

Direct Mail, how to make it effective.

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YOUR MARKETING COACH

When doing direct mail, you can typically expect a response rate of about .5%, which isn't all that high, but not surprising when you consider how businesses often tackle their efforts. Most direct mail is not addressed to anyone, it's usually poorly printed on colored paper that a printer can't even give away, and, more often than not, the copy and design is poorly prepared and there is no compelling offer to entice the recipient to take an action. So, it's no surprise that the average response rate is less than stellar.

Direct mail however can be quite effective if done correctly, and can garner response rates of 2-3% and higher. Here are some tips to consider...

Direct mail should be addressed to recipients name and messages tailored specifically for your audience. Mailings can be sent in a variety of formats, such as letters, postcards, brochures and even in 3-D containers that can accommodate product samples or specialty items, I like to call them "object mailers."

Metrics - I'm a big fan of metrics, direct mail can easily be tracked by counting the responses or inquiries it generates by offering a specific promotion, using a unique phone number, e-mail address or url.

Repetition & consistency - The advantages of a single mail piece can be compounded when the mailing is expanded into a series of mailers. Multiple mailers allow a message to be reinforced with the prospect, thus increasing response rates.

How often? The timing of the arrival of each mailer is probably as important as mailing frequency. In general you will want to space mail drops to be close enough together that preceding mailers will be recalled by the recipient, but not so concentrated or clustered as to become annoying.

Flat or 3-D? The type of mailers deployed in a campaign will be driven in many cases by budget. Three-dimensional mailers and those that feature a lot of special effects can cost more than a simple postcard or flat mailing, but dimensional mailers frequently yield greater results. In a typical business setting, some ordinary envelopes might not make it past a secretary, but when a package arrives it could receive special treatment, granting it a greater likelihood to reach a decision maker.

Mike Shubic is a 17-year marketing veteran and Gold Canyon Resident. For more information about direct mail, please visit www.ShubicMarketing.com