

W12

Wednesday
Morning
Fax
from
The
Castle
Press

As stated in the June 5 Wednesday fax, the mailing list—the most important factor in determining the effectiveness of any direct mail campaign—should be tested carefully.

Test various offers

The second most influential factor in determining your success in direct mail is your offer—what you will give people for responding. Some tips:

- Make your offer as specific as possible
- Offer something enticing to your market
- Stress that your offer is risk-free
- Incorporate a “limited-time trial” or “money-back guarantee”
- Be clear about when recipients must respond. Do not pressure prospects with too short a deadline, but don’t leave it open-ended.

Generally, four to six weeks to respond works well.

- Know the difference between product features and benefits

Features are inherent to the product, while benefits relate the feature to a customer need.

- Tie your offer to your main benefit. For example, “Act now and save thousands of dollars on direct-mailing costs.”

Some offer elements worth testing include price points, quantity of volume discounts, the way you state your offer (e.g., “save 50 percent” versus “purchase for half price”), and the response method.

“Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other one thing.”

—Abraham Lincoln

Experiment with your mail package

- Begin with the outside of your package. The key is to “make your pitch before the door is slammed in your face,” as old-time salesmen used to urge.

The average person spends three to five seconds deciding whether to open your direct mail piece, so start selling immediately.

Test various package formats (e.g., postcard, letter, self-mailer, etc.) and the use of stamps versus indicia. Even the use of stamps with different designs could produce a noticeable lift in response.

- Test the inside of the mail package also:

- Use a strong lead. Recipients will likely scan the letter before deciding whether to read it.

State your offer at the beginning of your letter. Clarify what you want the recipient to do and why he or she should do it.

- Appeal to the recipient’s problems and promise to ease their stress.
- Back up your claims with guarantees and testimonials.
- Make it easy to respond. Close with a call to action and include a vehicle to do so (e.g. coupon, response card, 1-800 number, etc.).
- Test different letter styles, graphic elements, and techniques.

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