

Update Snail Mail Techniques

Postcards: Direct Mail With A Difference

Direct implies a line connecting two points – the sender with the receiver.

Direct means personal, face-to-face, head-on. Few mediums can make such an offer. In a world of technology, we still enjoy viewing our mail. Research from the U.S. Post Office reports 56% say receiving mail is a real pleasure.

My friend and advertising specialist, Ann, has used direct mail postcards for years. A fan of color, her campaigns rely on oversized splashes of color with billboard-type messages. As she built her business, Ann sent 100 postcards per month; during any 12-month period her best prospects heard from her twelve times.

It takes discipline and perseverance to carry out such a campaign. Discipline because many things vie for attention each month. It's easy to get through five or six months of a campaign and then drop it.

I mention perseverance as a requirement because the continuation of any project over a long time period requires patience and firmness of mind. Statistics on New Year's resolutions give an idea of the likelihood of success. For this reason, many businesses give the care and completion of their mailings to an outside firm.

Direct mail campaigns present your message to a targeted audience. Direct mail can be economical because you pay for what you use, meaning the reach of your campaign controls cost.

In contrast, television offers a broad appeal that's more difficult to pinpoint. If you have a very narrow target (working women 50-plus, for example), the reach of tv is wasted. Direct mail offers the advantage of a clearly defined audience. You pay only for the defined target you want.

Thus, direct mail, for the business with clear customer focus, can be a great choice. Think direct mail postcards for these kinds of opportunities:

1. Wage a subtle, ongoing campaign with ongoing postcards – every week or every month, for example.
2. Use postcards to position your name in front of decision makers.
3. Choose direct mail postcards to retain TOM (Top-of-Mind) awareness with prospects.
4. Support other media channels with direct mail – mail postcards just prior to a trade show, for example.
5. Test special offers on post cards as you mail one offer to a specific zip code and test a different offer elsewhere.

The bottom line: use postcards to mail efficiently and effectively.

© Mary Ellen Merrigan, 2007, Merrigan Group, LLC. Mary Ellen Merrigan consults with small businesses on marketing and public relations; she maintains a marketing strategy blog and a free monthly newsletter, at <http://www.profitmeister.com>.