

A.M.

LetterLink

Your Resource for Direct Mail Marketing



Published by A.M. Mailing Services, LLC

Vol. 12 No. 2



“Providing seamless direct mail solutions”

Marty Ochs - President
Dan Topel - Sales Manager
Jeff Veesenmeyer - Sales & Mktg.
Fred Schulze - Print Manager
Dave Byrne - Sales Rep.

INSIDE...

- DM News & Tips
- Stop offering discounts
- Write effective letters
- 7 ways to reduce postage
- Calendar of events

Direct marketers are finding pearls of wisdom in PURLs

Personalized URLs (PURLs) are becoming more main stream with direct marketers.

Here's why. Mailers are finding that one out of two direct mail recipients prefer to respond online. Response rates with basic personalization and a PURL – will double the response – on average. When the database is applied with relevant information and list segmentation...response rates of 9-10% are possible.

So what is a PURL? It's simply a landing web page that has been personalized with the recipient's name. A direct mail piece provides a web address that goes to a personal landing page.

For example, a PURL address might look like this...

[JohnSample.ShopABCompany.com](#). Better yet, check-out the back page of this newsletter. It includes a PURL for you - and an offer to register for a FREE gift. Be sure to visit your PURL, update your account and see first hand how a PURL works.

“Surveys show that PURLs are helping direct marketers with tracking response”

Increasing response is not the only advantage of the PURL. It's a response mechanism that is easy for the recipient, easy for the sender to measure response and is actionable in real time. Surveys show that PURLs are helping direct marketers with tracking response and measuring ROI. Utilizing PURLs makes much of the back end reporting easier.

Other benefits of PURLs include...

- Drive prospect to your web page
- Gain same day access to responses
- Provides more information than would fit on a postcard
- Funnel prospects further on line with links to other pages
- Ability to gather more data than would be possible on a reply card
- Version offers and sales pitches with the PURL rather than the printed piece

Cont. on page 2

DM News & Tips

Move Update – update

The USPS has established a tolerance threshold for non-compliance of the Move Update Standards. These standards were implemented in November 2008. They require mailers to update their mailing list within 95 days of any bulk mailing. A mailing must not have a 30% or more error rate for deliverable addresses.

Noncompliance penalties were to go into effect on May 11, 2009. Those penalties have now been delayed until January 4, 2010. A mailing that fails this Move Update requirement - after next January - will no longer qualify for automation discount rates. A First Class presorted letter would get bumped to the single piece price of 44 cents. A Standard Mail letter would get bumped to the applicable non-auto rate. The goal is to reduce undeliverable mail and the costs of handling it.

Targeting green customers

There are two types of green buyers. They are the people who make a financial decision about green products/services and those who are concerned emotionally. The financial group is easy to target. Show them that you are saving them money by using your green service or product. The emotional group requires knowing more about their behavioral hot buttons. Behavioral greens have negative opinions of any product or company that pollutes or wastes natural resources. They have strong family ties. They tend to live in big cities. They will pay more for eco-friendly products and purchase from companies that have an environmental conscience.

How to stop offering discounts

In direct marketing, a strong offer is needed to get response. In a bad economy, discount offers become the norm. Retailers who slash prices with 50-percent off offers will struggle to get full price down the road. Think of the offer as a way to solve problems or address opportunities in the database. Use emotional offering that attracted your best customers in the past. Offer those value added benefits to new prospects.

Don't make these DM mistakes

1. Not Testing – Always test an A mailing and B mailing. Test a teaser, an offer or a price point.
2. Not Personalizing – The most important word to everyone is their name.
3. Not beginning with the best offer – Put the most compelling reason for buying up front. Use an intriguing question, solve a problem or provide strong statistics.

continued from page 1

Digital printing enabled marketers to utilize many levels of personalization in direct mail. Now that technology is being combined with the internet to take personalized 1-to-1 marketing to a new high. PURLs give you the tools to build interactive relationships.

Get PURL-sonal with your next direct mail campaign. Visit your PURL (see back page) and contact an A.M. sales representative for more details today!

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.

3 Keys to writing an effective letter

By Joel Boland, assistant editor, *Target Marketing*

The letter is a direct marketing mainstay and often the centerpiece of a campaign. Certainly, getting a prospect to open the envelope is paramount, but what's inside is equally as important.

That means the letter is crucial to engage the audience and, ultimately, get recipients to act. Here, Steve Swanson, marketing manager for Better Homes and Gardens, offers insights on how to create an interesting and effective direct mail letter.

1. First and foremost, know your audience, and write to its needs in its language. Everything starts with relating to the readers. Talk in their language, and engage them with stories or offers that are relevant to them.

For instance, Better Homes and Gardens customers are typically your average "middle Americans," as Swanson calls them. Therefore, the magazine "makes the letter folksy for our audience because that's the style that appeals to them," describes Swanson. Find the voice and tone that works for your audience.

2. Shorter is not always better. Despite popular opinion, shorter copy isn't necessarily more desirable for consumers - and it doesn't always pay for marketers, even in this era of high paper and postage costs. In fact, in the case of Better Homes and Gardens, a four-page letter works better time and time again than a two-pager. "I still haven't found a two-page [letter] that works better than a good four-page [letter]," says Swanson. "We've tested it the past five or six years, and four-page still works best for us."

So, if you're thinking of shrinking your letter, test it to make sure it's the right move.

3. Make it easy on the eyes. While long copy isn't always a bad thing, people don't want a sea of never-ending words laid out before them. If a letter looks too tedious to read, chances are people won't even try. Swanson suggests using the following techniques to give your letter the appearance of an easy read:

- Make sure the copy isn't too blocky. Use short paragraphs and simple language.
- Use breaks and white space to give readers a chance to think about the message.
- Underlining and bolding text attracts the eye and allows readers to scan the letter.
- Test things such as handwriting in the margins and bullets to draw attention to important information.

The letter is an important aspect to any direct mail package. Make sure it hits home for your audience and clearly states your offer or call to action.



7 tips to offset the Postal rate increase

On May 11th the Postal Service will increase prices for all classes of mail. A First Class one ounce letter will go up to 44 cents and postcards will be 28 cents. Standard mail will go up an average of 3.8%.

The major issue for the postal service is the \$5.8 billion annual obligation to pay healthcare cost for their retired workers. On top of that, First Class mail continues to plummet which is resulting in declining revenues. Plan to budget for a 3-4% postage rate increase in May of every year.

There are ways to offset the rising costs of direct mail. Postage is your single biggest cost on most direct mail projects. Here are some tips that could help reduce costs and improve ROI.

1. Postal Logistics – Reduce postage with BMC/SCF drop shipping or commingling.
2. Design for size – Keep you mailpiece within the maximum (6-1/8 x 11-1/2) for lettersize postage rates.
3. Reduce weight – Keep First Class under 1 ounce, Standard under 3.3 ounces and Flats under 1 pound.
4. Create automated mail – Mailpieces that can be sorted on postal machines qualify for discounted automated rates. Lettersize pieces should be rectangular and fit the piece aspect ratio (Length divided by Height = 1.3 to 2.5) to get automated rates.
5. Database cleanup – Eliminate undeliverable addresses in your database. Most databases have 10 to 20% undeliverable addresses. That wastes postage, printing and production. Mailings with over 30% UAA will now lose auto discounts.
6. Mail geographically – Lists with high saturation within zip codes receive greater postal discounts.
7. Share the cost – Develop a co-op mailer that promotes you and two or more other companies that share the same market.

Use real time stats to plan postal delivery

Just imagine. You receive a 4 color postcard for a one day event that is on March 30th...but the card arrives in your mailbox on April 1st. April Fools!

The negative impact of an event mailing that is delivered to recipients - after the event is over - is huge. Not only is the event a bust, but all of your planning, creative, printing, mail production and postage cost is wasted. You're job is in jeopardy and your company looks foolish.

This happens all too often. Why? We're spoiled. We've all sent First Class mail that arrived the very next day. Even Standard bulk mailings are often delivered in one to two days when they are mailed from a post office close to the delivery addresses.

The postal service does a tremendous job of delivering to all 135 million addresses in the U.S. No other company even wants that responsibility. But the reality is your mail is not going to get from New York to L.A the next day or even the next week with Standard Mail. Mail is moving slower due to USPS workforce cutbacks and the steady growth of addresses they need to service.

You need to allow ample delivery time for presorted mail. First Class mail is taking up to a week nationwide. Standard mail can take three weeks and sometimes more. What else can you do?

Work with a mailer that can offer postal logistics. Commingling and drop shipping are two methods that reduce postage and delivery time. Your list should be analyzed to see if there are opportunities to drop ship to BMC and SCF postal facilities. And when ordering postcards or selfmailers with an on-line printer...find out where they are located. Your mailing might be dropping in Alaska!

**A.M. Mailing provides Postal Logistics services.
To learn more call 800-410-MAIL (6245).**

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

Get the envelope opened with color



Marty Ochs
President

Why are so many direct mail packages a simple #10 with limited graphics and design? I believe in many cases – it's the cost!

Actually, the cost of the outer envelope in most direct mail packages is less than 5% of the total cost of printing, mail production and postage. Yet the outer envelope is crucial to the success of the package. The envelope should be compelling, exciting and replicate everything that is inside the envelope. Envelope expense shouldn't be your primary issue for the outer. If it doesn't get opened, the whole mailing fails!

Today, there are 100's of new exciting stocked envelopes (white wove, 100% recycled, cotton fiber, kraft, translucent, etc.) with a variety of appealing finishes. You can get a wide range of colors – pastel, Cromatica®, Starburst®, florescent and many more. Most of the standard packages I see in the mail are: #10, 6 x 9 or 9 x 12. Try another size. You would be very surprised at all of the stock sizes available to you!

The cost for printing the envelope is very inexpensive - whether it is one or four color. Four color printing will give the graphic designer a great range of high impact design! Psychologists believe that red, orange and yellow color families spell action - while blue, green or violet are quiet and reserved. Yellow and Red appear to be the "CHOSEN COLORS" that stick in the mind! Dark tones suggest stability and certainty.

New inkjet technologies enable A.M. Mailing to stock 25 different color inks for addressing and personalizing messages on envelopes! These colors, combined with unlimited variety of variable data and graphics, provide a real compelling call to action!

The envelope has to serve as more than a mere wrapping! A.M. Mailing will help you develop innovative direct mail envelope packages! How about matching your envelope data to the inside letter? A.M.'s Perfect Match system is another method for increasing your response! Call today for more information.



A.M. MAILING SERVICES, LLC
100 INTERSTATE BLVD
EDGERTON WI 53534-9399

PRSR STD
 U.S. Postage
PAID
 A.M. Mailing
 Services, LLC

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Inside:

**Your LetterLink Newsletter Vol. 12 No. 2
 from A.M. Mailing Services, LLC**

Printed on 100% post
 Consumer waste
PLEASE RECYCLE

Mark your calendar for these print, mail and marketing events

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 booth.

May 12, AMA MADISON MEETING

Madison, WI, Clarion Suites, lunch meeting hosted by the Madison Chapter of the American Marketing Association, presentation by the UW Alumni Association, "Staying Connected in Meaningful Ways," Call 608-232-9696 for details or visit www.amamadison.org.

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.

May 19, WPPC – LEAN, MEAN and GREEN

Pewaukee, WI, Country Springs Hotel, sponsored by The Wisconsin Publishers Production Club, contact Marty Ochs at 608-838-9899 or visit www.wppc.org for details.

June 16-18, DMA DAYS NEW YORK

Jacob K. Javits Conventions Center, New York, the annual conference and expo destination for direct marketers, contact Katie McEvoy at 212-768-7277 for information or visit www.dmdays.com.

July 21-22, TS2 – TOTAL SOLUTIONS MARKETING

Chicago, IL, McCormick Place, the one-stop-shop for interactive, advertising and direct mail solutions. Visit www.ts2show.com for more details.

Moving? Want someone added to this mailing list?

- Please correct my name and/or address
 - YES – add me to the LetterLink mailing list
- Fax 608-884-8949 E-mail info@ammailing.com

Name

Company

Address

City

State

Zip

E-Mail



A.M. MAILING SERVICES, LLC
 100 INTERSTATE BLVD EDGERTON, WI 53534-9399
 608-884-3452 FAX 608-884-8949
 800-410-MAIL (6245)
 e-mail info@ammailing.com
www.ammailing.com