



The Ultimate Guide to Direct Mail Marketing

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY UTILISE DIRECT MAIL CAMPAIGNS
TO BOOST RESULTS AND DRIVE SALES



So, you have decided to run a direct mail campaign – great news! Mail has the power to drive people online and gain a digital response from 70% of customers. In a digitally saturated world, the tactile nature of print leaves a lasting impression and drives conversions.

More businesses are benefitting from the combined power of digital and mail – it's no longer the case to choose either/or but both to deliver optimum results. To connect with your customers there are several steps to ensure a successful direct mail campaign.

Let's get started.

1 TARGET YOUR DIRECT MAIL CAMPAIGN

Running a successful direct mail campaign requires a considered planning, compelling creative and robust evaluation. Rather than one big idea, success will depend on getting your message in front of the right audience.

Direct mail remains a great way to achieve this – it continues to deliver in today's digital, post-GDPR world. You can safely use mail as a lead generator and to direct people online. Direct mail is not subject to the same data restrictions as email, so it is easier to implement and stands out from crowded inboxes.

Any business can use direct mail –there are many options to suit your market and budget, whether you are a large organisation or small business. The first step is to confirm your objectives and strategy.

DEFINE YOUR STRATEGY

The most successful campaigns span multiple channels, reaching customers across a variety of touchpoints.

Your campaign will achieve more if it has a clear goal. Perhaps you'd like to reactivate lapsed customers, or promote a retention or loyalty initiative? Maybe you have a coupon or offer code? Talk to your print provider at the start about what you want to accomplish. They can help to define a strategy that best utilises mail at key points in your customer journey.

Your print partner can advise on what is possible – it's no good creating a design that won't work in production or is too expensive for your budget. The earlier you work together then the more chance there is of hitting your goal on time and within budget.





DEVELOP BUYER PERSONAS

A key step in identifying your audience is to develop buyer personas. It is worth spending considerable time and thought on these to establish a few different potential buyers. They should be based on your own customer data, and include demographics such as age, income, occupation, location, gender etc.

As well as customer information you can also analyse data on your social media followers and information from previous campaigns, to give a full view. A good persona will go beyond demographics however and include behavioural insight:

- What are the customer's goals and challenges?
- How can your business help them to achieve or overcome these?
- What common objections or barriers there are to purchase?

Your marketing message should address these points. Whether your company is targeting senior business executives, fitness enthusiasts or charity donors, the important point is to determine how the ideal customer feels, what they need, and how you can help.

ENSURE GOOD DATA MANAGEMENT

Direct mail offers a huge opportunity to reach your audience, providing that your campaign is well-targeted. Forbes reports that 82% of direct mail is read for a minute or more, so it's important that your data is accurate.

Large companies may have access to more customer data, but this presents challenges in data management. Data must be regularly cleansed and updated to prevent wastage. Smaller businesses may have less data, but this can be easier to manage and segment. Take your data situation into account when you target your mailing; how accurate will your data be?

Remember too that unlike email, you can send direct mail to customers without their explicit consent. Direct mail gives you more freedom to connect and engage with customers, and then to direct people to digital.

Of course, personal data is subject to the data protection terms of the GDPR, so you will need to prove a legitimate interest. For more help on this see our [Guide to Legitimate Interest Assessment](#)

SEGMENT FOR IMPROVED RESULTS

You can target your mailing more accurately by segmenting your data, depending on the profiles and buying behaviour identified in your buyer personas. Messaging can then be tailored to very specific groups about their needs; helping you to achieve the goal of 'right message, right audience, right time'.

Personalisation can also be utilised here. It is possible to tailor messages with dynamic content including images, offers and formats that will better resonate with them personally – increasing your chance of a higher response rate and return.

We can help you to assess whether to run a series of highly segmented, low volume campaigns or one more generic high-volume campaign to meet your objective. Once you have tested responses you can continue to target those who react positively through additional campaigns and channels.

Segmentation will help you to send relevant, useful direct mail to each recipient, rather than wasting vital resources and money.

GET THIS RIGHT FOR SUCCESSFUL TARGETING

It's essential to target your message at the people most likely to respond to avoid wastage and increase response rates. These may be existing customers, but even then, there are various profiles from repeat, regular purchasers to infrequent spenders that you may wish to target separately. For new business, you need to identify people who match the profile of your existing customers.

The most effective direct mail campaigns are created using considered planning, fuelled by data insight. We can help your message to reach the right people and ensure an integrated approach across platforms – making the most of your marketing budget.



2 CREATING SUCCESSFUL DIRECT MAIL

Initially, you will have thought about the best strategy to reach customers at key points in their journey. You will also have a thorough understanding of your customer types and created personas to help target each one. You will also have a robust data list and have segmented it according to your strategy, making selections for this campaign.

Now, it's time to focus on campaign creation. This includes writing a compelling message, choosing the right format for your campaign and honing the creative.

WRITE COMPELLING COPY

Always write with your audience in mind and use language that will resonate with them (refer to your audience personas). Write in a style and tone that fits with your brand, and that your audience will expect, whether youthful and humorous or a more professional and serious approach.

HEADLINES

Headlines and subheads are crucial – David Ogilvy claimed in 1963 that 5 times as many people read headlines as they do body copy. This is still true, so aim to tell a story with your headings to pull prospects through the piece.

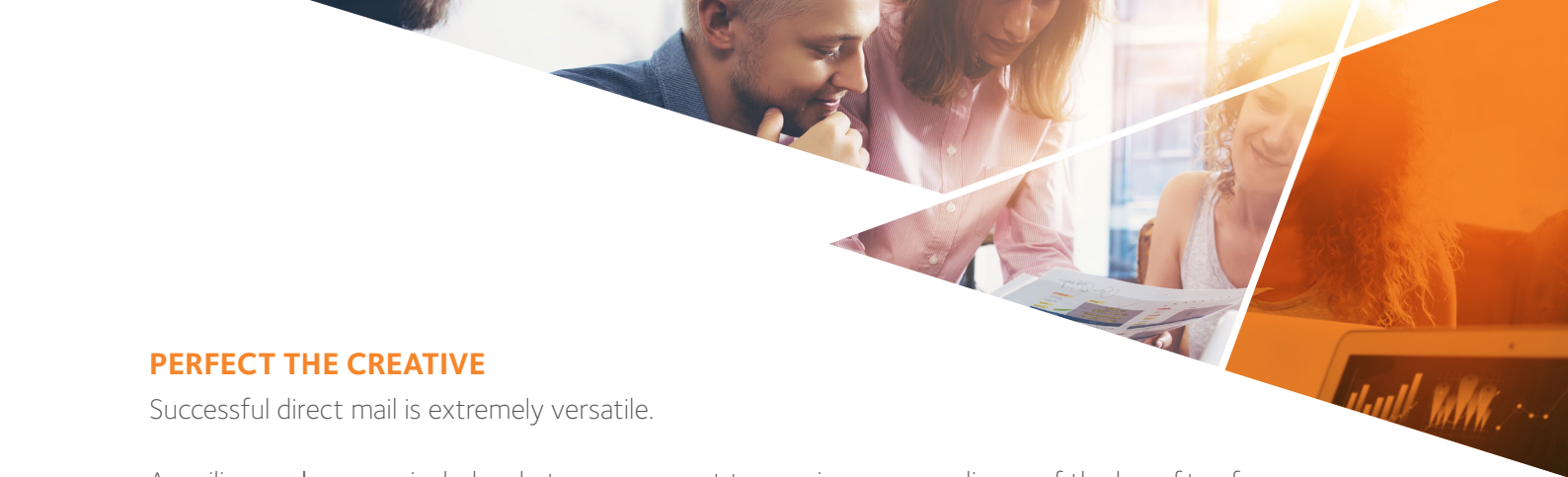
Headings need to be concise and include benefits. Also, try asking a question to engage the audience about a challenge they may have, and you can solve.

BODY COPY

In the body copy you can go into more detail but put the benefits up front. Start the sentence with “Reduce costs with...” rather than putting it at the end. The body copy is also a good place to use emotive copy and empathise with a challenge the customer is facing, how you can resolve it and what the improved result will be.

Finally, don't use industry jargon or assume that your audience is familiar with acronyms. When in doubt write less – successful direct mail leaves plenty of space for visual imagery (a picture is worth a thousand words!). Get straight to the point and only write about the most important details.





PERFECT THE CREATIVE

Successful direct mail is extremely versatile.

A mailing package can include whatever you want to convince your audience of the benefits of your product or service. Incentives such as special offers, coupons, samples and discounts all help to increase response rates.

Elements often include an envelope, letter, brochure and reply card, but we've sent items ranging from teabags to money boxes for clients. Again, it's important to align your campaign objectives with your audience.

If you are trying to sell an extremely high-end luxury item, choose a format, stock and finish that reflect the premium nature of your product. However, if your offer is more about high volume and low cost, choose a lower cost format and stock accordingly.

- **Mailer** – coming in all formats and sizes the options here are endless. Do consider the format and size up front, including what size envelope it will need and the postage required to work to your budget. Mailer items may include leaflets, brochures, company magazines and newsletters, postcards and foldouts. Also consider 'attention grabber' items and merchandise, or product samples.
- **Envelopes** – use the envelope as your first sales opportunity. Lots of companies forget this and send a standard type, but these can be designed, branded and come in a range of colours to stand out in the mail. Use an enticing message or offer to encourage the recipient to open it.
- **Sales letter** – don't underestimate the power of a well-written sales letter. Sales letters are inexpensive to produce, easily personalised and easy to test. Include an attractive offer and repeat it at least twice (at the beginning and end) to emphasise the message. If possible, add a deadline or closing date to encourage a prompt response.

A great way to check the effectiveness of your creative is the 5-second ad review. Find a non-biased friend or colleague and let them look at your mock-up for 5 seconds. Then take it away and ask some key questions – what is being sold? What is the offer? What action are they supposed to take next?

If they can answer the questions your mailer hits the spot. If not review and try again!

CALL TO ACTION

Ensure that your creative includes a clear message and a strong call to action. Make it as easy as possible to respond and offer a variety of methods to suit everyone, whether mail, telephone, email and website. Pre-paid reply cards can be effective at boosting responses.

It's a good idea to include a response code, to track responses and help you to assess the effectiveness of the campaign. Tracking mechanisms include standard codes, QR codes, phone numbers, email responses, landing page hits and submissions and, of course, sales.

We will cover A/B testing, postage and fulfilment options and campaign evaluation/ROI in future blogs in the series.

GET THIS RIGHT FOR SUCCESSFUL CREATIVE

In summary, to create successful direct mail you need to get these three things right:

1. **Offer** – Write compelling copy that clearly and succinctly explains your offer. Include benefits and show how your product or service will make life better. Consider incentives such as a demo or sample to encourage response.
2. **Creative** – be creative with your creative! Consider the right format to suit your product/ audience and budget and optimise space by utilising the envelope or outer packaging. Test and refine how clear and memorable it is.
3. **Call-to-Action** – Include the correct contact information, very clearly in multiple places. Make it easy for people to respond and clearly state what action you want people to take “Call today..!”

Book a Free Data Health Check

Discover how effective your mailing data is with our free report and recommendations. You'll gain insights into the quality of your data and see how much of your data is healthy. Plus, we'll include recommendations for improvement and next steps.

To book your Free Data Health Check please contact:

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