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from

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4 low-cost changes to existing mailings can boost response by up to 25%

To muscle-up their 2004 results, many advertisers are now developing brand-new mailing packages. Maybe that is not smart, says marketing consultant David R. Yale.

He suggests – before you take the costly gamble of creating and testing a whole new mailing – that four economical revisions to your current mailings could significantly better response:

■ **Test a new outer envelope only**

For the small cost of a press wash-up, Yale advises, you can print a new outer envelope to contain an unchanged control mailing – and tap into new market segments that otherwise did not respond to your offer.

He cites a new envelope that, using a foreign “stamp” as a peel-off involvement device, pulled 9.38% in response ... one “personally” from a celebrity that generated 12.6% in cash sales ... another that expanded a client’s customer list by 23%.

■ **Test changes to attention-catching elements of your control copy**

Test inexpensive copy tweaks to your control mailing’s Johnson box, headlines, subheads, call-outs, marginal notes, postscript, and order form, leaving other text unchanged.

Make sure to give your original copywriter first crack at making these edits. Only a writer who is a raving egomaniac will refuse. But asking him

As a rule, “you should not give much information about your offer on the outer envelope.”

—David R. Yale

or her to make changes will avoid hurt feelings. And most writers are alert to chances to improve results.

■ **Add a 2¢ lift note**

A lift note – so called because generations of direct marketers have discovered that the device lifts response – can raise a control mailing’s effectiveness by 25%, Yale says. A lift note:

- Presents a different viewpoint from the main mailing’s letter or folder. It gives you an extra chance to spur action by prospects whom the mailing otherwise do not inspire to act.
- Provides a brief, compelling, easy-to-read way to urge action.

A lift note, Yale cautions, should not be signed by the same person who signs your mailing’s main letter.

■ **Tack on an economical buckslip**

A buckslip can remind a reader that there may be other people in his family or organization who would benefit from the offer you are making – and urge the reader to pass your mailing on to them. It costs only a couple of pennies and adds to your mailing’s mileage.

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