

## Choosing The Direct Mail Format That's Right For You

You could choose between different direct mail formats: a self-mailer, a postcard and a letter. Or you could send out a catalog, a direct mail package, a bucksliip, an email or an unaddressed flyer. Some people might sing the praises of one versus the other but truth be told, it all depends which format you need at which point of time and for what purpose. Before you decide on the format, take a look at what each format would give you in terms of mileage and then make your decision.

A self-mailer is something that doesn't have an envelope but is folded down, stuck and mailed. Here, you can send out a message and yet keep printing and mailing costs down. A letter on the other hand is more personal so use this if you need to address the person by name. This goes into an envelope so it's private as well. A postcard is more of an appetizer. If you want to send out a short message to prod your reader to visit your web site, this is a good option.

Of course if you're looking to the direct mail format to tell the reader everything about your product, then you can send him a catalog. This is really a good idea because he gets to actually see the products you are offering, the various models or choices and the prices. It's all there in glorious color in front of him and if he needs what you are selling, he will look at it. That's half the battle won.

You might want to inform everyone in a particular area about a special offer, a bargain offer, or a sale. In which case an unaddressed flyer is the best. It can be stuffed into every mailbox and chances are quite a few people read what they get before they trash it. You can have a simply printed one, printed one side or both. You could also mail a bucksliip which is like a flyer but small, no bigger usually than a dollar bill. This is usually about some special announcement and very often gets mailed along with some other promotional material.

Of course today, you also have the email. This is great for a short message to be sent to your customers informing them of some event you would like them to know about. The only problem is that you may be able to send them to your customers because they know you but new people who have not heard of you could well put your emails under the junk mail category.

If you have a long sales message and you need a filled-out form or a check mailed back, then your best choice would be a classic direct mail package. What exactly would be in this package? There would typically be a letter, order form and business reply card, a brochure and a business reply envelope. All this would be put together into a mailing envelope and mailed to the customer.

A new development in this area is the dimensional mailer. This goes to the people who screen the mail of the top executives in a firm. It usually has a sense of intrigue built into it without which it would probably be consigned to the trash can. One such promotion had a DVD player sent and a letter stating that if the executive granted the sales rep of that company an audience, he would bring the remote along (without which there was no way that player would work!). It worked.

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### About the Author

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