

A.M.

LetterLink

Your Resource for Direct Mail Marketing



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“Providing seamless direct mail solutions”

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- Quotes by Denny Hatch
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How to survive a down economy

An economic downturn provides exciting opportunities for a savvy direct marketer. Many of your competitors will be cutting marketing budgets. They'll decrease spending on traditional media and turn to less expensive methods. A true marketer will take advantage of these times.

A research study was taken by McGraw Hill after the 1980 recession. They found that the businesses who kept marketing during the recession averaged a 275% growth over the next five years. Needs and wants do not go away during a recession. Companies with top of mind awareness will win.

Where are the opportunities? Every dollar you spend needs to solidify your customer base and be able to take business from your competitors. The best opportunities lie in these four areas.

1. Nurture your best customers. Keep them happy. Provide value. Sell them additional services. Find prospects that look just like your best customers.
2. Target industry segments. Use success stories that show your proficiency for servicing an industry segment.
3. Look at other parts of the country. There are regions, states and cities that might be better off than your primary marketing area.
4. Market to smaller companies. Organizations with fewer employees can change quickly.

What do you change? Eliminate all non-selling advertising. The principals of direct marketing should be part of every ad, brochure, sales letter and communication you use for marketing. Follow the AIDA formula...Attention, Interest, Desire, Action, that includes a strong offer and multiple response methods.

Direct mail has grown during every recession. E-mail will continue to grow. The telephone can still be used for B2B prospects or for B2C customers. By combining all three marketing methods you'll stay ahead of competitors that have backed off.

Your recipe for success will be powerful 1-2-3 multi-channel promotions. Target your database segments with relevant direct mail, followed by e-mail, followed by a phone call.

How can you improve customer value? Find out what your customers value most about you. Sell that value proposition and incorporate it into every aspect of the business. This will help with customer retention which leads to referrals which leads to new customers and continued growth. Here are ways to promote value.

- Use case studies - Prospects see them as a testimonial and customers are reminded of the value you provide.
- Win awards – Industry awards and community service awards provide FREE public relations.

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DM News & Tips

New address placement for flats

The USPS is changing the requirements for delivery address placement on flat mail. Effective on 3/29/09 the address area will need to be in the upper portion of all Periodicals, Standard Mail, Bound Printed Matter, Library Mail and Media Mail that are prepared for automation, presorted and carrier route rates. The new standards define upper portion as the top half of a mailpiece when standing on end. For publications the bound edge must be on the right. The address can be perpendicular or parallel to the top.

These new standards will allow the Flat Sequencing System to process flat-size pieces in delivery sequence at high speeds. For more details go to www.usps.com/mailpro/2008/.

Extend your DM age

The word “new” can be very powerful in a marketing campaign. It’s a great attention getting device for marketing new products, services or offers. Don’t stop using it too soon in a direct mail campaign. Prospects aren’t going to remember when you first announced something as being new. You should refer to the product or service as new for a year or more. Removing the word “new” from a successful direct mail control can result in a drop of response.

Promo items perform well

Surveys show that promotional gifts (tchotchkes) have higher recall than most traditional advertising. They are used as give-aways at trade shows or for dimensional direct mail. The key to success is choosing an item that fits the benefit of your industry. Don’t give away logo junk that has no tie in to what you sell. If you do - that cute stress ball will likely end up as a dog toy.

Direct marketing quotes

by *Denny Hatch*

- “Direct marketing is the business of acquiring customers – and continually delighting them.”
- “People don’t want their wants satisfied...they want better wants.”
- “Direct marketing doesn’t have to make sense – it just has to make money.”
- “Never try to sell two things at once.”
- “Neatness rejects involvement in direct mail. Ugly works.”

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- Develop creative pricing – Don’t discount to customers. Cutting prices will hurt long term. Do offer frequency and volume discounts. Provide more for the same price.
- Survey your customers – Do a third party mail or e-mail survey. Learn what customers like or don’t like. It’s a touch that shows you care.
- Maximize referrals – You’ll close 5 times more referrals than leads.
- Attend trade shows – Attendance at trade shows is down, but those attending have money to spend.
- Find a cause - Now is a great time to donate time or services to a good cause. Positive PR comes to those who give back to the community.

Thomas Jefferson said, “The man who stops advertising to save money is like the man who stops the clock to save time.” This still holds true 200 years later.

For more information (and samples) on how to develop a **1-2-3 Multi-Channel Promotion**, contact A.M. Mailing at 800-410-MAIL (6245) or e-mail info@ammailing.com.

GUEST COLUMN EDITOR’S NOTE: Article provided by ©North American Publishing Company. All Rights reserved. This article originally appeared in TM Tipline, Target Marketing Magazine’s weekly e-mail newsletter offering practical tips and solutions for profitable direct marketing. To learn more, visit www.targetmarketing.com.

4 Rules for Better Personalization

By **Ethan Boldt**, editor, *Inside Direct Mail*

Personalization of direct mail pieces requires a substantial investment, but it may be just the sort of new technology that any lagging direct mail campaign needs in the current economy—including preparing for when things get even worse.

"To really utilize personalization, we're really talking about relevant communication. The more relevant that communication, the better the response rate," says Mike Walther, president of DME, a personalized relationship marketing agency based in Daytona Beach, Fla.

Here are four tips for taking advantage of this powerful technology and making it as relevant to the prospect as possible.

1. Go multichannel

"Multichannel campaigns will outperform non-multi campaigns," states Walther, who gives examples of a PURL (Personalized URL) and a mail piece or an e-mail with embedded links as multichannel efforts that have worked well for his clients.

2. Be industry-specific

"You really need to understand an industry, the touchpoints, the communication points and the relevance of those communication points to be effective [with personalization]," recommends Walther.

3. Get relevant data

With privacy issues becoming more prevalent, it can be a struggle to get more relevant data. Walther advises that marketers work with their customers to maintain better internal databases. "And then you have to be creative in terms of where you get that information ... the databases of customers [are] a mailer's most prized asset," he asserts.

4. Understand the ground rules about relevancy

Before you begin to use that relevant data, Walther recommends you ask a couple of crucial questions: "What information do we know about the potential customer to make sure that the group that we mail to and the conversation we have is as relevant as possible? And are we going to get too relevant, so they think that Big Brother or a breach of trust occurs?"



Personalize your direct mail.... and increase response

Personalized direct mail works. A.M. Mailing proved it in [A.M. LetterLink Newsletter Volume 11 Number 4](#). All the newsletter articles were printed digitally and included personalized variable data. Readers were asked how many times their name appeared in the newsletter. Those who responded with the answer received a “sweet treat.”

Over 50 people read all the articles. They found their name six times, called A.M. and asked for their reward. One guy (named Dave) found his name seven times. He even counted “Dave” the A.M. sales rep listed on page one!

The teaser contest got reader’s attention. It piqued their interest, provided desire for sweets and encouraged action. It’s what every marketing message is supposed to do. Personalization just makes it easier. Why? Everybody loves their name.

Personalization works even better when you *really* know your prospect or customer. Utilizing relevant data is the final piece to the marketing puzzle. For example...an auto dealer knows when a vehicle was purchased. Sending periodic postcards to remind the customer of needed maintenance for his/her vehicle model is relevant to that customer. It maintains customer relations and sells service.

When database knowledge is combined with digital printing, good marketing happens. Here are some direct mail formats that can utilize personalized data very effectively.

- ✓ Postcards – personalized on both sides
- ✓ Double postcards – personalize for address panel and reply card
- ✓ Selfmailers – personalized on the covers and inside.
- ✓ Newsletters/booklets – personalized on all pages
- ✓ Envelope packages – personalized on envelope and matching inserts

Start using your database to add relevance to customer and prospect communication. Your response rates will improve and ROI will follow.

For samples of personalized direct mail formats call 800-410-MAIL (6245) or e-mail info@ammailing.com.

12 steps to writing effective direct mail cover letters

Everyone has some resistance to buying. The job of the direct mail letter is to overcome objections and persuade the buyer to take action. The letter is the salesperson for your mailing package.

A good sales pitch has a strong opener and powerful close. But, how do you organize the middle...the solutions, benefits and offer? There are 12 steps that provide a template for writing an effective sales letter. Follow these tested copywriting tactics for better results on your next direct mail project.

1. Grab attention – The headline and first sentence must pique interest.
2. Identify problems – Spell out the problem, agitate it so they feel the pain.
3. Provide a solution – Show how you can solve the problem.
4. List your credentials – Give reasons why you can be trusted.
5. Show the benefits – Bullet point how the reader will benefit.
6. Give proof – Testimonials are a powerful tool to prove claims.
7. Make an offer – Best offers combine price, terms and free gifts.
8. Give a guarantee – Make the offer irresistible with a strong guarantee.
9. Create scarcity – Motivate action with short supply or deadline date.
10. Call to action – Tell them what to do and how to do it.
11. Give a warning – Remind reader of consequences by not acting now.
12. Close the sale – Include a P.S. with reminder of offer and scarcity.

Follow this 12-step formula for more powerful direct mail letters. Include each step so that you build a sales pitch that adds to the readers emotions.

*Read more about direct mail marketing in A.M. Letterlink past issues.
Visit www.ammailing.com*

Message from Marty



Marty Ochs
President

This issue of the A.M. Mailing Letterlink focuses on personalization of your direct marketing efforts. Why? We recognize that

personalization of your direct mail with a more targeted database has proven to be very effective at retaining your current clients along with adding new prospects as clients. Over the years, A.M. Mailing is recognized to be an innovative leader in adding new equipment, technologies and people to meet your needs to an ever changing market. Who would have anticipated the current world economic situation would change so rapidly! Simply, our response is to offer more services, save you money and make your direct mail programs more effective! If you are open to ideas, we will guarantee A.M. Mailing can come up with a solution!

We have added the following services:

- **Marketing Communications:** 1 x 1 Strategies and Programs for retention mailings with follow up target mailings and e-mail mailings!
- **Mail Piece Design Services:** Creating more cost effective packages that prove a better ROI!
- **A.M. Perfect Match:** We have added the latest and greatest matching and ink jet systems with a wide variety of exciting capabilities!
- **Lasering/Digital Printing:** A.M. Mailing has added new exciting Lasering capabilities with 100% variable data combined with using targeted lists, messages, maps, logos, pictures and a wide variety of images!
- **Postal Logistics:** A.M.- MAX SAVINGS drop shipment and co-mingling programs to obtain the best postage available by using Monticello postal software.
- **IMB:** We are in process of implementing the IMB (Intelligent Mail Barcode) for tracking and analysis your DM efforts.
- **Sales Department:** A.M. Mailing has one of the most experienced and knowledge sales staff in the industry. We pride ourselves in TEAM SALES at A.M. Mailing. We come up with many solutions to your needs!
- **AM-EMAIL:** Combine the effectiveness of DM and EM!



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**Your LetterLink Newsletter Vol. 12 No. 1
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Mark your calendar for these print, mail and marketing events

February 10, AMA MADISON MEETING

Madison, WI, Clarion Suites, lunch meeting hosted by the Madison Chapter of the American Marketing Association, presentation by the Timpano Group on "Improving Organizations by combining development and strategic communications." Call 608-232-9696 for details.

March 5-May 21, CADM SPRING BASIC COURSE

Chicago, 11 week course covering all facets of direct and integrated marketing. Meets on Thursday evenings. Call 312-840-CADM (2236) for registration and details.

March 23-25, PUBLISHING BUSINESS CONFERENCE & EXPO

New York City, Marriott Marquis, annual event providing practical, strategic insights for publishing executives. Sponsored by Publishing Executive and Book Business magazines. Visit www.PublishingBusiness.com for details.

March 31, WPPC PUBLISHING VENDOR EXPO

Pewaukee, WI, Country Springs Hotel, Spring Networking Expo from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., an opportunity to visit with friends from the publishing, printing, paper and mailing industries over cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, sponsored by The Wisconsin Publishers Production Club, contact Marty Ochs at 608-838-9899 or visit wppc.org for details.

April 6 – 8, B-TO-B LEAD GENERATION CONFERENCE

New Orleans Riverside, sponsored by the Direct Marketing Association, meet and network with key players in the B-to-B community, contact Katie McEvoy at 212-768-7277 for details.

May 5, CADM – IMX09

Chicago, IL, Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers, sponsored by the Chicago Association of Direct Marketing, the multi channel world of direct marketing will be explored with educational sessions, keynote speakers and vendor expo hall, call 312-849-CADM (2236) or go to www.cadm.org for details and registration. Be sure to visit the A.M. Mailing Services, LLC booth.

May 17-20, 2009 NATIONAL POSTAL FORUM

Washington DC, four-day conference and expo for the mailing industry. Mark the date and visit www.npf.org/reg2 for details and registration.

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