

Top 7 Tips for Direct Marketing Success

It's no secret that digital advertising has become a crowded landscape making it harder for brands to cut through the clutter and reach consumers. Overcrowded inboxes and fleeting digital ads have brands investing more in their direct mail channel to reach customers and prospects more memorably. Recent studies by SmallBizGenius showed that more than 50% of direct mail recipients read the mail they get and spend 28% more money than people who don't get that same piece of direct mail.

While adding direct mail to your marketing mix can feel daunting, there is a proven, data-driven strategy to reach the right prospects with the highest propensity to convert. The direct marketing experts at Path2Response know this and know how to build the best-performing audiences based on actual buyer behavior. Here are the seven tips on how to get the highest return on ad spend (ROAS) from your direct marketing.

#1 Use buyer behavior to build your target audience. To get the most out of your direct mail campaigns, leverage purchase behavior from over 120MM US households. Advanced machine learning modeling identifies the best prospects for your direct mail campaign. Millions of purchases and online intent signals create non-intuitive correlations to identify a target audience with the highest propensity to convert, resulting in increased revenue.



This is easier said than done, given the fact that customer data is most often an organization's most valuable asset. However, there are a few cooperative databases that offer a give and take opportunity to leverage first and second-party data for mutual benefit in a non-competitive, privacy compliant way. The importance of using quality data sources increases with the price you pay per ad impression.

Therefore, for direct mail campaigns are highly dependent on this approach due to the high relative production and postage costs.



#2 Identify your ideal seed audience for the model.

This advanced modeling process begins with a seed audience of customers or hand-raisers; depending on your key performance indicators (KPIs), you may want to use a recent customer file or prospects who completed a form fill, or even website visitors. This 'responder' file is used to build the model and find spend-a-like audiences that would most likely behave the same as your original seed audience.

#3 Personalize your message. Use personalization to make your messages more relevant and engaging. Use data-driven insights to segment your audience based on their interests and create personalized offers that appeal to their shopping patterns. Data accuracy is mission-critical here, to protect your brand and create dynamic messaging that truly reflects one-to-one marketing communications that set you apart.



#4 Create a clear call-to-action (CTA). Make sure your message has a clear CTA that tells your prospects what to do next. This action may include signing up for a free trial, making a purchase, or simply visiting your website. This is what makes direct marketing truly DIRECT, so make sure it is a compelling reason to act – and remember, you can test more than one!

Yes, I want my free guide mailed to me today!

#5 Measure your results. You can measure the effectiveness of your campaigns using metrics such as open rates, click-through rates, and conversion rates. However, a common mistake is leaning on the wrong definition of success, and this stumbling block is most often encountered with digital advertising. Email opens and clicks may be nothing more than automated processes applied to safeguard users or company networks. Banner clicks and Google Analytics sessions may show signs of engagement, but true engagement that matters most is when users respond with interest and not just accidental clicks.

Among the most reliable attribution methods is a customer match back process, where you compare the initial audience to actual sales on an individual or household name and address basis. You can use this information to refine your target audience and create new 'responder' lists for even higher converting direct mail initiatives.



#6 Test and optimize. Test different variations of your creative assets, messaging and offers to see what works best. Despite your best intentions and what may 'feel right', always let the data drive these optimizations to for better results. Successful and experienced direct marketers don't rely on their gut instincts. A sample size of one (n=1) is unreliable at best.

#7 Nurture to close. Follow up with your leads to nurture the relationship and keep them engaged. Action items here may include sending follow-up mail pieces, appending and sending opt-in email, activating digital retargeting ads or even making phone calls. The goal is to keep your brand top of mind and build trust with your prospects.

