Direct Mail Still Works: How To Use Tech To Elevate Traditional Marketing

Forbes — Direct mail may sound old-fashioned and outdated in today's technological world, but if we only utilized new forms of advertising, there would be no Super Bowl ads — or TV ads, period (television has been airing for the masses since the 1940s). There would be no radio ads (America has been listening to radio programs since the 1920s). We wouldn't do trade shows (those have been around since the 1800s). Even some modern-day marketing strategies are growing gray hairs, as email has been around since the early 1970s and internet advertising was launched in the 1990s.

Direct mail — especially niche-based, targeted direct mail such as the new mover marketing program we offer at Our Town America — has endured because it works. Helping local businesses create valuable, long-term relationships by delivering thoughtful and personalized gift certificates direct to new mover doorsteps is what we do. It's in our DNA. Sure, it's old-school, print-based advertising, but it's effective because it can reach a niche customer base when they're interested in finding new, go-to solutions for everyday needs (groceries, hair care, restaurants,

etc.).

That’s the key to effective marketing, both online and offline: the ability to reach customers when they’re actively searching for answers. And in today’s world, technology plays a pivotal role in determining who those customers are and where/how they’re searching for solutions. You must always be open to embracing new technology — even if it’s in conjunction with an old-school form of advertising — that helps you efficiently reach and influence target audiences.

So what if you own a direct mail company and know you need to evolve? Or perhaps you’re a business owner considering direct mail marketing and you want to be sure the company you choose “gets it.” Keep these three things in mind:

Technology Is Still Essential To Key-In On Target Audiences

Direct mail efforts without demographic-based strategies can be a waste of money. These days, you can use technology to pinpoint target audiences. If your core customer group is within two miles of your place of business, don’t send to a 10-mile radius. If your products are best-suited for senior citizens, don’t send offers to millennials. And if you want apartment dwellers, it’s silly to send direct mail to McMansions. Too many businesses throw money to the wind because they aren’t specific about reaching their core audiences at the right time. Technology affords us the ability to only send to specific zip codes, neighborhoods, etc.

Create Human Connections With Customers Ready To Act … And Track Redemptions

That is, when you send potential customers gift certificates to try out your business, include a tracking mechanism (like a QR or barcode on the certificate that you can scan). This should be done so that if they redeem your offer, you will *know* it’s being used. This also helps you secure their contact info, so you can follow up with an additional offer, thank them for being a customer and invite them back.

All customers want to feel appreciated. But they don’t just want discounts or coupons — they want real, thoughtful offers (such as a free pizza, not just 10% off). That’s the key to inspiring action and increasing redemptions — getting them in the door when they’re ready to act and delivering an unbelievable in-store

experience that keeps them coming back for years. This is the human factor of direct mail that technological advancements don’t compromise — the opportunity to send a real, tangible, personalized offer delivered directly to someone’s doorstep.

Don’t Let Technological Advancements Scare You Away From Direct Mail

Look, it’s easy to think that direct mail doesn’t work because everyone’s using the internet to find out where they’re going and what they’re buying. But that’s actually a reason direct mail could be beneficial. Potential customers can be overwhelmed by all the information they find online and don’t know where to turn. You’ve got that person’s mailbox, sometimes to yourself, and you can use technology as a facilitator to help connect with potential customers in a direct way.

So it’s important to remember that technology is your friend. Implement tiny aspects of it to create a personal touch and avoid bombarding potential customers with emails and push notifications.

The internet is a technological marvel, but everyone uses it. Seeing an ad on the internet is like looking at the night sky and picking out a favorite star. They all look the same after a while. But that’s where direct mail — if you use it properly — can separate your business from the crowd … especially when you’re using technology to elevate the reach and impact of direct mail programs.

And, besides, as the saying goes: Everything old is new again!

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