

# W3

**The American public hates telemarketing even more than it hates France, low-flow toilets or "customer service."**

—Dave Barry

**Wednesday  
Morning**

**Fax**

*from*

**The  
Castle  
Press**

## **4** realities that limit mail response

David Stockmen, then President Reagan's young economics advisor, bad-mouthed direct-mail advertising because only 1% or fewer sales prospects acted on it.

Since, he has grown a few gray hairs – and may have learned that the 1% response he once lamented is much higher in fact than that of any other form of advertising.

Some astute marketers, for instance, budget for an average 0.0028% in replies from traceable space advertising.

Still, hope springs eternal. So a good many advertisers anticipate avalanches of replies to their mail or other kinds of advertising. And doom themselves to costly disappointment.

Columbus, Ohio, consultant Dean Rieck provides a sobering dose of reality in a recent issue of DM News.

"If you could watch people on the day your direct-mail piece arrives in their mailbox," he writes, "what do you think you would see? Awe and amazement? Cries of joy? Dancing and high-fiving?"

"Don't count on it," he says.

He cites four factors that limit response to your mail:

### ■ **Most people will not read it**

Only 20% of the individuals on the average mailing list, Rieck says, will even open the envelopes they receive from advertisers. Eight of 10 prospects simply chuck your mail into the trash.

### ■ **You have only seconds**

The one out of five recipients who even open your mailing glance at its headlines, offer statements, subheads, call-outs, the postscript – in 15 to 20 seconds.

About half of them decide they are not interested. Net audience: 10%.

### ■ **One detail can stop people cold**

Assuming that the remaining 10% of your original prospects don't tuck your mailing away (deadly!), or lose it, or forget about it, Rieck notes, they skim it for details.

About half of them hit an item that stops them, or do not find what they are looking for. Net net remaining prospects: 5%.

### ■ **Many still don't respond**

Even after they digest your carefully written copy and graphics, Rieck says, a quarter to (if you are really lucky) half of your remaining prospects actually respond to your offer.

Net net net result – maybe 1% to 2% of the people who receive your mailing actually respond to your offer.

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