



## THE CASE FOR DIRECT MAIL MARKETING

### PURPOSE

Direct Mail Marketing has taken a major hit since the start of the recession in early 2008. Since then many companies have cut back their direct marketing budgets in an effort to reduce costs. To fill the void many have turned to lower cost email marketing or are trying other social media methods. The purpose of this paper is to look at how that seems to be working for some companies and to identify when, how and where direct mail marketing still makes sense.

### MARKETING IN A RECESSION (OR ANY OTHER TIME)

Where to spend your marketing dollars? Should I stop my direct mail marketing and just start email marketing? A recent article published in the January 12, 2010 Wall Street Journal entitled "Firms Hold Fast to Snail Mail Marketing" cited several cases where companies that had gone away from "snail mail" had come back to it in an effort to recoup revenues that they had lost and guess what, it worked! This is not to say that direct mail marketing is the panacea for all revenue shortfall problems but direct mail marketing should definitely be a part of most companies marketing strategy and budget.

### PICK YOUR CHANNEL

There are many media or channels that can be used to communicate and market your business. How do you know the most effective channel for your different messages?

A White Paper called "2009 Channel Preference Study by ExactTarget, a major provider of email marketing services compared consumer preferences for various communication channels. Their study reported that direct mail was either equal to or the preferred messaging method over email, phone or messaging for the following purposes:

- Alerts regarding banking or travel
- Confirmations for transactions
- Customer service messages
- Promotional messages from companies I have granted permission to contact me
- Polls surveys or questionnaires
- Sweepstakes invitations
- Promotional messages from companies you do regular business with but have not asked for ongoing information

However, one of the most important results of this study showed that direct mail really shined as the **preferred** method of contact for consumers from a company with whom they have never interacted.

**In plain English that means:**

**If you want to sell me something and I've never done business with you, please send me a direct mail piece.**

## OK, SO WHAT KIND OF DIRECT MAIL?

Do I just throw caution to the wind and send out 250,000 postcards and blanket my marketing area? If I do that the postage alone is going to be a fortune, so then how can I be smart about this and get a good return on my investment?

There are some common sense steps that you can take to improve your response rate and your return on investment.

1. Target your audience – Get the best list you can. If you want to reach families, your existing and past customers are the best place to start. To find more people like your current customers ask your printer or mailing company to get you a list of other people that match the same demographics. Forget the “To Resident at” or “Our Neighbor at” generic mailing, send it to a specific family or name.
2. What kind of Mailer – Your printer can help you decide the type and size of mailer that will give you the best results for the best price. A slight change can significantly increase or decrease the cost of printing and/or postage. Determine this first, then design your piece.
3. It's all about the offer – If you are trying to get new customers make sure that your offer is compelling enough to get someone's attention and then for them to take the action you want. Make sure you make it clear and easy for them to respond.
4. Create a sense of urgency – Give them a reason or two to do it NOW!
5. Is your timing right? – If you have a great product or service for people that are on Social Security, you probably want your piece to get there at the first of the month when they receive their benefit checks. Think about the best time for people to be reading your piece then work backwards to determine your schedule.

## WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO IMPROVE MY RESULTS?

Technology has given us some great tools that can significantly improve the results and your returns on direct mail marketing. A 2009 study conducted by InfoTrends an international leader in market research and strategic consulting reported:

- A 35% improvement in results when print marketing is combined with other channels (email, web landing pages, or QR codes) in multi-channel campaign.
- Personalization which makes PURL'S (Personalized URL's) possible can increase response to nearly a 50% improvement for multi-channel campaign over a print only campaign.

SmartCampaigns are also possible now with the technology available from PrintWest and PULSE Media. This technology allows you to test different offers, lists or concepts and based on the results of each option and then on the fly launch a full campaign that reflects the best results of the test.

For more information on how we can help you dramatically improve your marketing results contact your PrintWest or PULSE Media Account Representative.

The Wall Street Journal article can be viewed at:

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703481004574646904234860412.html>