

US Postal Service...Your Marketing Buddy

One of the first things I do with clients is determine their relationship with the post office. Why? Because in order to be an effective marketing organization, they will need to get pretty cozy with them. I admonish you to shake off the image of our mail system as being anything other than a highly reliable and valuable strategic business partner. After all, they help to deliver your message to a targeted group of prospects in an inexpensive way. And these prospects will buy depending upon the right message. Think of your mail carrier as a kind of sales director and the letters as sales sentinels without the downside of having to pay benefits.

Direct mail has been and remains the marketing champ for efficiency. It is still the most cost-effective tool for creating and maintaining interest as well as gaining valuable information to re-use in other marketing media. In terms of return, you need to determine how much a sale is worth to you over the lifetime of the client. Let's say for widgets, that it's \$3000 over 5 years. In one year, by writing say, six letters to them to create the dialogue, you've spent 75 cents times 6 which is about \$5. \$5 in acquisition costs compared to \$3000 in value of the client. Can you beat that? Even if you factor in all the mailers in that campaign with no one else buying, you're still probably ahead.

Whether you've never used mail to market your business or you've tried and done poorly, I encourage you to pick it up again, plan, modify and learn until it works for you. Direct mail is a tactic that you need to be patient with. It might not bring results in the first couple of tries, but as long as you've identified a good list and your message is sound, it will pay off. And after you've seen good results from it, you'll work this method into your marketing efforts permanently.

Get to know the costs: the supplies, the printing, the postage, the delivery times, and the specific results. Try different copy to different groups on your list. Tinker with it, try different things. Call a few prospects on the list for feedback. This is how you remove the guesswork out of your marketing efforts!

Once you get calls or inquiries from the mailers, you can use that message in your advertising and the results should be similar.

Again, be patient with direct mail. Expect to send out six different pieces to someone before you get a response. And send out different types of copy to them each time, such as newsletters, postcards, or press releases. Include yourself in some of the mailings to get an idea of what and how they're receiving. The bottom line is that you act similarly to them...that is, you're probably not going to call until you see the name and the offer several times. Be steadfast, and after some time, you'll be sold on the mail as well.

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