

# THE RECIPE FOR A GREAT DIRECT MAIL CAMPAIGN

## *Five Ingredients Every Mailer Needs to Succeed*

**Whether you're trying direct mail for the first time, or looking to improve your ongoing response rates, here are five ingredients InfoUSA recommends you make sure to have in the mix:**

### ① **A targeted, up-to-date mailing list.**

A great mailing list is the main factor in the success of any direct mail campaign. If your target audience is off the mark, even the best of mailers will receive little to no response. Research the demographics of your current customers and then develop a prospect list based on those characteristics.

Be sure to update your list regularly and continually mail to fresh prospects. If your contact data is out of date or lacks new prospects, it will be very difficult to discern whether a particular mailing was successful.

Be flexible and open minded in terms of what you're learning from each mailing, and build upon it for the next phase of your campaign.

### ② **A succinct, relevant headline.**

You only have a few seconds to get the attention of your readers. If possible, use words that paint a vivid picture – but a headline that is relevant to your target audience will always attract more potential customers than a flashy or clever headline.

### ③ **An offer that's valuable and easy.**

Offers come in all shapes and sizes – a discount, a free trial or coupons are just a few examples, but don't limit your imagination. Strive to provide real value with your promotion, as a way of rewarding the prospect's time and energy in trying out your company.

Remove as much risk as possible and don't require too much heavy-lifting. The first sale asks the most of your new customer, so carry whatever weight you can to guide them through the process.

Not surprisingly, consumers are generally interested in coupons and special discounts. According to an article in *DM News*, as many as 94% of consumers say they take action

on promotional offers and coupons they receive in the mail.

#### ④ A clear call to action.

Make it easy to do business with you. Lay out exactly what your prospect can do to accept the offer. Would you like them to call you, visit your website, fill out an enclosed response form, or send you an email? Put your call to action in multiple places throughout the mailer so there's no confusion about how to get started when they do decide to act.

#### ⑤ A follow-up mailing.

In today's busy world, your prospects will miss your message two out of every three times you mail it, on average. So repetition is crucial – the more they see your message, the likelier they are to take action on it. For the highest overall response rates, mail three to four different times to each prospect.

At the very least, follow up your initial mailing with a phone call, an email, or a second mailer within two weeks. People frequently intend to take action, but often get sidetracked and require a friendly reminder at a later date.

### MIXING INSTRUCTIONS: TEST, TEST, AND TEST AGAIN.

Many variables can affect the response to your mailing – the list, the offer, the price, the headline etc. Once you create a mailer that brings in a good response, you can send it over and over again to fresh lists of prospects.

Or you can choose to change one of the variables now and then, to see if the new version performs even better.

If the new mailer gets a better response than the first, you now have what is known as a “control” piece in direct marketing. And that's time to celebrate, because you now have a scientific way of improving your response over time.

Many of the blockbuster campaigns throughout direct mail history began as humble mailers that received a mild response on their first run. But with continued variations and improvements, they became big winners over time.

That's the promise of direct mail – you can always try, try again, and build upon your findings from each mailing to the next. Then one day you'll walk into your office to find a surprisingly long list of orders waiting to be filled.

And best of all, you'll know exactly how those orders came in, so you can repeat the formula again and again, whenever your business is ready for new growth.

## A WORD ABOUT INFOUSA

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