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9 reasons direct mail continues to thrive

While many mass media advertising agencies — whose products rarely can be linked to sales — are struggling to turn a profit this year, direct mail continues to reach new high points.

Why? Veteran marketing man Denny Hatch writes that there are nine good reasons:

■ **Direct mail generates \$700 billion a year in sales.**

Without doubt, it is the most cost-efficient form of advertising.

■ **Every \$5.60 spent on mail advertising generates \$70 in sales**

That translates to an average return on investment of 8 to 1.

■ **Mail results are precisely measurable**

Mailers can track results down to tenths and hundreds of a percent.

By contrast, general advertising leaves marketers “without a clue as to its effectiveness.”

■ **The economics of direct mail demand discipline unknown to general advertising.**

At a cost of \$750 to \$1,000 a thousand prospects reached, Hatch remarks, “it does not take much direct mail sent to the wrong people or containing a poor offer to result in rivers of red ink.”

■ **Direct mail is the most affordable advertising medium for growing businesses**

Advertisers will invest a record \$56 billion in direct mail in 2007.

— Direct Marketing Association

■ **Printed direct mail** is the only economical way to talk to customers that

1. Reaches people where they work or live — and buy
2. Communicates with people who do not have Internet access
3. Avoids the clutter and irritation of spam
4. Is immune from the restrictions of national and state Do-Not-Call registries

■ **Mail is the only advertising medium** that can sell complex products or services that require careful consideration of their benefits before a purchase.

■ **Only mail allows the seller to stay in touch easily and affordably with customers**

■ **Direct mail closes sales** — unlike mass-media advertising, which only creates a favorable climate of opinion that may or may not produce a transaction.

Hatch agrees with the late copy king, Bill Jayme that junk mail should be called “junque mail.” And observes that without the income from direct-mail advertising the post office would need to charge \$5 to \$10 for every first-class stamp it sells.

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