

Why Direct Mail Still Works In A Digital World



Forbes — As businesses adapt to consumer shopping habits in the post-pandemic world, it's important to evolve your direct mail marketing strategy to stay relevant and ensure your direct mail list converts.

Last year saw the rise of teleconferencing, remote working, binge-watching and grocery delivery across the globe. Even before the pandemic hit, the average American worker spent five hours per day on email, according to an Adobe study. While the rollout of the vaccine and dropping Covid-19 numbers are fueling consumer confidence, many Americans expect to continue to telework, and at least 26.7% of the workforce will be fully remote by the end of 2021, according to an Upwork survey of more than 1,000 hiring managers and chief executives. By 2025, 36.2 million Americans will be working remotely, an increase of 16.8 million people from pre-pandemic rates.

As our digital footprint hits overdrive and Zoom fatigue kicks in, Americans are craving experiences outside of their computer screens. Email inboxes are

overflowing, and people are growing numb to online ads. Direct mail marketing continues to deliver a personal and tangible alternative for customers suffering from screen overload, which will be more important than ever as the country slowly returns to normal. It allows small businesses to reach customers in their community at home, where they spend their time, providing a physical touchpoint of their message.

As technology continues to innovate, direct mail marketing is evolving to provide businesses with real-time marketing analytics to help improve targeting and cut marketing costs. Direct mail can also include unique codes or barcodes to track individual responses to your mailings.

Combine Accurate Direct Mail Lists With Technology Enhancements

Small businesses can leverage their direct mail lists by taking advantage of digital enhancements. The USPS developed a unique feature for your direct mail postcard. Informed Delivery allows residents to **get a copy** of their direct mail piece in their email inbox before it arrives in their physical mailbox. Marketers can capitalize on this trend by including unique links in the message or videos about the deal. Voice activation technology allows businesses to use their smart speakers, like Amazon Alexa and Google Assistant, to respond to advertising offers.

Focus On Sensory Experience

Direct mail marketing allows businesses to focus on the sensory experience of their customers. Sensory marketing plays a major role in buying decisions, as it can help strengthen B2C connections. Both vision and touch are key senses that influence product perception, according to a **report** by IE University in Spain. Your direct mail marketing message can stand out and engage customers by offering an offline sensory experience in our increasingly digital world. Direct mail messages can further stand out by including increased personalization and physical touches like foiling, embossing and even scent.

For example, my company provides an enhanced sensory experience for new residents in the community. We send an upscale, ribbed texture **welcome package** filled with oversized colorful proven offers from local businesses. Our businesses appreciate the high-quality design, and new movers receive a tangible offer giving them the opportunity to engage with new brands.

Stumbling Blocks To Direct Mail Marketing

While it's clear direct mail is an important tool in your marketing arsenal, it's important to remember that it's not foolproof. Still, the high return on investment that a direct mail marketing campaign can bring makes these stumbling blocks worth conquering. Here are some of the most common hurdles businesses encounter and how to fix them:

- **Frequency.** Determining the frequency of mailings is difficult to attain. Send out a postcard too often, and customers will cast them aside. Splitting up your list and sending postcards at different frequencies can help ensure you avoid saturation and find that sweet spot. Sending to a new, niche audience each time can also help with this.
- **Up-to-date lists.** It's also important to keep your mailing lists up to date. USPS can validate the addresses in your database to make sure they're current. Routinely doing a database validation can help make your campaign more effective and could increase returns. If you're working with a company that provides a mailing list, check with it to determine list accuracy.
- **Going over budget.** Make sure your direct mail marketing campaign generates results. Overspending your marketing budget isn't an option. Many providers offer apps to track the success of your campaign while also providing detailed demographic data to help streamline your next mailing.

As Americans continue to weather the pandemic, reaching them at home with direct mail marketing can provide a solid return on investment for your business and a welcome respite from the digital overload.

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