

# W4

**Wednesday  
Morning  
Fax  
from  
The  
Castle  
Press**

## **Latest figures from the Census Bureau show:**

- **Average U.S. credit-card debt = \$4,862**
- **Average auto and home-equity debt = \$39,088**
- **Average outstanding balance on home mortgage = \$28,919**

## **D Direct-mail advertising tops at building customer relationships**

A survey released June 27 of more than 350 U.S. households with annual incomes greater than \$35,000 indicates that direct mail—long known for efficiently pulling orders—also is better than other print or electronic media at establishing and strengthening lasting customer links.

The new study was sponsored by Pitney Bowes and conducted by the Peppers and Rogers consulting firm, which specializes in developing customer-focused business strategies. It shows:

- 34% of respondents reported that direct mail contributes most to establishing a relationship with them and keeping them informed and involved with a business.
  - Trailing were print advertising (30%)...television commercials...radio announcements (5%)...e-mail messages (4%)...Internet ads (2%)...and telemarketing calls (0%).
- Respondents said that direct mail is most effective at building customer relationships because it is familiar (95%)...convenient (94%)...interactive (93%)...universal (93%)...private (87%)... and personalized (84%)...about power tools.

The study showed that direct mail:

- Inspires action
  - A robust 22% of participants reported that they might buy an advertised product. More than that, however:
    - 45% of mailing recipients said that they would mention the advertiser to friends

- 44% said that they would phone the advertiser if they needed more information
- 43% would open a second mailing piece from the same company
- 39% would look up the advertiser on the Internet
- Is welcomed by the consumer
  - 82% of survey respondents enjoy their sense of control in choosing whether to open a direct mailing
  - 78% value direct mail's non-intrusive nature
  - 65% reported positive attitudes toward the security of mail transactions
  - 56% said that they feel involved with companies that continue to stay in touch with them by mail

Kevin Weiss, President, Customer Marketing, Pitney Bowes Global Mailing Systems commented, "While e-mail and the Internet are important communication and research tools, our report indicates that they are not perceived as valuable as direct mail in building and sustaining customer relationships."

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