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Internet Direct Mail Is Different: 14 Things To Remember

By **Aran Kay**

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Internet Direct Mail (IDM) and Traditional Direct Mail (TDM) both have the same goals in mind. They are to generate leads or orders.

However, marketers need to respect that online media and print media present different hurdles in achieving this goal. Some of these hurdles will require that copy be written differently for each media. And some not.

Here is a list of 14 things you should remember when writing copy for Internet Direct Mail. And how each one relates to Traditional Direct Mail.

1. FROM and SUBJECT are very important. During the anthrax scare in America, these two items became very important in TDM because any given envelope could contain a deadly poison. And while this fear has passed for TDM, it is still very present in IDM. That's because any given e-mail could contain a computer virus. Prospects are more apt to simply delete a message they are unsure of nowadays than risk opening it and ruining their computer.

Here are a couple of tips to solve this problem: FROM line should display someone the readers will trust for house lists, the prospect has presumably bought from the company before and would trust them. So include some company identifier: "FROM: Macromedia FLASH Team" SUBJECT line should be treated like envelope teaser copy. You have to give the prospect some reason to open the e-mail to see what is inside. "SUBJECT: Try The New Update For Your Macromedia Product!"

2. Your first paragraph or two should contain a mini-version of your whole e-mail. So instead of carefully spreading out your 4 P's (Promise, Picture, Proof, Push) or AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action), you should try to get all these elements in early. Online users have little patience in general and they need to know your whole offer fast.

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3. For readers willing to spend the time to read every word of your e-mail (God bless them), you can expand on your opening later. Just remember that less people will read right to the end than will scan your first couple of paragraphs. So include all your best stuff up front.
4. Avoid using "hard-sell" techniques in IDM. These tend to produce poor results. Readers on the internet expect to see information. The information can be on the benefits of your product and how to order, but the tone must remain helpful. If it's slick, your email will be trashed.
5. You should include multiple response options for your prospects. But ALWAYS remember to have a web-based response form. Many online users prefer to keep the entire transaction online. That way the user keeps control and does not have to worry about more sales talk or being upsold when they phone in.
6. Limit the amount of click throughs in your IDM piece. Usually only the first 2 or 3 get used. The rest are ignored.
7. Premiums still work online. Maybe even better. You have the opportunity online to animate your premiums in action or even make them interactive. Try this out and see how it effects your results.
8. Sweepstakes work great online. This is because it is usually much easier for the prospect to quickly fill out their information on an online form than to fill out a paper-based form and then have to mail it.
9. Avoid the word FREE in the subject line. FREE is too blatantly promotional a word for people to bother opening your e-mail. Besides that, many online users now employ "spam filters" which work to screen out unwanted mail. FREE is often a word that these filters pick up and then they'll delete your message before it ever reaches the prospect's inbox.
10. A headline is a headline is a headline. Start your email off with one that will draw your reader into the package. Try to make it different from your SUBJECT line. Your best benefit up front usually does the trick. Injecting a news feel and some self-interest doesn't hurt either.
11. ALWAYS include an opt-out statement! The only thing more powerful than good will towards your company is ill will. Don't make any prospect feel like they've been spammed. Include an un-subscribe or remove statement at the end of your e-mail.

"We here at ABC Company respect your online privacy. If you received this message in error or simply do not wish to receive further e-mails from us, please reply to this e-mail and type REMOVE in the subject line."
12. For once, shorter is better. In TDM, we all know that long copy generally works better. But in IDM, brevity is the key. If some of your prospects require more information before they make a purchasing decision, include a click-through to an expanded version of your e-mail.
13. Remember in IDM, you can use viral marketing techniques. This is not possible with TDM as you

cannot tell a prospect to make 10 copies of your message and then pass them on to neighbors and friends. But in IDM, make sure the prospect understands that your fantastic deal is not exclusive to them. They should pass on this message to others they think would be interested.

14. Online users prefer free trials or bill me later offers to money-back guarantees. While online transactions are rising every day. Some prospects are still wary about sending their credit card info over the internet. They would much rather just send their shipping info. Try the product for a while. And then choose their payment option when the time comes.

Aran Kay is a marketing consultant and freelance copywriter with experience working for Nintendo, Direct Energy, Kellogg's and more. He has written numerous marketing articles and includes a selection of them on his web site. www.ProfessionalCopy.ca is also your source for "The 52 Best Marketing Web Sites." It's a great resource and yours FREE just for visiting his web site.
Web Site:

E-mail:

Direct Mailing: Is It Still Effective?

By Gabriel Adams

Direct mail, or marketing by snail mail, is an oft forgotten marketing method - after all, email is quicker, easier, and much less expensive. There are many businesses that now use email exclusively, and do not use snail mail for marketing purposes.

But I believe that these businesses are missing out on a piece of their pie. Actually, they are leaving a piece of their pie for other marketers (ones who use direct mail) to pick up.

DMIS, or the Direct Mail Information Service, reports some important statistics, showing that direct mail is indeed a vital marketing method, even in this digital age. For example, DMIS reports that 67% of direct mail is opened by the recipient, and 45% is both opened and read. Also, 32% of consumers surveyed reported that they had responded to a direct mailing in the past twelve months.

Direct mail is still an effective marketing piece that every business should use, even internet based businesses. Direct mailing has several advantages over email, such as increased delivery rates, higher readership percentages, and the fact that a physical direct mail piece will make a bigger impact than an email.

If you run an internet business, you may not want to use direct mail as an initial marketing piece. Initial contact is probably the strongest point of internet marketing. But follow-up is one of the strong points of direct mail. Use direct mail to follow up with your customers, to let them know about promotions, or to follow up with prospects who have not made a purchase yet.

For all businesses, direct mail allows you to contact precise markets with geographical and demographical targeting. For example, if you sold commercial bakery equipment, you could send your

promotional mailing to a list of bakeries.

Direct mail is still an extremely viable marketing method that you don't want to miss out on.

For more Direct Mailing Information, visit

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