible.

Omnichannel Marketing

There are a variety of ways to interact with your business. Maybe you have a physical store, plus a telephone number (perhaps a toll-free customer service line), website or mobile app, social media accounts, mail-order catalog, etc.

Additionally, there are going to be a variety of electronic devices used to access your information (desktop, laptop, tablet, smartphone). So, you need to be sure you're giving the customer a consistent and complementary experience across all channels and devices.

Your direct mail campaign and your point-of-sale displays need to work hand-in-hand with your email and social media efforts. You need a coordinated marketing plan that influences consumers everywhere they interact with your brand. Companies with a strong strategy see a year-over-year (YOY) increase of almost 10% in annual revenue.

Omnichannel is different from multichannel in the way the channels interact with one another. As we learned, multichannel involves a variety of channels, but they're not necessarily connected. For example, you could have a physical store and a website, but the two may not work in sync with one another.

With omnichannel, they do work in sync. In fact, a customer can have these multiple touchpoints with a retailer (a physical store and a website), but they expect their customer journey between the two to be a seamless experience. Here's an example. If you visit Walmart's website, you can order an item and have it shipped to your home. You can also have it shipped to your nearest Walmart store. Another option is you can find out if your local store has that product in stock. Furthermore, if it is in stock, you can reserve that product and pick it up at your convenience.
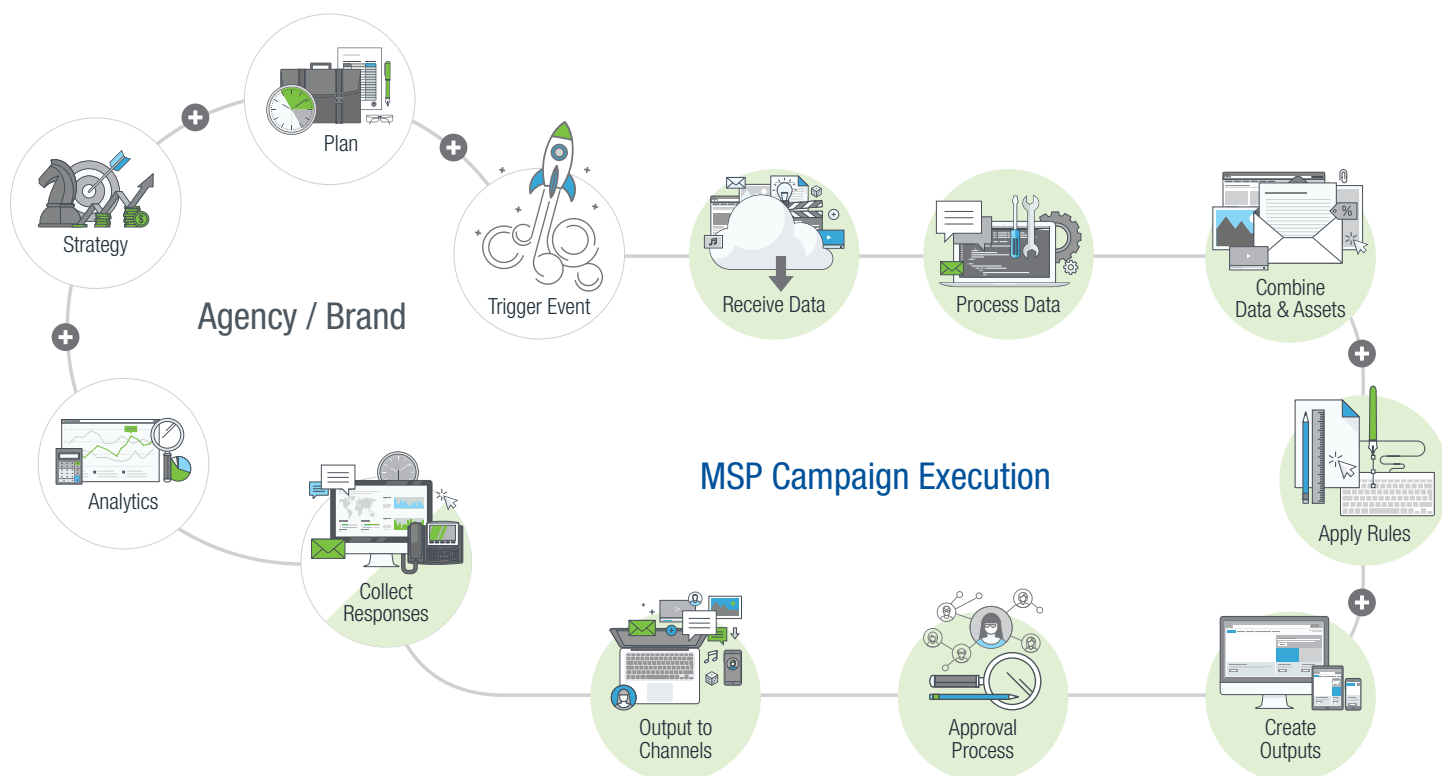
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Automated Direct Mail Marketing

The more you automate, the more you achieve. That's why marketing leaders are on board with marketing automation. In fact, the practice is expected to grow by more than 30% in the next year, according to Salesforce.com research.

Marketing automation software helps automate repetitive marketing actions, like sending emails, posting to social media, and other website behaviors. The technology of marketing automation allows these tasks to happen according to a planned schedule—automatically.

Agency / Brand

Strategy

Plan

Trigger Event

Receive Data

Process Data

Combine Data & Assets

Apply Rules

Analytics

Collect Responses

MSP Campaign Execution

Output to Channels

Approval Process

Create Outputs

Contact MSP for a free consultation.

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So, what does this have to do with direct mail?

As previously discussed, when you apply a multichannel approach to your marketing strategy, you're allowing traditional and digital channels to work together. Thus, automation saves time, helps to retain current customers, and turns prospects into new customers. You can use triggered direct mail responses to reinforce the other channels you use.

Here are a few examples of direct mail marketing automation in action:

Customer Reactivation. For those customers who haven't purchased anything from you in a while, you can send them a friendly greeting to let them know you miss them. You choose a timeframe for inactivity. When the customer has been inactive for that amount of time, they're automatically sent a piece of direct mail inviting them to reengage. It helps to include an incentive, like a discount or reward for purchasing again.

Customer Thank Yous. After a customer makes a purchase, a printed thank-you note is triggered to let them know how much you appreciate their business. A handwritten thank-you note is a great way to create a personal connection with a customer. Visit SimplyWritten.com for more information.

Customer Reminders. Let's say you're a veterinarian and you want to send a customer a reminder that it's time for Fido's check up. You can set the date that will trigger a reminder postcard to make that appointment with your office. Additionally, by using a personalization technique, you can send different reminders to dog and cat owners. The dog owner gets the reminder with a picture of a dog on it, and the cat owner gets the reminder with a picture of a cat on it.

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QR Codes

Quick Response Codes (commonly known as QR codes) were invented in 1994 when they were designed for Japan's automotive industry. Their purpose was to allow vehicles to be tracked (via high-speed component scanning) during manufacturing. Today, they appear everywhere from print ads to in-store retail displays and product packaging to hiking trails, just to name a few of the locations.

These unusual-looking, two-dimensional barcodes are scannable with a smartphone to do things like:

- Get product or service information
- Send an email or text message
- Go to a website link

By adding QR codes to direct mail marketing, smart marketers can direct consumers to customized PURLs (more on these to come). This allows them to create a more personalized experience for each customer, plus it allows for customer engagement and offer-redemption tracking.

Augmented Reality

Augmented reality (or AR) takes QR-code technology and makes it more user friendly. Rather than having someone scan an optical label, you can use image recognition with unique designs and photos to unlock a world of digital engagement, all from the comfort of a customer's smartphone.

Like a QR code, an AR tag can open a website URL or landing page, show a video, make a phone call, etc. Then you can track those responses to measure ROI.

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PURLs

One of the ways a marketing manager can create a personalized experience for a customer is with a personalized uniform resource locator, or PURL. As a layman's marketing term, it's a personalized web page (not a knitting stitch). It could also be called a personalized landing page.

For example, when you provide a PURL to a customer (in the form of a URL, QR code, or AR technology) and they click on the link, scan the code, or type the address into a web browser, they're taken to the personalized landing page. At the same time, their activity is tracked so you know when they visited the link. If they provide any information via a form on the page, you get that information, too, of course.

PURLs are oftentimes used as a multichannel marketing technique.

Informed Delivery® by USPS®

Another example of direct mail digital integration is a program called Informed Delivery® by the United States Postal Service. This service allows your customers to digitally preview their mail from a smartphone or tablet.

After your customer creates a free account and signs up, they'll receive a black-and-white view of the address side of their letter-sized mailpieces. They can also manage their packages to track the delivery status, schedule redelivery, or leave instructions for their postal carrier.

Why is this important for your marketing efforts? As someone who's creating and sending direct mail, you have yet another opportunity to engage your customers by combining print and digital marketing. According to the USPS, you can triple the impact of your marketing message: via email, digital content, and the direct mail piece itself.
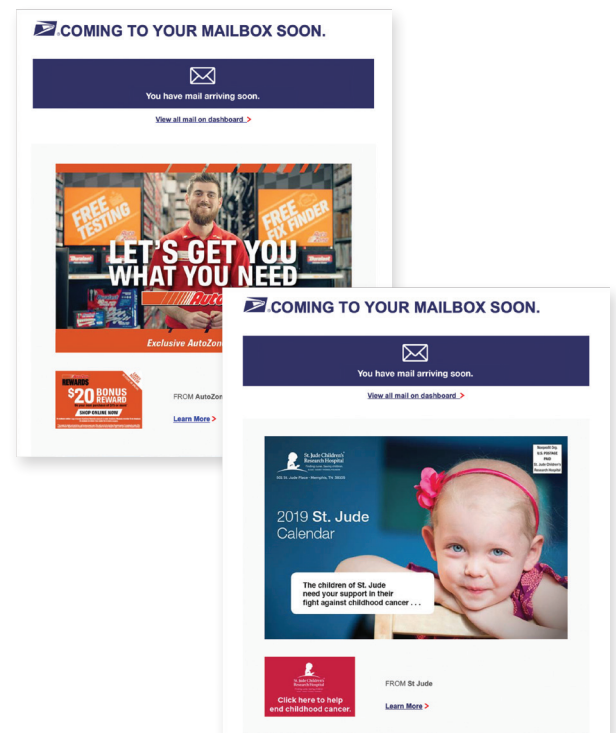
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How will you know if your direct mail marketing campaign was successful if you don't measure your results? You should be able to connect your direct mail to revenue for your organization. After all, that's the intent of any successful business.

Frequency

Let's begin with how many mailings you're going to send for any given campaign. That number will inevitably vary from one campaign to the next, but let's shoot for a certain standard.

Smart marketers learn patience. It's unlikely you're going to achieve the success you're looking for with one mailing. Rather, it's going to take up to seven mailings.

That may seem like a lot, but there's an old advertising rule that says someone needs to see a marketing message as many as seven times before they decide to take action. That's why you should plan to send multiple mailings as part of any direct mail marketing campaign.

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Requesting an Action

Within your direct mail piece will (hopefully) be a call to action. This CTA will require that a prospect performs a specific task in response, such as:

- Visiting a landing page (maybe a PURL)
- Completing a form for additional information
- Calling for more information
- Making contact for a free demo or sample

Keep in mind that your CTA will vary according to the relationship you have with your prospect. You're probably not going to ask for an order with your first mailing, especially if you're just introducing yourself to a potential customer. The key is to make sure you know your audience and what the appropriate course of action is to request. Then, you can track their behavior accordingly.

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Personalized CTA

As we discussed earlier, a PURL is a great way to give your response rate a boost. You can even add images and text via variable data printing (VDP) that apply specifically to that person. By creating a PURL for each recipient, you can easily track their activity. Every action they take reflects on them as well as that particular campaign.

A/B Testing

A great way to figure out what's working or not working with a direct mail campaign is to conduct an A/B test. From the simple to the complex, A/B testing can provide valuable information for future mailings. Here are a few ways to test your next direct mail marketing campaign.

Simple A/B Test

If you want to get your feet wet with A/B testing, run a simple experiment that includes one difference, like the offer. Split your mailing list in half so each group receives a different version. Then track the results to see which of the two offers performed better. To make the tracking process easier, use unique coupon codes, promo codes, or URLs.

Control Group A/B Test

A control group test involves a previous mailing and a test piece. First of all, determine what you want to test, like headline, color, images, etc. Then divide your list into two parts to see which one gets the better response.

Complex A/B Test

For a more thorough test, you could categorize your mailing list according to purchase history or demographics. Then create separate mailings for each one. Then you could test a variety of direct response methods, as previously mentioned, to decide what works best. For example, you could compare how a phone number CTA performs against a website URL or QR code as your CTA.

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Direct Mail Panorama

Direct Mail Panorama is an innovative new software solution developed by MSP and BlueSky ETO to help you better manage your direct mail marketing campaigns. This technology enabled program streamlines the direct mail management process, improves your campaign's time to market, and provides valuable production insights. Here's how it works.

STREAMLINED WORKFLOW   **SPEED TO MARKET**   **INCREASE ROI**

Streamline Management

When you have complex direct mail campaigns, you can simplify the entire process and reduce your production management time.

Direct Mail Lookup. This allows your customer service team to view a digitized version of the direct mail letter the customer received. It has the capacity to house hundreds of millions of records, searchable by multiple criteria with quick retrieval speeds. Reports can be downloaded with the tap of a button.

Template Editing/Approval Process. This provides a formal mechanism to manage template edits (featuring multi-level approvals), which includes an audit trail to track all the changes. It can also be combined with timed reminders.

Production Dashboard. This provides an overview of all your mailing campaigns, with details on final mail counts, links to letter templates, and permission-based access to mailing lists.

Integrations. Bi-directional integrations are available with established APIs, so you can generate multi-channel output like email, SMS, and HTML5. What in the world does that mean? First of all, APIs (or Application Programming Interfaces) allow for data communication across different software systems. Think of it as a software negotiator that allows two apps to talk to each other. So, if you bring all your contact data into a new system, you want to be certain it will transfer accurately. Duplicate contacts, incompatible formatting, or even one instance of broken code can harm the effectiveness of your marketing strategy.

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Experience. Innovation. Results.

Improve Time to Market

By reducing your cycle time through automation, you'll experience quicker mailings.

Automated Data Processing. Automation reduces your cycle time and improves your speed to market – ahead of your competition. Automation features include:

- CASS™ certification (zip + 4)
- PAVE™ certification (Presort Accuracy, Validation, and Evaluation)
- National Change of Address (NCOA) database check
- IMb (Intelligent Mail Barcode) tracking against approved templates
- Suppression of existing customers

You also get data consistency benefits in a secure, cloud-based system.

High-Speed Production Platform. Direct Mail Panorama has the capacity for multiple millions of monthly pieces. Color inkjet presses are available for color personalization, along with a high-speed bindery and inserters, plus postal optimization.

Gain Production Insights

You can get a "panoramic" view of all your direct mail metrics via a secure web portal.

Monthly Production Report. Track your campaign costs per piece (like postage, printing, and mailing) with access to invoices.

Postal Reporting. You'll have real-time access to postal delivery performance, with detailed insights to aid call-center staff. Mailings can be viewed at a macro level or all the way down to an individual piece, and it's easy to share reports.

Inventory Report. You'll be able to see exactly what inventory is on hand, with an available PDF for each item, if desired.

PANORAMA

155 Commerce Drive, Freedom, PA 15042
800.876.3211 • msp-pgh.com

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In a world dominated by web content, emails, and text messages, direct mail marketing provides proven results year after successful year. Response rates to this time-honored marketing medium continue to rise as smart marketers use the latest in print technology to keep their current customers and attract new ones.

The strategies and tactics are almost endless. Personalization, automation, and digital integration, not to mention volume discounts and state-of-the-art tracking and analyzing. Marketers want to get the most out of their modern-day campaigns and direct mail continues to be a tried-and-true component.

Direct mail has been proven as a successful way to get your marketing messages into consumers' hands. When you consider the design of your direct mail marketing campaign, plus the cost of printing and postage, it may seem like an expensive undertaking, but it doesn't have to be. When you partner with a knowledgeable direct mail provider like MSP, we'll help you manage your spending while delivering targeted direct mail marketing campaigns. Contact us for a free consultation today.

Contact us for a free consultation today

🌐 msp-pgh.com

✉️ info@msp-pgh.com

📞 800.876.3211

If you have any questions, please reach out to us anytime:

🌐 msp-pgh.com

✉ info@msp-pgh.com

📞 800.876.3211

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