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from

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6 ways to increase responses to your direct mailings

Once you have developed a compelling offer and determined which lists to use, you can lift response to your mailing package—as much as 100%—by copy and graphics tweaks.

That's exactly where many mail advertisers come a cropper. They lack reliable information on the results of various creative techniques.

That's why publications like Alan Rosenspan's "101 Ways to Improve Your Response" are so important. Here are a few recommendations:

1. Use a headline on the outer envelope

Rosenspan points out that of the 71 all-time-successful mailing packages reviewed in the book, "Million Dollar Mailings," almost all carry a copy line on their outer envelopes.

2. Insert a gift in the package

AT&T increased response to one package by about 50%, Rosenspan says, by including an economical ballpoint pen in it.

3. Use a color envelope

The average American now receives 10 pieces of direct mail a day. Many or most of them arrive in white envelopes. Color, Rosenspan urges, will make your mail stand out.

4. Include a separate letter—and don't hesitate to use long copy

Ogilvy & Mather research shows that the letter is the most important unit in any mailer. "I believe it," Rosenspan says. "I have never seen a self-mailer beat a letter package."

"Technical glitches now stymie 25% of attempts to make online purchases."

—Anderson Consulting

Rosenspan recommends use of a Johnson Box—a headline area at the top of the letter. Research shows "that letters with a Johnson Box outpull the same letters without one by as much as 40%."

Don't be afraid of long letter copy, he urges. One thoroughly tested Ogilvy & Mather letter, he notes, "went to 13 pages before response started to fall off."

5. Make it easy for people to respond

Rosenspan advises that you include an 800 number boldly in the body and P.S. of your letter, in your brochure, and on your reply device—which should be personalized.

6. Use "Yes," "No," and "Maybe" boxes

"Yes" and "No" boxes involve mail recipients and generally improve response, Rosenspan says. He also successfully has used a "Maybe" box.

He feared that the "Maybe" box might cannibalize the people who otherwise would check "Yes." "It didn't," he reports. For every "Yes" reply, he received 40 incremental "Maybe" responses to follow up.

To receive your own copy of Alan Rosenspan's "101 Ways to Improve Your Response"—with 95 additional ways to generate more replies to your direct mailings—e-mail him at: arosenspan@aol.com

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