



14 Direct Mail Tips that Will Improve Your Mail and Save Money

By Greg Kathol ~ Marketing Director

1. Target your mail by segmenting your list: Target to a specific audience. Compiled lists can work very well. Income based lists can also be a good way to go. There are lists based on credit history and/or home value. The available demographics are almost endless. Selecting prospects this way can be costlier, but it will insure your offer is being made to qualified leads.

Saturation lists are the least expensive. They can be especially beneficial to small local businesses or churches. Postage for saturation mail can be as low as .137 per piece.

Why not combine the idea of an income based list and a saturation list, i.e., let us obtain the *median* income for various neighborhoods – and then purchase the saturation list for the incomes that appeal to your offer.

2. Some experts say consumers need to be contacted at least three times in order to notice marketing. The price tag is the same if you mail 25,000 pieces to 25,000 consumers or send five pieces over five weeks to 5,000 targeted consumers.

3. Marketing 101 - The best source of new business: The best source of new business is your current customer list. Are your current customers satisfied? You don't know?

4. Bottom Line - Direct mail is effective: Direct Mail Marketing is still the most cost effective way to keep in touch with your customers – second only to a direct face to face or phone contact.

5. Self-mailers vs. envelopes with inserts: Look at your envelope package. Can the inserts be combined and presented as a self-mailer?

6. Save Dollars with Design: 1. Design self-mailers with the fold on the bottom to allow for the use of only one tab. 2. Use white tabs when possible. 3. Pre-printing the indicia will save processing costs by eliminating the need for metering or stamps.

7. Did You Know: You can avoid tabbing carrier routed letter size mail by paying flat rate postage. (The additional postage minus the cost of tabbing equals about one penny each)

8. Letter Size vs. Flat Size: The post office refers to letter size mail as any piece measuring 6-1/8" x 11-1/2" or smaller. It must also be less than 1/4" thick and standard mail must weight less than 3.3 ounces. Pieces larger than letter size are called flat size. Companies often mail flat size without any apparent benefits. Letter size mail can give you an average postage savings of \$50/m. Add that to the reduced cost of printing and processing.

9. Automation compatible mail pieces: Be sure your mail is automation compatible during the design phase. Since compatibility rules vary for the different types of mailers, check your design with ADMSI before printing.

10. Drop Shipments: If you are mailing large volumes of standard mail into specific national geographical areas, or smaller quantities into local geographical areas, drop shipping to a post office in that area will reduce postage costs. ADMSI routinely checks our customers' mailing lists and makes this recommendation when it's beneficial.

11. Keep your list clean – and go green at the same time: 1. Remove duplicates. 2. National Change of Address (NCOA) is now required for all mail. However, there are always good addresses that are in question and if mailed will incur additional postage. Ask to have these addresses returned to you and update them before your next mailing. Green Lists will save dollars in printing, processing, and postage. All of these also help save the environment.

12. Paper weight: This is particularly important when mailing 1st class. You want to keep 1st class mail under one ounce. Cards must be a minimum of .009 and paper self mailers won't stand up to the hazards of mail processing if their weight is under 24#.

13. Paper coating: Varnishes and some aqueous coatings are not inkjet compatible. Check with your service rep before printing.

14. Consider Size: Post cards have become a staple of direct mail because they are economical and efficient. Chances are your cards could work a lot harder with just a little more effort: Print a larger size card. Don't let them hide between the #10 envelopes or circulars in mailboxes. Printing costs may be slightly higher but with current printing technology, the cost will be almost insignificant compared to the gain. Try 5.5x8.5 – or go all the way up to 6-1/8" x 11-1/2".

15. Creativity: Who doesn't need more space? There are many ways to utilize white space without cramming it full. Try a photo, bold your headlines, add a coupon, or a free offer. If full-color isn't in your budget try black ink on colored stock. Or use 1 color with screens to make it more interesting.