

# Whitepaper



## Direct Mail – Benefits and Practices



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# Executive Summary

Did you know that 98% of consumers bring in their mail the day it is delivered and 77% sort through it immediately after receiving it? With the rise and ease of email marketing and social media, the amount of Direct Mail pieces has decreased in people's mailboxes? Thus, direct mail has become a type of novelty, which allows your marketing message to stand out more.

## How can you increase the benefits of Direct Mail?

**Add a personal touch.** According to the United States Postal Service, 55% of consumers look forward to discovering the mail they receive. This opens up a great opportunity for you to personalize your message by addressing your customer's name and/or company and appealing to their interests. The best part about this is that you can fully automate this process with mail merge tools through services such as Swiftpage Direct Mail.

**Target it to smaller groups.** When putting together a Direct Mail piece you want to make sure you are sending a targeted message to a qualified group of individuals that will likely produce a higher response rate.

**Take advantage of the endless possibilities.** Not only do you have freedom in your postcard design, but you have endless possibilities to extend special offers and promotions through it.

**Increase its tangible value.** What makes Direct Mail so remarkable is the fact that you can place your message directly in your contacts hands. It is something that can stick around and act as a reminder to the recipient to take action.

**Track its success.** Every Direct Mail piece should have a call-to-action should always have a next step. The next step will most likely lead to a [landing page](#) that will encourage the participant to sign up for an event, purchase an item, start a free trial, download a report, and more. Through the landing page you will be able to see how many people took action. By tracking those results you are better equipped to analyze what's working and where you can make changes to ensure the greatest response rate.

The benefits of Direct Mail extend beyond what is mentioned above. The intention of this white paper is to dig deeper and provide practical examples to you to increase your Direct Mail campaign's effectiveness.

We hope this information is helpful to you and your business. Feel free to contact us with any questions at (877) 228-8377 or at [support@swiftpage.com](mailto:support@swiftpage.com).

# Step One: Lay Out a Framework

Laying out a basic framework for a direct mail campaign will give you a better grasp on creating compelling content and design, focusing your intentions and setting realistic expectations for your results. Before you send your Direct Mail piece there a few questions you need to answer.

1. **Who is your target audience?** Being able to write content focused on the needs of your readers is crucial to the campaign's effectiveness. Knowing who your audience is will also help you better answer the questions below which in turn will improve your message.
2. **Where will you find your audience?** You can save time and money by marketing to the right people. Start by researching your current customers to get an idea of why they use your product/service. Take that information and apply it to potential customers. Will they have the same positive reaction?
3. **How will my customers benefit from this product/service?** The keyword in this question is "benefit." Your recipients will want to know what is in it for them. It will be easier for you to state feature by feature what your product/service can do, but that may not provoke action. You need to step away from your product and figure out what value it has to offer to your customer.
4. **How does my product/service compare to its competition?** In other words, what makes you different from everyone else? Why would someone choose you over another similar product/service? Again, make sure to put this in terms of benefits rather than features. Maybe that could be a reason you are different – your ability to appeal to customer's needs...
5. **What action should take place after the customer reads the Direct Mail piece?** The call to action is the single most important part of a direct mail campaign. Will your reader know exactly what to do after reading it? The bigger question is, will they be compelled to do so?
6. **How will you measure the success of your offer?** Determine how you will track the results of your campaign and follow up and adjust future campaigns accordingly. One way you can track success is by monitoring how many inquiries you receive and then analyzing your survey results.

Direct Mail can help you save money and reduce your environmental impact when you take the time to determine your best prospects. There is no need to send a direct mail piece to those who simply won't be interested. By answering the questions above, your marketing message will have a greater appeal to your recipients and further extend your business objectives, increasing the chances that your audience will act on your offer.

## Consider this...

- Determine your audience through a survey profiling your customer trends and demographics.
- Provoke excitement and create a sense of urgency to take action through your message.
- Focus your call to action on your recipient; such as existing customers who you'd like to see again, potential customers who are interested in your product/service, a whole new market to tap into and many more.
- Answer, "How will these recipients reply to my offer?" You can invite them into your store, provide a coupon or rewards towards your product/service, a phone number or email address they can reply to, and or a landing page where they can take action and will further extend the offer.

## Step Two: Build a Mailing List

An effective mailing list is more than just contact information. The list should also profile the buying behaviors of your contacts so that you can personalize offers and increase the chance of action.

### Let us count the ways to build a mailing list:

**Through your Website.** Create a landing page with a survey that allows people to ask for more information about the company's products or services. Ask for their name, company, address and a few profiling questions including the size of their company and industry. You can create a [landing page](#) within the Swiftpage Editor.

**Network. Network. Network.** Collect leads at a networking event and enter them into your CRM database. One way to do this is by putting an offer on the back of your business card to sign up for your newsletter or direct mail campaigns.

**Incentivize customers to refer you.** Send an email blast to your current customers with an incentive if they refer you. Include a form in the email that allows the customer to enter contact information for the new person they are referring.

**Purchase a mailing list.** Purchase a list from a list provider (i.e. Hoovers) with demographics that you are interested in. Import the purchased list into your database and utilize the direct mail stage of Swiftpage's Drip Marketing to send your target audience a compelling offer.

**Advertise.** Place an ad that drives people to your website or product-specific landing page to capture lead information using a survey form.

**Review your database.** A Direct Mail campaign that you can execute is one to garner missing contact information. Are you missing email addresses or phone numbers of some of your contacts. Put together a direct mail campaign that will gain this information. Offer recipients an incentive, such as a white paper, and have them fill in their information, especially the information that is missing.

#### Consider this...

According to AmazingMail, personalizing your Direct Mail can lift your response rates by 30-50%. Personalize your campaign by including the recipient's name or referring to their company. You can also customize the imagery and messaging to be as relevant as possible.

**Request tradeshow attendee lists.** One of the incentives to attending a tradeshow is the attendee list that you receive at the end. Review this list and qualify key contacts to follow up with a Direct Mail campaign. You can even offer a special promotion tied to the tradeshow highlights. Make sure to associate yourself with the tradeshow so that the recipients will know how they know you.

**Group your contacts.** As your list grows, you may want to consider investing in some sort of list manager that can segment your list into targeted groups and track your contact's interactions with your marketing campaigns, revealing the performance of each one. (See [site index](#)).

## Step Three: Create Your Mail Piece

You have built your mailing list and have profiled your target audience. It is now time to create your mail piece. What is the greatest benefit your contacts can receive from your products/services? Center your message around your product/service's value and produce an enticing design layout with relevant images and content.

### Let's get started.

#### Select a format

Choose the size, shape and layout of your mail piece. Through Swiftpage's Direct Mail service you can send postcards at these sizes: 4.25" x 6", 5.5" x 8.5" and 5.5" x 11." The format you choose should depend on the type of information you want to present.

Ask yourself these questions:

- What is the purpose of this direct mail campaign?
- What is the take away?
- What is my offer?
- How much space do I need for my message?
- What design principles can I use to make my campaign memorable?

Once you have answered these questions, decide which format best meets your needs. Hint: the best format is one that allows you to say and show exactly what you intend to, nothing more and nothing less.

Because postcards are able to give your message immediate attention, they may have a greater chance of increasing your return on investment. Your message is not hidden behind an envelope that may not get opened. If your postcard is designed well and relevant to your recipient it has the potential of ending up on a refrigerator or cubicle wall. Plus, you save a few bucks with the reduced postage rates offered.

#### Write your message

Your message needs to tell your story and highlight the benefits your product/service offers to your target audience. There are so many ways in which you can present this message. You need to write content that is relevant and actively engages the specific contacts receiving your postcard.

#### How do you create enticing copy?

1. Establish who your audience is and verify what they expect to get out of your campaign.
2. Write in second person. A conversational style will add another personal touch to your message.
3. Remember benefits win out against features. The recipient wants to know what is in it for him/her. An eye-catching way to present benefits is by using bullet points. Typically 3 bullet points are easy to

#### Consider this...

Postcards give your message immediate attention to:

- Announce new products/services
- Easily extend special offers and/or coupons
- Send a quick thank you note for recent purchases
- Invite contacts to an upcoming event
- Drive traffic to your website
- Gather survey data

remember, but if you want to add more make sure to keep it an odd number. People have the tendency to remember odd numbers more than even.

4. Instill a sense of urgency within the message to encourage action. Add an expiration date to your offer or make your offer seem exclusive.
5. Appeal to the readers emotions. People are more likely to buy on emotion, over logic. Stimulate their senses with bold headlines and big statements. Use words like Free, Discount, Brand New, Sale, Exclusive, Big Savings, etc... Take a look at newspaper headlines to see what words they use to draw you into the story. Do the same with your copy.
6. Use short, tight sentences.
7. Make sure your offer stands out and contains a clear call to action.
8. Read your message out loud so you can hear how it will sound to the recipient.
9. Proofread. Proofread. Proofread.

### Create a Call-to-Action

Why would you spend valuable dollars on a Direct Mail campaign if you do not provide an irresistible offer to its recipients? When putting together an offer consider these elements AmazingMail mentions...

As a rule:

- Dollars-off will outperform percent-off (i.e. \$10 off a \$100 order should beat 10% off...this holds true until around 50% off, then switches around)
- Buy One Get One should outperform ½ off...and is better for maintaining revenue
- ½ off the second item usually outperforms 25% off the order
- Buy 2 get 1 free should outperform 33% off

Once you have a valuable offer to extend, you need to execute a proper call-to-action. A call-to-action lets the reader know the who, what, where, how and when of your offer. Without a call-to-action, your direct mail piece is just a piece of paper and your offer is merely words. Make sure you make it explicitly clear. Use graphics to highlight it and make sure all of your content points to it. According to AmazingMail, you should call for action at least 3 times in a single direct mail piece.

Remember to include your contact information as part of the call-to-action. Make it clear how they can contact you and even offer a few different methods to appeal to their preferences.

### Consider this...

Use these call to action examples:

- Call Today! (insert phone number)
- Enter to Win (insert url)
- Limited time only – Sign up now!
- Limited space available – Register Today!
- Start your Free Trial today!

## Create Your Design

You have worked hard putting together each element of your direct mail piece. Design is the final touch to tie each element into a successful visual message that engages and entices your readers to take action.

This step may seem a little intimidating if you do not have any design experience, or a creative bone in your body. Good luck for you, there are many sources (see site index) on the internet to learn good design practices and there are simple enough programs out there that provide you with all the design tools you need. You can also consider outsourcing your design work with a company like Bright Peak (the creative division of Swiftpage) to do the work for you.

### Here are some tips to get you started:

- Clean and simple design outweighs big, bold, colorful and cluttered. Utilize whitespace to your advantage. It will make your message pop.
- Don't let the elements of your message compete with one another. Pick one relevant feature to dominate the postcard.
- Make sure your logo is prominent.
- Do not go crazy with fonts. Simple is always better.
- Make your headlines stick out with bolder type and size.
- If you use images, make sure they are relevant to your message and to your reader. Do not merely show a picture of your product, rather show a picture of what your product can do for the reader. For example, if you sell cookies don't use a picture of a cookie. Use a picture of someone eating a cookie in absolute delight. You have now created a mood associated with your product.
- Use bullet points to break up your message and highlight key points.
- Again, make sure your call-to-action is easy to find and to act upon.

### Consider this...

Where can I find images to use?

- Free stock photo websites
  - Istockphoto.com
  - Photolibrary.com
- Take your own pictures
- Create your own graphics

Side note: Studies have shown that using photographs of humans, particularly faces is a very positive marketing strategy, due to the fact that people naturally notice human eyes and are drawn to look at them.

### Print it

Through Swiftpage's Direct Mail services you can print directly through us and our partnership with AmazingMail. You send us your design and mailing list and we ensure high quality printing and successful delivery.

We have broken our pricing down in three packages: First Class Mail, Standard Mail and Non Profit discounts.

## Swiftpage Direct Mail Pricing:



### First Class Mail

	4.25" x 6" Postcard	5.5" x 8.5" Postcard	5.5" x 11" Postcard
1 to 49	\$1.00	\$1.29	\$1.49
50 to 199	\$0.89	\$1.19	\$1.39
200 to 999	\$0.79	\$1.09	\$1.29
1,000 to 9,999	\$0.69	\$0.99	\$1.19
10,000 to 49,999	\$0.59	\$0.89	\$1.09
50,000 plus	\$0.55	\$0.85	\$1.05

If getting your mail there fast is your top priority, use First-Class Mail postage rates. They are the same regardless of how far the mail travels, include forwarding and return services, and are generally delivered in 3-5 days nationally.



### Standard/Bulk Mail

	4.25" x 6" Postcard	5.5" x 8.5" Postcard	5.5" x 11" Postcard
1 to 49	N/A	N/A	N/A
50 to 199	N/A	N/A	N/A
200 to 999	N/A	\$0.97	\$1.22
1,000 to 9,999	N/A	\$0.87	\$1.12
10,000 to 49,999	N/A	\$0.77	\$1.02
50,000 plus	N/A	\$0.73	\$0.98

A great alternative if you are mailing 200 or more postcards. It offers lower postage rates however delivery times can be as much as 10-14 days. Standard Mail postage does not include forwarding and return services.



### Non-profit

	4.25" x 6" Postcard	5.5" x 8.5" Postcard	5.5" x 11" Postcard
1 to 49	N/A	N/A	N/A
50 to 199	N/A	N/A	N/A
200 to 999	\$0.72	\$0.87	\$1.12
1,000 to 9,999	\$0.62	\$0.77	\$1.02
10,000 to 49,999	\$0.52	\$0.67	\$0.92
50,000 plus	\$0.48	\$0.63	\$0.88

Organizations recognized by the IRS as being "non-profit" may qualify for reduced postage rates in the Standard Mail class. AmazingMail can mail at these discounted rates provided you have received authorization from the US Post Office and your paperwork is on file them prior to mailing.

## About Swiftpage

Swiftpage is a subsidiary of Summit 5, a software development company whose founders have a passion for changing the way people communicate. We work hard every single day to provide thousands of companies with a way to create, send and track their email campaigns. Swiftpage is also the first server-based email management system to be fully integrated into ACT! by Sage, the leading contact management system in the world.

Swiftpage provides you with the tools to construct professional email templates. It gives you the ability to track your email campaigns and provides you with valuable information when contacting your clients. Swiftpage gives you the power to send emails without the fear of being blacklisted, as we maintain key relationships with Internet Service Providers.

Swiftpage stands out from its competitors through its full integrations with ACT! by Sage, Sage SalesLogix, SageCRM and Microsoft Excel as well as its recently release free-standing automated marketing solution, Swiftpage Connect. Customers can spend their valuable time managing their existing database instead of maintaining the same list in two different locations. Swiftpage believes our customers should not have to change the way they do business, so we bring the sales and marketing solutions directly to them in their own environment. Whether sending email to database contacts, updating contact information from survey results, adding contacts to automated marketing campaigns, or receiving ranked lists of the most interested contacts, Swiftpage brings the tools to them. Our main goal is to make our users' email marketing solutions simple and easy. Swiftpage exists to help you do the important work of communicating with your contacts.

# Site Index

- Swiftpage's Direct Mail Services - <http://swiftpage.com/DirectMail/index.htm>
- Swiftpage Drip Marketing - <http://swiftpage.com/automate-your-business/drip-marketing.htm>
- AmazingMail - <http://amazingmail.com/default.aspx>
- United States Postal Service - <http://www.usps.com/>
- List Purchasing Company - Hoovers - <http://www.hoovers.com>
- Color Palate Tool - <http://kuler.adobe.com/>
- Contact Management Programs:
  - ACT! by Sage - <http://www.act.com/>
  - Sage Saleslogix - <http://www.sagesaleslogix.com/>
  - Sage CRM - <https://www.sagecrm.com/>
  - Swiftpage Connect - <http://swiftpage.com/reach-your-contacts/swiftpage-connect.htm>
- Free Stock Photos Sites:
  - <http://www.istockphotos.com>
  - <http://freestockphotos.com/>
  - <http://www.sxc.hu/>
  - <http://www.photolibrary.com>