

## Designing Direct Mailers

An easy way to spark ideas about the design of a direct marketing mail piece is to pay attention to the direct mail that you receive both at home and at the office. Save the pieces that you find extremely effective and extremely ineffective, then analyze them to see what made you react. Compare the pieces to determine what made you inclined to open or discard the mail piece.

- Were you drawn to (or put off by) the size, shape, color, and feel of the mail piece?
- Did teaser copy catch your eye or arouse your curiosity?
- Was the mail piece addressed in a way that made you curious to know who sent it?

- Was your eye drawn immediately to the marketer's message or offer? How was this done?
- Were the important points organized and presented in a clear, compelling manner? How was this accomplished?
- Did the mail piece ask for the order or a response in a way that moved you to take action?
- How long did you spend reading the mail piece?

Printing & Mailing Services can help you with the design of your direct mail piece. If you would like to discuss your ideas, call us at 581-3768 or 581-3765, to set up an appointment to review your direct mail samples and samples from our own portfolio.

## Planning a Self-Mailer

Self-mailers are a great way to cut printing costs—by eliminating envelopes and enclosures—and bulk mailing saves on postage, but rushed deadlines and last-minute planning can lead to headaches and unexpected costs that rapidly negate anticipated savings.

Printing & Mailing Services can help you plan ways to design affordable self-mailers that meet your goals and expectations. Our customer service representatives can help you select papers that make your mailing stand out and look great, and our graphic typesetter will work with you to design a mailer that is both eye-catching and United States Postal Service Automation-Compatible—saving on postage costs.

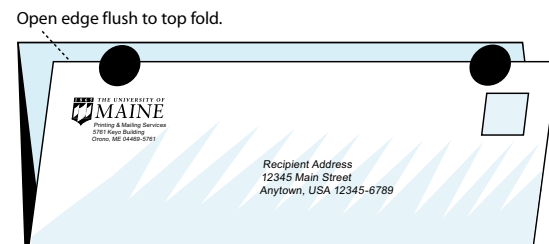
We can also help you plan and organize your Excel or tab-delimited address database for maximum compatibility with our SmartMailer™ software system. Once your design and database are complete, we can print, fold or stuff, tab, and address your mailing—First Class or bulk, from one to thousands of pieces—saving you time and your department the cost of labor.

Visit our Web site—[www.umaine.edu/printingservices](http://www.umaine.edu/printingservices)—for more information about our mail services or give us a call at 581-3768.

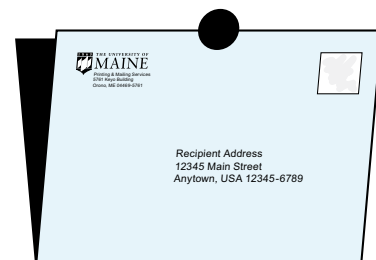
We're always happy to help!

Open Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

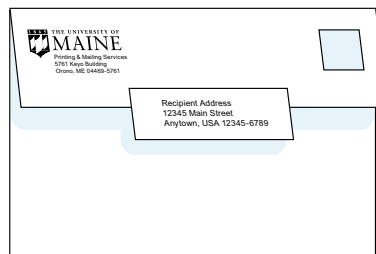
Printing & Mailing Services  
5761 Keyo Building, Orono, ME 04469-5761  
Telephone: 207/581-3768 or 207/581-3765  
Fax: 207/581-1321  
E-mail: [printing@umit.maine.edu](mailto:printing@umit.maine.edu)



Tri-fold self mailer. Open edge at top with two tabs.



Double postcard mailer. Open at top with one tab.



Invitation fold mailer. Tabbed with address label.



## Practical Tips for Direct Marketing Success

Direct marketing is an outreach to consumers, donors, or businesses that is designed to generate a response: a donation, a request for further information, or a visit to your Web site. Direct marketing is effective because it can be targeted at a specific audience; it arouses interest; and its results can be measured. When done properly, direct marketing creates a relationship with an existing or potential customer.

The word *direct* denotes that the marketing outreach is straight to the intended recipient, without the use of third party media such as newspaper, radio, or television advertising. Although some direct marketing outreach is in the form of door hangers, package inserts, broadcast FAX, telemarketing, or e-mail, the most prevalent means of reaching consumers or businesses is by using the mail.

### Using mail for direct marketing

Despite conventional wisdom, e-mail has not eliminated regular mail as the outreach method of choice for direct marketing. This is due largely to spamming—the indiscriminate use of unsolicited e-mail messages. Because spam is so intensely disliked, e-mail has become less desirable as a commercial advertising vehicle.

Mail, on the other hand, remains an effective way to reach a specific audience. The cost of a direct mail marketing campaign is borne by the company making the outreach, and the level of intrusiveness, when compared to telemarketing or e-mail, is minimal.

### Determining response rate

There are three elements that determine the response rate for direct mail marketing: the mail list, the offer, and the mail piece design. Overwhelmingly, the mail list is the most significant determinant of response. The best offer, persuasive copy, and compelling mail piece design mean little if sent to the wrong list! So, when planning a direct mail marketing campaign, put significant time and effort into compiling a good, targeted mail list.

### Characteristics of a good mail list

In general, there are two sources of mail lists: a house list and a compiled or managed list. A house list is something you pull together and in its most basic form is a list of your current, past, and inactive supporters—those who have donated or supported you in the past. A house list can also contain referrals, such as workshop or open house attendees, networking contacts, and leads gathered from other sources.

When compiling a house list, you become responsible for list maintenance, including list hygiene and move updates. List hygiene includes



tasks such as identifying and eliminating duplicates in the mail list; using standard abbreviations, and consistency during data entry; and maintaining the integrity of data entered in the fields of each record. Move update includes keeping track of when those on your list move, and taking appropriate action (i.e., entering the new address or removing the name from your list).

A compiled list is any that is created from different public sources such as phone books, directories, licensees, or courthouse records. Compiled lists often contain additional demographic information besides name and address, and so can be matched to a profile of your best customers.

continued on page 2

A managed list is compiled from limited and private sources like ticket sales, enrollment, alumni, or membership lists. These often require the approval of the list manager for use in a direct mail campaign.

#### The Offer

To be effective, the offer in a direct mail marketing piece must appeal to the recipient in a significant enough way to cause him or her to take action. Most recipients will be reading the mail piece while asking the question, "What's in it for me?" The offer must answer that question in a persuasive way. Typical offers include a discount, free gifts, a guarantee, a sale, a coupon, a gift certificate, a sweepstakes, or a drawing.

The offer should also include an urgent, compelling call to action. A call to action tells the recipient exactly what to do to respond—call a phone number, send in a reply card, go to a Web site. A call to action should include a sense of urgency—a device that limits response time so the recipient has an incentive to act immediately.

"Free to the first 100 callers," or "Offer expires in 10 days," are examples of ways to create urgency.

#### Mail piece design

The design of the direct mail marketing piece must get the attention of the recipient and visually clarify the message. Here are some tips for designing a mail piece:

- Select one visual element to dominate the mail piece. It could be a headline, a photograph, a graphic element, or even a block of type.
- Limit the use of typefaces to one or two. If using two, use one for headlines and one for body copy.

- Use white space to avoid clutter and confusion. Don't fill every space of the mail piece with text or graphics. Including too much information in the mail piece may confuse the recipient and cause him to stop reading.

- Make text easy to read. Select a typeface that is legible, and use a point size big enough for easy reading. Write so that the message is easily understood.
- Prominently display your logo and contact information. Make it easy for a motivated recipient to act!

#### Mail piece options

The options for direct mail marketing mail pieces are post cards, self-mailers, the traditional direct mail package, and other forms of mailers. Common uses for each type of mail piece are:

- Post cards: quick and easy to produce with a low-cost break even point, post cards are often used for announcements, date-based events, time-sensitive promotions, and sequential mailings.
- Self-mailers: offering more privacy for the message than a post card and still relatively easy to produce, self-mailers are used for newsletters, product flyers, and information pieces.
- Envelopes: information enclosed in an envelope, though the most expensive to produce, offers the most privacy; often used for fund-raising and membership campaigns, or other solicitations.

#### Successful direct mail

A simple formula for measuring the success of a direct mail marketing campaign is this: when the amount of money you received as a result of the campaign, less cost of the mailing and

the cost of fulfillment, is a positive number. When you are planning your next campaign, call us at Printing and Mailing Services and we'll give you additional tips for success.

### Mailing in Bulk

Printing & Mailing Services' automated Pitney Bowes mailing system can collate, fold, and stuff envelopes with up to six individual inserts for bulk mailings. We can also custom address a mailing using variable database information provided by the customer.

Databases must be submitted as Excel or tab-delimited files. When you select Printing Services to meet your mailing service needs, we provide up to 30 minutes of complimentary address database verification service.

Upon request, our staff will data check your Excel or tab-delimited file and run it through Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS) certification. In this process, your mailing list will be checked against the United States Postal Service Address Matching System to match addresses and 9-digit Delivery Point ZIP. Upon verification, corresponding barcodes will be added to your mailing. Only addresses with Delivery Point ZIP and barcodes are eligible for automation bulk mailing rates.

Upon request we will also check your database for duplicate addresses and return an error list to you, providing an opportunity for you to rectify problem files in your master database. For more information, please contact Customer Service at 581-3765.

## No Deforestation Required



The planet need not be deforested for you to get your message out!

Printing & Mailing Services offers a variety

of pH neutral and acid-free papers for Print on Demand, that contain 20% to 100% recycled or post-consumer fiber or are manufactured from alternative fibers. We also offer chlorine-free paper options and many Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified products including FSC 100%, FSC Recycled, and FSC Mixed Sources products.

Our house stock for black and white photocopies is International Paper *Report* Multipurpose 20# text, ultra bright white, made with fiber produced from a 100% sustainable eucalyptus forest. *Report* paper is pH neutral, Elemental Chlorine Free and is FSC Certified.

For black photocopies on colorful paper that give your flyers and direct-mail brochures "Pop" at a budget-

minded rate, we offer Wausau *Exact*® Multipurpose 20# and 60# text. Available in 25 colors, including Brite Hues, Wausau *Exact*® is manufactured with 30% post-consumer fiber and is *Green Seal*® approved. Offering a smooth surface, *Exact*® is not only acid free but is laser and ink jet guaranteed.

Wausau *Exact*® Index and Tag stock, containing 30% post-consumer fiber, is available in white, pastel, and bright hues and meets U.S. postal regulations for use as 9-point return postcard stock. Wausau *Exact*® Index and Tag stock can be used for direct mail postcards or folded self-mailers.

For 4-color promotional mailers, our house stock is Mohawk *Navajo*® 28# text and 60# cover to 180# double-cover. Acid free with an ultra smooth surface and high opacity, Mohawk *Navajo*® has 20% recycled fiber content.

*Carnival*® Vellum, available in 17 colors, also meets U.S. postal regulations for use as 9-point return postcard stock. It

contains a minimum of 50% recycled fiber and a minimum of 30% post-consumer fiber. *Carnival*® Vellum is also acid free for longterm stability.

For self-mailers that really stand out in a crowded mailbox, we carry the Fox River *Evergreen*® and *Crushed Leaf*® lines. Stocks from the *Evergreen*® 100 PC line offer 100% post-consumer fiber, while the *Evergreen*® 30PC and *Crushed Leaf*® lines feature 30% post-consumer fiber. All Fox River stock is Elemental Chlorine Free, FSC, and Rainforest Alliance Certified. *Crushed Leaf*® also offers a smooth finish flecked with eye-catching metallic sparkles that provide a warm, elegant, and colorful backdrop for any print job.

By making environmentally conscious choices when selecting papers for your direct mailing, you can be confident that your message reaches your intended audience in an affordable and socially responsible way. Contact Printing Services for more information and to see swatch books for the papers listed here.



### What is a good response to a mailing?



This is probably the most-asked direct mail marketing question, and the answer is: it depends. Does your mailing list target the right audience? Is the mail list clean and the data current? Is the offer hard (you're asking for money with the response) or soft (you will bill the respondent)? Are you asking for an order (direct sale) or inviting an inquiry (lead generation)? Does the mail piece get the attention of the reader and visually clarify the message?

In a January 2007 white paper, The Winterberry Group noted that the three key factors influencing consumer decisions in response to direct mail are timing, personalization, and relevance. For most mailings, a response rate of 1-2% is considered good. Keep this in mind when setting the budget for the direct mail marketing campaign. We suggest setting the budget so that a 1% response rate creates a breakeven mailing.

questions and answers