



PRINTtips



Graphics

Printing

Mailing

Under One Roof

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For Now and Forever... The Importance of Advertising

Have you noticed that despite the economic downturn, we are still sending you our newsletter every month? If you're a customer of ours, you know we won't stop building the relationship and providing useful information even though we're watching our expenditures closely just as you are.

What we have learned is this: that in volatile economic times, businesses that continue to advertise and engage in proactive marketing do better during the economic downturn and position themselves to prosper when the economy recovers.

You don't have to take our word for it. In 2001 noted researchers Yankelovich Partners and Harris Interactive conducted a survey of 505 key executives across all major business segments. Here are some of the major findings:

- The more frequently executives see products or services advertised, the more likely they are to take action.
- Companies that advertise in a down economy are perceived as having more commitment to their products and services.
- Frequent advertising keeps a company or brand top-of-mind, provides more information about the company or brand, and makes respondents more likely to consider the company's products or services for purchase.

More recent evidence appeared in December 2008 in a Forbes.com article entitled Don't Skimp on Ad Budgets. In it Wharton marketing professor Peter Fader states that cutting back on advertising "leaves space for an aggressive



marketer to make strong inroads." In other words, if you cut back on advertising, it leaves room for your competitors to gain a foothold in the mind of your customers.

Change the message, not the budget

While cutting the advertising budget is not the right action, changing the message in the advertising might be. When reading advertising, both customers and prospects seek an answer to the question, "What's in it for me?" – or stated more elegantly, how does your product or service provide benefit to the customer or prospect? If your advertising is already built around providing this answer, now may be the time to tune it up to reflect the current economic downturn.

A simple way to answer the question "What's in it for me?" is to make a list of features, then turn them into benefits. To do this, state the feature then bridge to the benefit using the phrase what this means for you. Finally, edit the benefit to reflect possible concerns of your customers or prospects. Here are some examples:

- Our company has been providing printing services to businesses and organizations

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“... the statement of benefits touches on topics likely to be of interest to the customer...”

since 1970 (feature). What this means for you (bridge) is that we have stood the test of time – we have weathered previous downturns and will do so again (benefit).

- We have just upgraded our digital color printer to the latest technology (feature). What this means for you (bridge) is that we can offer full color printing in quantities smaller than you might have thought affordable (benefit).
- We are experts at both offset and digital printing (feature). What this means for you (bridge) is that we can use the technology best suited to your budget and turnaround time requirements (benefit).

Note that the statement of benefits touches on topics likely to be of interest to the customer or prospect – that your business is strong enough to survive the current economic conditions and will not fail when others might; that you are conscious of budget constraints; and that you can offer options to fit the project requirements.

Advertising with direct mail marketing

Among advertising methods, direct mail marketing stands out for its cost effectiveness and likelihood of success. Unlike mass media, direct mail can be targeted to a specific audience of any size, including an audience of one. The results of a direct mail marketing campaign can be tracked and measured in number of responses, and a campaign can be tailored to fit almost any advertising budget.

Two important elements to the success of a direct mail campaign is to use a good mail list and to be consistent. A good mail list is one that contains complete and accurate addresses, contact names or titles, and is composed of individuals or businesses that you know or suspect have an interest in your product or service. An indicator of interest could be a response of some kind such as requesting information or asking to be placed on a newsletter distribution list. It could also be that the characteristics of the individual or business match those of customers who are already buying from you.

“... direct mail marketing campaign is overwhelmingly determined by the mail list...”

What to mail

There is much debate about what makes an effective advertising piece, and a good case can be made for all possibilities – post card, self-mailer, or information enclosed in an envelope. Likewise there is much debate about whether response rate is increased by using live postage stamps or by addressing the mail piece so it appears to be handwritten or by extensive personalizing.

Since statistics are available to support almost any contention, we think it is important to mention this: most statistics are based on very large mailings (100,000 pieces or more) often sent to a nationwide mailing list. The question of whether the valid and useful information derived from such a mailing will translate to a regional or local mailing isn't clear.

Another thing to keep in mind is that the response rate of any direct mail marketing campaign is overwhelmingly determined by the mail list – as much as 60%. The appearance of the mail piece and the offer each account for about 20%. What this means is that a well designed mail piece with an unbeatable offer won't succeed unless it is sent to the right mailing list.

The importance of repetition

The most effective direct mail marketing campaigns are repetitious – that is, they consist of more than one mailing and are spread over a regular interval such as monthly or quarterly. You will realize a higher cumulative response rate by mailing three times to the same list than you will by mailing once to a larger list. This is because each subsequent mailing increases the likelihood that someone on the mailing list will be interested in your product or service. Someone who was not in the market for your product or service at the time of the first mailing may be when they receive the second or third mailing. Others may not have noticed the first mail piece; still others may need more exposure to your product or service. An interesting fact of human nature is that someone can receive the same mail piece up to seven times before they recall having seen it before. Make this fact work for you by using the

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same design for your entire campaign. This has a positive effect on your budget, since you can have all the printing done at one time and derive the benefit of longer-run pricing.

A final word of advice

We'd like to end with words of wisdom from the 300-member American Business Media, which was founded in 1906:

When times are good,
you should advertise.

When times are bad,
you must advertise.

“This has a positive effect on your budget...”

Tips For Writing Good Teaser Copy

Think for a moment how the mail looks when it arrives at your home or office. It will be oriented with the addresses all facing you and sorted from smallest to largest. Keep this in mind when you are designing your direct mail piece and improve the chances that your mailer will stand out from the rest of the mail.

If an envelope is being printed with a return address and a postal indicia, then it costs nothing extra to have teaser copy printed at the same time. Teaser copy is anything – a picture, an image, text or a combination – that piques the reader's curiosity or arouses interest.

Here are a few tips for writing good teaser copy:

- Be honest; don't mislead the reader. Make sure the teaser copy on the outside relates to what's inside. Misleading the reader solely for the purpose of getting him to open the envelope can backfire.
- Urge action. Create a sense of urgency in responding by providing a call to action with a limit (either time or number).
- Write a benefit statement. Answer the question, what's in it for me, in the teaser copy.
- Be sure the words and pictures work together. If using graphics or a photograph to illustrate the teaser copy, be sure one explains the other. Otherwise you risk confusing the reader.



“Teaser copy is anything that piques the reader's curiosity...”

Providing a Mockup is Very Helpful

When you return home from a business trip or vacation, what method do you use to sort your mail?

- A. bills, personal mail, advertising mail
- B. first class mail and all other mail
- C. important or interesting-looking mail and all else

We assert that no matter what method you use, an eye catching mail piece will make the first cut and stay out of the waste basket long enough for you to take a second look. The same is true for your customers or prospects. Advertising mail can survive a first glance if it is well designed and of obvious quality.

Whether your advertising material is a post card, self-mailer, or traditional direct mail piece enclosed in an envelope, the choice of paper is an important quality consideration. The stock should be sturdy enough that the mail piece can withstand high speed mail processing without damage, and appropriate to the printing process. And if you are using post-press processes such as die cutting or embossing, you will want to select a stock that is known to produce a good result. We are experts at matching paper to the project. Contact us at 513-248-2121 to arrange a convenient time to meet and discuss your project.



“Advertising mail can survive a first glance if it is well designed and of obvious quality.”



“... it may be possible to devote much more room than you thought to the sales message or teaser copy.”

Q. *Why does half the space on a post card have to be devoted to the address?*

A. It may surprise you to learn that it doesn't! The practice of placing a vertical line midway across the post card and using all the space to the right for the outbound address is a holdover from post card designs dating back to 1907.

The term for the part of the post card containing the outbound address is the address block, and the amount of space required for it depends on the elements of the

address – the number of lines and the length of the longest line. In addition, the United States Postal Service (USPS) has requirements for the location of the address block and the barcode in order to qualify for postage discounts. But meeting these requirements generally does not require devoting the entire right half of the post card to the address.

Depending on the size of the post card, the amount of information in the address block, and other items such as the return address and the postal indicia, it may be possible to devote much more room than you thought to the sales message or teaser copy. Please call us at 513-248-2121 and we'll help answer your questions and make recommendations to help you maximize the impact of your post card.



“... who subscribe to a particular publication or service.”

Compiled list: a list of names, addresses, and other criteria aggregated together from a variety of different sources including participating databases, website registrations, directories, public records, and subscriptions.

Deduping: the process of identifying and removing duplicate entries from a mailing list.

Direct marketing: a form of marketing that communicates directly with the target audience. Contrasts with media marketing through a third party using billboards, print, television, or radio.

Direct marketing campaign: a single, distinct direct marketing activity involving sending out direct mail to a target mail list at regular, periodic intervals.

House list: a list of an organization's customers and/or prospects. In general, house lists produce a higher response rate than compiled lists.

List appends: adding information such as age, household income, or SIC code to a mailing list.

List segment: a subset of a mailing list consisting of records that match specific

criteria such as gender, age, household income, geographic region, or other characteristic.

Response list: a list of names, addresses, and other customer data compiled by a company based on sign-ups, subscriptions, surveys, and other commercial transactions.

Slim jim: a narrow-format catalog sized to fit within USPS specifications for letters. Slim jims can be mailed at the lower postage rates for letters rather than the higher rates for flats.

Seed: to place addresses within the list so the list owner can track use of the list by list renters. Also known as salting.

Select: a single criterion or multiple criteria applied to a mail list to produce a subset of the entire list.

Subscriber list: a list consisting of data records of people who subscribe to a particular publication or service. Contains the information the subscribers provided at the time they began the subscription.

Teaser copy: Anything that draws the reader's attention or arouses curiosity. Can be text, graphics, photographs, or a combination.