

111 Ways To Improve Your Direct Mail Response

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1. Mail to your customers more often. If you are now mailing four times a year increase the frequency of your mailings to six or eight times. If you increase your mailings by 25% you should increase your sales by at least the same percentage.
2. Use a P.S. on every direct mail letter. The P.S. is second in importance only to the headline.
3. Don't forget to thank your customers for their orders by enclosing a message with the orders...and enclose another merchandise offer with the "thank you" message.
4. Vary your mailing format - use self-mailers, Lettergrams, computer letters, envelope formats, catalogs...change your format so that prospects don't get in the habit of recognizing your mailing piece.
5. Ride on the coattails of current events (energy crisis, elections, cold winters, etc.) When inflation increases, have an "inflation-cutting" special, etc.
6. Look for other products you can successfully sell to your customers.
7. Include more offers in your mailing package than you already are.. Study the mailings firms such as the Haband Company who pack a volume of material into their envelopes and see if you can adapt the idea to your own mailings.
8. Think about using simulated handwriting for emphasis in your letters. Occasionally test a handwritten letter...particularly if you're soliciting funds for charity.
9. Try an unusual format that you've never used before.
10. Test selective distribution to your list. Maybe only a portion of your list should receive more mailings. Other mailings should go to the entire list.
11. Stimulate off-season business by asking for it.. If you normally have a summer slump have a special "summer sale" mailing in the summer. You can boost your sales any time of the year you need a boost through effective direct mail.
12. Word your offer differently - put a unique twist into it by offering a baker's dozen instead of a regular dozen.. Or sell 110 instead of 100.
13. You can even add a smell to your envelopes. Check with your envelope manufacturer about special inks that can be used to make your envelope "smell" the way your product does.
- 14.. Change the size of your mailing package frequently to create interest and appeal.
15. Test credit terms.. You'll find that Master Charge or Visa Bank Americard will result in larger orders than cash terms.
16. Let people "peek" into your envelope with multiple windows on the face and back.
17. Test buck slip routing for addressing...and use it to reach multiple prospects.
18. Try using illustrated letterheads and test them against

conventional letterheads.

19. Put a simulated check into your mailings to emphasize a discount..
20. Consider using stamps, coupons, early bonuses, etc.
21. Pack order starters - a special offer that will get a person started on his order - into your catalog..
22. If you can sample your product, test including a sample in your mailing..
23. Make more sophisticated use of your own list and the lists you rent by looking for those segments of people in a list who buy.. and forget the rest of them.
24. Test simulated telegrams. Mailgrams, other imitation formats similar to the Mailgram.
25. Test a tiny letter with a tiny pencil accompanying it. Test a jumbo letter in your envelope...maybe even mail it in a jumbo envelope.
26. What is your "wastebasket readability factor" and what can you do to get people to read your mailing piece when it is sitting on somebody else's desk... or has already landed in his/her waste basket?
27. Put a wraparound on your catalog. It gives you two covers instead of one.
28. Test your catalog mailing and mailing dates.
29. Use teaser copy on your outer envelope and test its vs a blind envelope.
30. Acknowledge orders promptly, and include additional sales literature with your acknowledgement.
31. Periodically send a statement to your customer that shows he's been missed - even if he doesn't owe you any money.
32. Follow up inquiries promptly and persistently. Make it easy to buy from you by giving the inquirer a return envelope to send his order back in.
33. Tie in with a timely topic (current events, special problems, etc.).
34. Get to know your printers - not printer, printers. Every direct marketer needs different types of printers with different capabilities to come up with different printed pieces.
35. Test multiple premiums with your offer and give your prospect a choice of the one (s) he prefers.
36. Put your letterman on your team - make your best selling products sell most..
37. Remail your mailing to your best customers three or four weeks later.. You'll do 60-75% as well on the second mailing as you did on the first.
38. Look for creative new ways to increase catalog sales.
39. Remember the five basic rules - test, test, test, test, test.
40. Don't be afraid to run without a test if your gamble is small.
41. Use good judgement in planning your direct mail and you won't go wrong.
42. Use a bounce-back package enclosure to get an extra order.
43. State your guarantee in the strongest possible terms..and

- state it often. 44. Spotlight your message on your envelope and lead your reader inside.
44. Spotlight your sales points in your headline.
45. Start your message on your envelope and lead your reader inside.
46. Feature last-minute merchandise on the back of your envelope or on a separate flier enclosed in your package.
47. Offset delays in mail delivery by extending cutoff dates.
48. Cultivate customer with special savings, bonuses or premiums.
49. Use lightweight paper to save postage and allow you to put more in your envelope.
50. Use a "Publisher's Letter" to give the prospects an extra reason for buying.
51. Put distinctive differences in your catalog to add interest.
52. Check dimensions of your envelope to make sure they'll conform to new postal requirements.
53. Stimulate action by featuring a time limit at the top of your letter.
54. Show how merchandise solves problems and enhances the stature of the user among his contemporaries.
55. Use a full-view envelopes to display attractive literature.
56. If buying your product spells numerous benefits, spell them out by number for maximum impact.
57. Increase customer goodwill and purchases with advance notice of sales.
58. Use stock photos for much less than the cost of making original shots.
59. Cultivate customers with special catalog offers directed exclusively to customers.
60. Use unusual techniques to get your customer to open your envelope.
62. Dramatize big news by using a big format to present your message.
63. Can you use the inside of your merchandise carton as part of your media mix?
64. Increase the impact of your advertising with clip art- at minimum expense.
65. Express appreciation to your customers for their past business! And enclose some extra sell material with your thank you message..
66. Use match-up and comparison tables to increase selection ease and accuracy.
67. Offer premiums that are unusual.
68. Include smart-selling stuffers in envelopes, packages, etc.
70. Update your catalog with supplements or newsletters. 71. Use a second letter in the package to increase the impact.
72. Use a second letter in the package to make a second offer...
73. Notify the customer if there is going to be a delay in fulfillment - and include additional merchandise offers with the notification.
74. Test post card deck mailing as an inexpensive method to get leads/customers.

75. Put an unusual message on the outside of your envelope.
76. Put an alternative offer in the reply envelope to create bonus sales.
77. Try a massive display of stamps on the outside of your envelope to emphasize a fact.
78. Try a 3-dimensional package for unusual effect.
79. Try a pre-holiday mailing to invite a former customer back.
80. Try a customized response vehicle to get your customers to respond.
81. Offer to provide specific benefits to the customers.
82. Offer potential gift lists to both customers and prospects.
83. Use customer gift lists as future mailing lists for your prospecting..
84. Test selling your product by phone.
85. Use an in-watts line to get more orders.
86. Call on your business reply order by some other name! Such as, trail order card.
87. Can psychographics help you build sales from neighbors of your customers?
88. A double coupon in your package could double your response.
89. A reply envelope plus loose stamp might be more effective than a B.R.E.
90. If a postcard can tell your story ...test it.
91. If a postcard's too small, step up to a self-mailer.
92. Follow-up your prospects inquiries promptly with hard sell material.
93. Make the space on the inside of your mailing envelope work for you by using it to sell your product.
94. Prove to your prospect that your free gifts are really free.
95. Combine promotion with your shipping and service information.
96. State your guarantee boldly, in strong words .. and repeat it often.
97. Test allowing mailer in your envelope and you in his..
98. Test simulated gram formats.
99. Develop a distinctive personality for your business.
100. Make a major anniversaries a plus factor in your promotion..
101. Have your reply envelope emphasize your prompt shipping service..
102. Present outstanding testimonials in a big way for big impact.
103. Never stop selling the advantages of direct marketing to your customer.
104. Consider using special formats to make ordering easier.
105. Test different length trial periods.
106. Promote seasonal products in off-season times - and offer alternatives.
107. Ask customers their opinion of a proposed new product.
108. Test the plastic record message in your mail formats.
109. Use the negative to accentuate the positive.
110. Use simulated handwriting in your messages. And just like every good direct mail package should offer something : a little extra" to the prospect here is one more a total of 111 ideas - to

add to the list.

111. Use the telephone aggressively - both outgoing and incoming
- to stimulate business, customer activity and salesmen's
productively.