

Direct Mail Marketing

A type of direct marketing that's delivered physically to a prospect's mailbox through the United States Postal Service or other delivery service. Postcards, flyers, and catalogs are common examples. Email marketing is the digital equivalent.

These days, the marketing world is largely digital. But when done right, direct mail marketing can work with your other channels and make your business stand out.

What is direct mail marketing?

Direct mail marketing is any physical correspondence you send to customers in the hopes of getting them to patronize your business.

All that your direct mailers need to have is something identifying you or your business, a **call to action (CTA)**, and a way for your customers to contact you. The rest is up to you. Get as creative—or as minimal—as you like.

Why does direct mail marketing still work?

On his blog, Neil Patel, an entrepreneur, marketer, and best-selling author, wrote about recent research that investigated the median **return on investment (ROI)** per marketing medium. **One survey** showed that direct mail campaigns actually had a higher ROI than both paid search and online display ads. In fact, direct mail was only 1 percentage point behind social media, the second highest ROI medium.

Other recent results also showed that direct mail's response rate of 5.3% is higher than the 0.6% response rate for **email**. So why is direct mail, something considered by many to be on the decline, still so effective?

Direct mail is interactive.

Because customers physically handle mail and usually look at it before deciding whether to keep it, direct mail can help get more eyes on your marketing. If you include a **promotional offer**, coupon, or a CTA that requires them to do something with the mailer such as bring it to a store or restaurant, your customers are more likely to keep it.

It's memorable.

Getting letters in the mail can evoke nostalgia about the times friends or family has sent you mail. If you'd like to spark a more emotional response in the recipient, consider adding a personalized touch like a handwritten note or signature. Small gestures like this can make your marketing more memorable.

It can have a bigger reach.

Direct mail can also reach a wider demographic than electronic advertising if your **target audience** is less likely to use **social media** or email. This form of marketing can turn some people into potential customers when all-electronic ads would have missed them completely.

It offers a lot of ways to get creative.

You can pair social media and digital content marketing with direct mail for a seamless customer journey.

A Utah-based marketing firm, for example, ran a holiday campaign in which they sent out a card and a \$20 bill while encouraging recipients to spend the money on a charitable donation. When people scanned the code on the back of the card, it brought up an explanatory YouTube video and gave them a hashtag they could use when posting about their contribution on social media. This increased people's awareness of their brand and emphasized the company's values to the public.

There are even more ways to **get creative with direct mail** because its tactile nature gives you the chance to engage more of your recipients' senses than digital marketing. Here are just a few examples of innovative marketing techniques from various companies:

A Brazilian gym gave out calendars to their customers with cutouts in the shape of a man and a woman. As they flipped back each month, the silhouettes of the people got slimmer, imitating the effect of consistently working out. To promote World Water Day, one marketing team sent out direct mailers with a message that only became visible when soaked in water. An Australian marketing firm sent out disassembled cardboard FM radios. The recipients who put them together were directed to tune the radio to a channel where they could hear an ad inviting them to join the national defense force.

There's not as much competition.

Companies are scaling back their physical marketing efforts in favor of **digital marketing**. Digital is the more environmentally friendly route, and it's also easier to start seeing results with digital.

But because not as many companies are operating in the direct mail space these days, it's easier to get noticed.

Remember that most people will at least skim through their mail before throwing it away, and a **colorful, creative piece of mail** has a much better chance of standing out in someone's mailbox than your website does on Google—at least in the beginning. People don't expect direct mail as much in the modern age, and they aren't subjected to the same distractions when looking through physical mail as they are when they're online.

Even if someone doesn't use your coupon or special offer right away, they might keep it, especially if it's something they need. They'll stick it on their fridge or a board and let it hang out. Then when they're looking for a new pair of pants or a deal on power tools, your company will be more likely to come to mind.

Dos and don'ts of direct mail

Now that you've seen the benefits of a direct mail campaign, you might be curious how to start one. We'll go through a few guidelines that could help you save you time, money, and energy.

Do: Define your audience.

Consider your product and who it would be best suited for, and focus your efforts there. While direct mail can have a great ROI and engagement rate, researching your target market can help you save money because it helps find where people who are most likely to be your customers live.

Do: Run tests first.

After you've defined your market and found neighborhoods to target, send out a few **test batches**. When sending out tests—or any mailers, for that matter—make sure you have a way to **track your customers' engagement**. This can be a coupon code unique to the mail campaign that's tracked online according to how many customers end up using it. It could also be a phone number to call or an email address set up only for that campaign. That way you can easily keep track of who is engaging with your marketing.

Do: Make sure you have a CTA.

The best, most eye-catching mailer delivered to the right people at the right time still needs a CTA. Think about what you want the customer to do and define that for them

in clear terms. That can include buying something, using a coupon code, donating to a charity, taking a survey, and more.

Don't: Forget to proofread your mailers.

Your mailer will be the first impression many people will get of your business, so it should be free of typos and grammatical errors. Make sure you or a colleague takes the time to double-check the copy and make sure it's clean.

Also, make sure it reads well. It should have a good flow and strike the tone you're hoping for, whether that's professional or conversational.

Don't: Forget to follow up.

Track how many people are responding to your mailers and note who they are so you can follow up with them later. This gives you a database of **engaged customers are more likely to be receptive to future marketing**. You can also use that information to send out a short message telling them you appreciate their patronage.

Don't: Forget to drive traffic to your online presence.

However valuable it is, direct mail probably won't be the bulk of your marketing efforts, and most of your business will probably take place online. Leverage that high response rate we mentioned earlier to get people active on your social platforms. That way they can follow your business and stay up to date without waiting for the next mailer.

You can also link your physical and digital marketing campaigns with scannable coupon codes, **hashtag** campaigns, or giveaways on your social channels.

A modern twist on a classic channel

Contrary to popular belief, direct mail is far from obsolete. Although it's one of the oldest forms of marketing, it's still effective in closing the gap between brands and customers. It's also a good way to stand out, so if you're looking to shake up your marketing efforts, give it a try.

Let's Get started with a fresh
Direct Mailer Campaign now!