

It's OK to Use the Free Stuff You Get in Junk Mail

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By Mark Jeantheau

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According to several pieces of junk mail the Grinning Planet offices have received this year, we can get 37 CDs for just a penny! Fine, as long as we don't have to listen to the complimentary copy of "Megadeth Plays Liberace."

We're really here today to talk about some of the stuff you get in the mail that may actually be usable. Most of us have received all sorts of supposedly usable stuff in junk mail—free return-address labels, blank greeting cards, calendars, even reeeaaaally flat sponges. Well, we may be very pleased to find out that some junk-mailer considers us "sponge-worthy," but the larger question is, should we use this stuff even if we don't send a contribution to "Save the Down-Sized Rich People" or whatever group sent it to us?

Consider the case of the free return-address labels. The organization sent them to you hoping that you would send them a donation. If you're not inclined to donate, it is NOT unethical for you to use the labels. From an ecological perspective, whether you send the organization money or not is irrelevant. The labels have already been manufactured, packaged, and mailed—those financial costs and resource costs have already been incurred. If you can make use of the free labels instead of throwing them out and buying similar replacement items, then it's a "win" for resource utilization and the environment. The group that sent you the labels isn't any worse off than if you'd just thrown the labels out. The same logic applies to ALL of the free goodies you get in the mail.

So take those return-address stickers you got from the "Friends of Hard-Luck Martian Television Stars" (or whomever) and use 'em up!

P.S. To get less junk mail in the first place, you can get on the "Stop Sending Me This Crap" list at the Direct Marketing Association's Mail Preference Service ---
<http://www.dmaconsumers.org/offmailinglist.html> .

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Mark is a writer, financial analyst, web developer, environmentalist, and, as necessary, chef and janitor. Grinning Planet is an expression of Mark's enthusiasm for all things humorous and green, as well as a psychotic desire to work himself half-to-death. Hobbies include health foods, music, getting frustrated over politics, and occasionally lecturing the TV set on how uncreative it is.

Marketing 102 - Aiming vs. Spraying

By Marsha Kopan

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Pick up the stack of mail that you receive in the mail today. How much of it do you consider "junk" mail? Do you stand over the wastebasket and take the "he loves me, he loves me not" approach to it tossing about every third piece in the trash without even opening it.

For the next week, rather than tossing that junk in the trash, hang on to it for evaluation purposes after reading this article.

After tossing out what you have considered to be junk mail, do you still have stuff that you've opened but goes immediately to the trash without reading it? Ok, for this same next week set that stuff in another pile.

Now after putting all the other mail in its proper queue lets see what's left. You now may have some mail left that needs your attention but not in terms of paying a bill, answering a client or depositing that customer check.

What is it? It is mail that perks your interest to build your business, give you a new perspective on success or makes an offer you just can't pass up. How did this mail bypass the garbage?

First of all 99.9% of it was in an envelope personally addressed to you with a real stamp or it was someone or a company that is of interest to you. The mere presentation could have been the key to your opening it. Examine this mail very carefully to see why you decided to open it and if you would take any

action
on it. Go back and evaluate the other batches of mail that you've saved.
Decide
what makes you immediately discard it.

Now, when developing your direct mail advertising consider what you've just learned about yourself and keep in mind that 99% of others do the same thing.



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