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**How to Increase Direct Mail Advertising Response Rates**

**By Nathan Cai**

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A couple nights ago, I was watching the evening news. There was a piece about the anthrax scare. The story was about the fact that everyone is scared to open their mail.

They showed a few clips of people checking their mail with much trepidation. One woman walked up to her front door and found the mail lying on her doorstep. Instead of picking up the mail and walking inside to see what she received, she used her foot to shuffle through the mail and she kicked away any mail that she thought was the least bit suspicious.

Being in the marketing business, I couldn't help but think that she was kicking away some valuable direct mail pieces. I felt sorry for the small business owners and marketing managers that put their time and energy into creating a mailing, only to have it kicked away to decompose outside.

I also thought about all the business people that saw that news story and made up their minds that they wouldn't be using direct mail for a while.

Please don't make that same decision! Although you should use caution in this time of national crisis, you should under no circumstances pull back in your marketing efforts.

Next week every mailbox in the United States is going to receive a direct mail postcard from the U.S. Postal Service. It has a message from the Postmaster General and information on what to look for if you suspect a letter or package may contain a harmful biological agent.

Click here to preview the message they are sending.

[http://www.usps.com/news/2001/press/pr01\\_1019postcard.htm](http://www.usps.com/news/2001/press/pr01_1019postcard.htm)

## How to Increase Direct Mail Advertising Response Rates

In view of this public service announcement, I believe there is also a need for a list of Do's and Don'ts for direct mail advertising.

Lets start with the Don'ts:

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· Don't send unsolicited mail in an envelope.  
Only use an envelope if you already have a relationship with the recipient.

· Don't send any mail without a legitimate return address.

Use a complete return address including company name.

· Don't use any fonts that look hand written.

Make every effort to make your mailing look as professional as possible. Now is not the time for sending "friendly" or "silly" mailings.

· Don't send any types of unsolicited boxes.

Nothing you send should be covered or concealed. The recipient should be able to tell right away that they have received a promotional item.

· Don't put restrictive endorsements such as "Personal" or "Confidential."

Instead make every effort to make your mailing look as innocent as possible.

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Direct Mail advertising is still one of the best ways to gain new customers and keep your old customers!

Consider these facts:

81% of Americans read a newspaper.

96% have a phone.

98% have a TV.

100% HAVE A MAILBOX.

If you want to stay ahead of this economic decline you must continue using direct mail advertising.

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If you want to increase your direct mail advertising response rates you must put the following Do's into action.

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Do's:

- Do send postcards –

Of the different types of direct mail pieces available the following performed best in the category for pieces immediately read:

#1 Postcards (76.1%)

#2 Letter-size envelopes (74.3%)

#3 Flyers (67.6%)

#4 Catalogs (67.1%) (USPS)

- Do attach magnets, phone cards, or other promotional items to postcards -

Studies show that a typical sales call costs a company more than \$300. Direct Mail with promotional products like magnets, phone cards, or non-magnetic items attached can decrease the cost of securing a single sales appointment by almost 65%. (USPS)

Trade show traffic increases nearly 300% when a pre-show direct mail piece includes an attachable, such as a magnet, phone card, or non-magnetic item. (SAAGNY)

- Above all else... Do use common sense.

Imagine yourself in your prospects shoes. When you are looking down at the mail on your doorstep, do you kick it out of the way or does an innocent looking post card and a free refrigerator magnet catch your eye?

### **Do You Know The Common Direct Marketing Measurements**

**By Daegan Smith**

Do You Know The Common Direct Marketing Measurements by Daegan Smith

John Wanamaker, a 19th century entrepreneur, once famously made the statement, "I know that half of my advertising is wasted, I just don't know which half." Fortunately for today's marketers, there are scientific ways to determine which half is wasted, and which half is not, through the use of common direct marketing measurements.

Advertising is, and has always been, part art and part science. With direct marketing, the science part

## How to Increase Direct Mail Advertising Response Rates

takes center stage as there are common direct marketing measurements that can be utilized to verify the results of the advertising.

With the increased popularity of direct marketing, the success of advertising can be measured through a variety of common direct marketing methods such as cost per acquisition, cost per piece, and response rate.

Before continuing in describing these common direct marketing measurements in detail, it is beneficial to review one of the direct marketing tools needed to determine the success of the mailing. The most important direct marketing tool is the response mechanism. This is how you can gauge the success, or lack of success, of a direct mail campaign. This is the mechanism by which the prospect will use to respond – it may be a postcard to request more information, an 800 number to call, or a website address to place an order. You can then utilize this response to determine the success of the direct mailing.

The first of the most common direct marketing measurements is the cost per acquisition. The cost per acquisition can be determined by taking the total cost of the mailing and dividing it by the number of responses. For example, let's say the total cost of a mailing is \$2,000 and 20 people respond. The cost per acquisition is \$100. This is an important tool to find out if the cost to obtain a new customer is in line with the profits that you will receive.

The second of the most common direct marketing measurements is the cost per piece. To find the cost per piece, you would take the total cost of the mailing and divide it by the total number of pieces sent. For example, if the total cost of the mailing was \$4,500 and you sent 2000 direct mail pieces, the cost per piece would be \$2.25. This is an important figure to keep in mind, because by lowering the cost per piece (as long as the number of responses stays the same), you can lower the cost per acquisition.

The third of the most common direct marketing measurements is the response rate. The response rate can be calculated by taking the number of people that responded and dividing it by the number of people that were sent the direct mail package. For example, if 2000 people were mailed a direct mail package and 20 people responded, the response rate would be 1%. This is an important tool that you can utilize to forecast the success of future mailings.

By using all three of these common direct marketing measurements, you can finally determine which half of your marketing is working, and which half is not.

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