

# W27

**Wednesday  
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## **8** tips on self-mailers from marketing consultant George Duncan

- A “self-mailer” is any format that does not require an outer envelope. An 11” x 17” flat folded in half to 8-1/2” x 11” is a common self-mailing format. So is the same size flat, folded in half once again to 5-1/2” x 8-1/2”.  
**Note:** The United States Postal Service requires self mailers to be sealed at least once by a wafer or glue device.
- Self-mailers are usually less costly to produce and mail than envelope mailings.  
**Caution:** Customers and prospects often perceive self-mailers as cheap—an image, says George Duncan, that you may not want your advertising to project.
- Self-mailers are “look-at” pieces, not “read carefully” advertising.  
**Recommendation:** If you need to communicate detailed or complicated information, you may be better off with a multi-unit mailing enclosed in an outer envelope.
- Direct mail hinges on a letter. The further away one goes from the look and feel of a letter, the more one risks reducing the mailing’s impact.  
**Idea:** Print a simulated letter on one panel of your self-mailers.

**“Keep away from those who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you believe that you too can become great.”**

—Mark Twain

- Self-mailers typically pull less than 1% response, while envelope packages generate response of between 1% and 5%.  
**Experiment:** Test your self-mailer against an envelope package with the same offer to determine which format is more cost-effective.
- Self-mailers do not include reply envelopes.  
**Penalty:** An offer that calls for payment will usually work less well in a self-mailing format than in a multi-unit package that includes a reply envelope.
- Self-mailers work best with impulse buys—books, seminars, conferences, periodicals.  
**Pricey Offers:** Some software companies, George Duncan observes, have used self-mailers successfully—mainly as lead-generation pieces.
- A self-mailer to a customer list can cross-sell, upsell, or produce aftermarket sales.  
**Boom!** The same offers by self-mailers to cold lists probably would bomb.

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