

AND WHY YOU NEED TO INCORPORATE IT INTO YOUR BUSINESS



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## INTRODUCTION

Where are you putting your marketing money? Companies of all sizes know just how important it is to make sure that they have proper marketing to help brand their business and increase name recognition. Without actual marketing, it is impossible to get enough customers to thrive and grow. Word of mouth marketing can only do so much.

The use of digital marketing has grown significantly over the last few decades, but it is important that businesses do not forget about one of the best options for marketing that is still available – direct mail.

### That's right.

The direct mail that comes to you straight from the post office to your mailbox is still one of the best ways to reach a large number of people affordably and in a short time.

There are ways that you can use the data you have on your customers and potential customers to ensure that you send out direct mail to those who are most interested in the types of services or products that you offer.

However, you can't simply flood those mailboxes with junk. You need to think about the quality and design of the pieces you are sending, and you need to make sure that it can provide the recipient with some type of value.



### **Get Started in Direct Mail**

Of course, you might not know much about direct mail at this point. You might not know what benefits it can offer or why you should use it. You may not know how to get started with this type of marketing.

This eBook will help to illuminate you. It will provide information on the benefits of direct mail, what you need to be successful, and how to do it – even when you have a small business.

Let's get a closer look at what direct mail will offer.



## **CHAPTER 1:**

## Direct Mail Is Still Alive and Kicking — The Biggest Benefits of Direct Mail Marketing

As a business owner, you know just how important proper marketing is when it comes to the success of your business. You probably also know that over the past decade or so there seems to have been an exodus from the traditional marketing options out there. Today, people tend to talk about various ways that they can market and reach their customers digitally.

While having a good and firm grasp of digital marketing is certainly a good idea, it is also important to reconsider the benefits that using direct mail marketing can off. There might be some people out there who proclaim direct mail marketing to be dead, but the truth of the matter is that those people are dead wrong.

Let's take a quick look at some of the biggest benefits that direct mail can provide and why you need to start incorporating it into your business sooner rather than later.

### **Benefit #1: Target Your Audience**

This is one of the main benefits of direct mail marketing. Businesses are able to buy mailing lists of people who would be their potential customers through mailing list distributors like Dun and Bradstreet, for example. You can find a list of people in various geographical regions who buy the types of products or use the types of services they offer.



With a list of potential customers in hand, who are already known to have an interest in services and products like the ones you sell, they are considered targets. You do not have to simply send out direct mail blindly, hoping that you could find buyers.

### **Benefit #2: It Is Measurable**

If you would like to know just how successful the direct mail marketing campaign can be, it is easy. You can put some type of coupon onto the mail along with an expiration date. Determine the number of direct mail pieces that were sent out with the coupon in question and then the number of times that the coupon was used during that period. This is a way that many eateries measure the success of their direct mail marketing campaigns.

### **Benefit #3: Very Flexible**

There are many different types of direct mail options that are available to you. Some could work better for certain types of businesses than others might. For example, some companies might want to send out samples of a product they offer. This is possible with direct mail. Others might be on a tight budget, and they want to use postcards, which tend to be a very cheap option. This is possible, as well. There are ways that just about any company will be able to make use of this type of marketing effectively.

### **Benefit #4: Individualized Options**

People do not want to feel like an afterthought, or even worse like you weren't thinking about them at all when you sent the advertisement. Fortunately, there is technology that makes it possible to allow for more individualization with direct mail. It



is possible to address a person by name on a postcard or a sales letter, for example.

While this might seem like a simple thing, people tend to be more likely to look at mail that has their name on it rather than just "resident".

### **Benefit #5: Cost Effective**

One of the reasons that some companies might have shied away from using direct mail in the past is because they thought it would be prohibitively expensive for them to do so. That's not the case, though. In fact, it is possible to achieve great designs and layouts in less time than it once was. You can have professionally printed direct mail pieces for less than what would be spent with many other types of marketing.

If worrying about the cost was something that kept you from using direct mail for your business, you might want to take a closer look at today's options and costs. It could be the perfect addition to your business's marketing needs.

### What Can Direct Mail Do for You?

You've seen five of the biggest benefits that direct mail can offer when you integrate it into your business. However, that's just the start of the benefits. You will likely find plenty of other great reasons to start using and to continue using direct mail.

Use the information and the guidance presented in the rest of the book to help you make sure that you are doing it the right way, and then experience just how helpful it can be for your business.



## **CHAPTER 2:**

# Direct Mail is a Great Choice for Companies Large and Small

What size company do you run? Do you have a small, local business? Are you running a business that caters to the city and the surrounding area? A region of your state? Perhaps the entire state or the entire country. Regardless of the size of your business, you will find that it is possible to benefit from the use of direct mail.

However, you need to make sure that you are doing direct mail the right way. Fortunately, it is not too difficult, but you probably will want to have some help from those who understand the ins and outs of what does and does not work. We will cover this a bit further in Chapter 3.

### **How Can Direct Mail Help Small Companies?**

Small business owners tend to work in the realm of digital marketing today because they see it as a cheap and relatively easy option. They worry that direct mail will be too complex or too cost prohibitive for them.

However, that's not the case today, and even small businesses that are on a tight budget will find that they can make good use of targeted direct mail campaigns that can help them to grow their business.



With a small business, it can be difficult to have the same advertising dollars as your larger competitors. You will, therefore, need to find ways that you can make better use of the money that you do have. Targeted direct mail can help in this area.

People have been shown to prefer getting regular, physical mail from brands than they do online junk mail. While many of your competitors are likely putting a focus on digital marketing, you can reach people in an old way that has really become new again. You can focus on customers that are right for your business, and these types of ad campaigns can allow for flexible spending, so you only have to spend as much as you can afford. It is not dissimilar to today's online campaigns in this aspect.

You will also be able to reach customers that you might not have been able to reach through a computer. There are some people today who are not savvy when it comes to technology, and there are those who don't care to spend much time on their computer or their phones, as hard as that might be to believe. With direct mail, you can speak directly to these people, potentially opening up an entirely new group of customers for your business.

### **How Can Direct Mail Help Large Companies?**

You will find that the benefits that the large companies have are quite similar to those that the small companies will enjoy. However, they will generally be able to use direct mail on a much larger scale. Instead of focusing only on a city or a relatively small geographic region of the state, the direct mail ad campaign might be something that encompasses an entire region of the country or the whole country for that matter.



The companies will be able to use the same types of promotion and deals tactics in their direct mail that the smaller companies will use. With larger companies that might have multiple stores around the country, it might be a good idea to make sure that the ads for each of the various locations are targeted toward the items that are available in their area.

Consider the grocery store mailers and circulars for department stores. In some cases, these sales ads that come in the mail will be geared directly toward that particular store rather than the company as a whole. This would mean multiple and different printings for the direct mail depending on how many stores or regions will need to have individual mailers.

This might seem like a lot of work and cost. However, companies will find that the amount of money that they can gain from getting people to come into the store to spend money, can more than make up for the cost of the direct mail.

### Local Service Companies Make Great Use of Direct Mail

If you would like to see an example of just how beneficial direct mail can be, consider some of the local service companies in your area. Chances are very good that these companies have sent you fliers or postcards in the mail before. There is a chance that you might have even used their services if you happened to need them at the time.

Service companies like plumbers, roofers, landscaping, auto mechanics, and the like provide services that people will likely need at some point in their life. They might not need it today or tomorrow, but they will eventually. By sending out direct mail to



the local area, these companies are reaching their target customers, and those customers will likely hold onto the mail, at least so they can keep the company's name and number handy if they ever do need the service.

When these local service companies use direct mail properly, it can help to drive their business and their brand, making them the go-to company in the area for the type of service they offer.

The local service companies, especially those who have been in the business for a few years, know what it takes to make direct mail work for them. You will find that they will often use this type of advertising as much or more than their Internet marketing.

### What Makes Mailers from Local Businesses Work?

As mentioned, local businesses have spent a lot of time trying to perfect the mailers that they send out to their customers and prospective customers. Here are some takeaways that other businesses should keep in mind when they are developing their own direct mail.

- They sell the benefits of the service, not the features. They
  explain to customers why they can make the customer's
  predicament or life better.
- They explain what they do in simple terms.
- They provide essential information that the recipient will find useful.
- They will have all of their contact information and service areas noted on the pieces of mail they send out.



- They make it easy. Whether it is calling a plumber during an emergency, ordering a pizza, or inquiring about a new garage door, they make getting in touch and getting what the customers need as easy as possible.
- They provide some type of actionable content. This might be a simple call to action, or it might be a coupon or discount.

Ultimately, it is about giving people what they want and what they won't consider junk and throw away. Show them why you are essential to their life, how you can make things better or easier, and then give them a reason to follow through and get in touch with you.

### **Everyone Can Benefit Greatly from Direct Mail**

Data from the Direct Marketing Association has found that direct mail response rates are much higher than the response rate of email. While 0.12% of people respond to email, 4.4% of people respond to direct mail. In addition, of those who respond, 62% of them become customers and actually make a purchase.

As you can see, it doesn't matter what type of business you have. It doesn't matter whether it is large or small. You can benefit from the use of direct mail. However, that doesn't mean that you can just send out anything through direct mail and expect great results.

You need to do your research, you need to make sure that you are creating pieces of mail that people actually want, and you need to be sure that you consider working with professionals who can help with different aspects of your direct mail marketing campaign, including the design and printing.



# CHAPTER 3: Ugly Postcards and Mailers Will NOT Work

How important is design work in the direct mail that you send out to your prospective customers? For many, this is going to be the first thing that they see involving your company. The very first thing.

As they say, you can only make a first impression once. This is very important when you are in someone's mailbox. They are going to be sorting through their mail, and they are going to determine, often with little more than a glance, whether they are going to keep your mailer or toss it into the recycling.

Naturally, you want to make sure that you have something that will catch their attention and make them keep your flier or post-card. Not only do you need to make sure that you provide quality information and offers on the mailer, but it also needs to look good from a design perspective.

Good design really can make quite a difference, even though many people think that they can get by without actually working with a designer. This is one of the reasons that some people who attempt direct mail marketing end up failing.



### Why Do Businesses Hesitate to Spend on Design?

Even though businesses want to succeed, they are not always willing to spend on certain things that can help with their success. One of the areas that tend to get neglected is design.

While a company might realize that they need to have quality design for logos that they use, and they know that they need a good design for their website, they might not realize that they also need to have a great design for their direct mail. This leads them to sending out mailers that are not going to get them the attention and the additional customers that they need.

Why are they not putting in any effort on design? There are several reasons for this, as noted below.

### They Believe It's Too Costly

One of the first reasons that many businesses will cite when it comes to not getting professional design for their direct mail is the cost. They believe that it will cost them a lot of money to hire a designer who can put together quality mailers and fliers. Businesses like to cut corners on their expenses wherever they can, and design is often where they will cut corners, especially for direct mail design.

However, the truth of the matter is that design today is not as expensive as most businesses believe. It only truly becomes costly for them when they do not bother with hiring a design team and put out poor quality mailers.



### They Think They Can Do It on Their Own

One of the other reasons that companies believe they do not need to hire a designer for their direct mail is because they believe they have someone on board who will do it. The owner might even think that they will be able to do it themselves despite not having any training or experience. It's not as easy as downloading Photoshop and creating a flier.

People need to have the knowledge and skills needed to understand what actually goes into proper design. They need to do more than just put your logo onto the flier or postcard along with your phone number.

People who do not have some training and experience in design are not going to do as good of a job as those who have taken the time to truly understand what does and does not work in design.

Take the time to hire a professional who can help with your design work. Make sure that they have experience creating direct mail and look at some examples of other work they have done in the past.

### They Don't Think It's Important

Of course, there are those businesses that do not think that design is important. They think that the only thing that matters is the message and what they are offering the customer. While those things are certainly important, you aren't going to be able to reach any of those customers with poor quality design. Your fliers and postcards are not going to make it past the recycling bin. This is a simple truth that businesses need to admit and understand.



Something that is well-designed and that catches the attention of the recipient will stand a better chance of being kept and read, and eventually used.

### The Importance of Good Design in Direct Mail

When a company allows bad design to become a part of something they do, even if it is their direct mail, it will cause more problems than they might realize. Having bad design can make your brand look bad. You need to make sure that every foot that you put forward looks as good as possible and that it truly represents your business and what you can offer.

## Bad Design Makes It Look Like You Don't Care About Your Brand

Every part of your brand identity makes an impression. Make sure that the impression is a good one. If it isn't, it can color how people perceive your brand. After all, why would they want to do business with a company that doesn't even care enough to make sure their mailers look good? They might think that you are going to be cutting corners in other areas, as well.

### **Good Design Can Build Credibility**

However, when you put in the effort to ensure that you have quality design work for all of your direct mail – and other aspects of your business – it helps to increase your credibility.

When you are thinking about doing business with someone, those first impressions matter. A nicely designed flier is going to be more appealing than something that looks like it was hastily scrawled and then photocopied. A nice looking flier will help to improve that initial impression, and it will make it more likely that someone will be willing to do business with you.



It really isn't that much different than visiting a business in person for the first time. If you were to walk into a restaurant that was dirty, disorganized, and didn't have any information on the menus, what would you do? You would turn around and walk out. People view your direct mail the same way. When you have a good design that's well-made and well thought out, they are more likely to be willing to check out what you have to offer.

### **Good Design Helps You Stand Out**

Many businesses refuse to accept that their design is important. That's the entire reason for this chapter, after all. This is why so many companies fade to mediocrity at best and close at worst. You do not have to suffer that fate with your business when you step up the quality of the design on your direct mail.

The good design is going to stand out compared with all of the other mail that people are getting. Companies today are often sending out "adequately" designed mail. This isn't good enough, and you do not want to be lumped into that category if you can help it. Just as the chapter title says, having ugly postcards and mailers will simply not work today.

Put in the effort to improve the look and the design of your direct mail and be sure to work with a professional designer. This means that the recipients are more likely to look at the mail, more likely to keep it, and more likely to use it when they need it, as well. You can leave your competitors in the dust with better direct mail design.



### **Tips for Great Direct Mail Marketing**

Before closing out this chapter, let's look at a list of some of the things that you will want to do in order to help make your direct mail marketing campaigns even more effective. These can make a difference in your level of success.

- Work with a professional for the design elements
- Make it personal
- Make it relevant
- Make the mailers useful by providing value don't send out junk mail to people or they will write off your brand
- Be creative
- Have a call to action
- Keep is simple
- Tailor it to the individual whenever possible

These are some simple tips that can really help you to improve the direct mail marketing materials that you are creating and sending out to your customers and those you hope will become your customers.

Your direct mail marketing campaign deserves as much care and attention as all of the other marketing that you are doing.



# **CHAPTER 4:**Why Having Good Data Is Essential

Thus far, we've discussed the importance of quality and design when it comes to direct mail marketing. This is because they are essential in getting potential customers to take the next step and contact your company. However, you can't overlook something that is very important – finding and targeting the customers in the first place.

### What Roles Does Data Play?

Data is important for a range of reasons. With the right data, you will be able to better calculate the market potential and what share of it you might get. It can also help to make it much easier for you to segment your audience into smaller and more manageable chunks. This will make it much easier for you to target specific groups with the right types of ads at the right time.

Data will provide you with various types of demographic data that you will want and need to have on hand, as well.

Some of the types of demographic data that can be obtained include:

- Median income
- Median age
- Median home value



- % owner/renter occupied
- % of families with children
- Ethnicities
- Religion

When you know the habits of the people that would likely be your ideal customer, and you combine that information with the data from demographics, it can help you with the design of your direct marketing campaign. Knowing who you should be targeting and where they are located will provide you with the best results.

For example, if you offer services for roofing or installing solar panels, you will want to target homeowners, not renters. If you have a store that sells item geared toward the elderly, chances are good that you won't be targeting millennials.

Even if you are working with a professional, as you should be, you will find that it can be quite helpful when you have solid knowledge of who your customers are and where to find them.

### **How to Target Customers**

There are a number of ways that you can obtain the data you need. One of the first things that you will want to do is set up a mailing list for your current customers. These are people who will provide you with their address in the expectation that you will be sending out mailers from time to time. To help get more of your current customers on a list, you might want to come up with a loyalty program for them. Of course, it will depend on the type of business you are running.



Another option is to acquire a third-party mailing list. One of the simplest and best options for sending direct mail, and which is the focus of the following chapter, is USPS Every Door Direct Mail Service.

Keep in mind that you might want to have several different mailing lists, each of which are segmented and targeted for specific types of mail and ads.

### **Be Sure to Collect and Analyze the Data**

Data is not only used when determining who you are going to target in your first round of direct mail marketing. It is also quite useful when it comes to determining the success of the campaign. After all, you want to know whether your efforts are being spent well, or if you might need to change some of your tactics. Keeping up with changes to the demographics data that you have collected will be important, as well.

Some of the types of data that you will want to consider measuring and recording are in the list that follows.

- Response rates for coupons
- People who have recently moved to the area
- New homeowners
- Behavior of your current customers
- Increases in social media engagement from people who have been sent mailers

The more data you have the better. Keeping up with the data will ensure that you are making the most of your direct mail campaigns. It can take some work, for sure, but having someone who can help you through it will make it far easier.



Measure your success and continue to alter and improve your marketing mailers to increase the number of conversions that you get. In this respect, it is not much different from online marketing.

### **Keep At It**

Data is essentially what is going to make your company a success and what will help you to focus your direct mail marketing efforts in the campaigns going forward. The following are some tips to remember.

You need to know your buyer, make sure that you have a strong database, and that you clean out that database occasionally from those who are simply not responding. Be sure you are building your database of customers from quality sources and try to verify the data when possible, so you are not wasting your time and energy. You could also use EDDM, which can help to simplify things greatly, as you will see in the following chapter.



# CHAPTER 5: What Is EDDM and Why is It a Good Option?

We've mentioned Every Door Direct Mail in the book already, but you might still not really know much about EDDM or why it could be useful for your business. While there are some similarities to direct mail, the goal of EDDM has always been to make things as easy as possible for the businesses that use it.

### **How Does EDDM Work?**

The system is offered through the USPS, and it is a good choice for anyone who has a business and who wants to target customers in the local area. It makes it possible to advertise to specific residential areas, and you do not need to have contact information from each of the households to do it.

You might be wondering what other benefits it can offer. Check out the list below.

- Place your ads in the hands of all houses in an area
- Include coupons, menus, and more in the mailing choose the format that's right for your needs.
- Choose the size that will work right for your needs
- Cost effective
- Easy to set up



Fortunately, it is easy to get started with this system. The following are the steps that you will need to take.

### **Set Up an Account**

In order to get started, you will need to have a USPS account. There are a couple of options from which you can choose.

- EDDM-Retail Account Those who have this type of account are able to have up to 5,000 pieces of mail each day per ZIP code. No postage permit is required.
- USPS Business Account This type of account is a better option for those who have a high-volume that they need to send out. It makes it easy to manage mailings online, and you can send out more than 5,000 pieces per day per ZIP code. There is a postage permit required for this type of an account.

### What Routes Are Right for You?

You will then use the EDDM mapping tool from the USPS to choose the delivery routes that you would like to hit with your mailers. It is possible to choose those routes based on different factors, such as income, age, or household size.

### **Get the Mail Designed and Printed**

You will next need to design the mailers that you are sending out. Keep in mind the tips that were included earlier in the book and be sure that you have a professional design the mail for you. A clear, beautiful, and simple design will work wonders for you. Postcards, fliers, and leaflets can work nicely.



Once you have designed the mail, you will need to make sure that you have them printed properly. A great design can be all for naught if you have a poor quality printer handling the printing job. Whether you use a local or online printer, you need to make sure that you are choosing a quality, affordable option.

# Set Up a Date to Drop the Mailers Off and Prepare Them Properly

Once you have the mailers ready to go, you will want to set up a drop-off date to bring them to the post office. Consider how many deliveries you have, their destination, and when you are going to need to have them delivered.

You will also be responsible for preparing the mailers. They should be bundled together in stacks that are six inches high or less. They say that they prefer when the bundles contain between 50 and 100 pieces of mail.

### **Complete EDDM Forms**

You will then complete all of the EDDM forms and facing slips that are needed, so the post office can process the order for you. The facing slip will be attached to each of the bundles that you provide, and it should include the number of mailers that are in that bundle.

Those who have used the service before and have had a customer that has told them they do not want to be included in the mailings, should include that address on the facing slip in the Do Not Deliver Address column.



### **Pay for the Postage**

Next, you will just need to pay for the postage. The USPS will take care of everything else for you.

As you can see, the use of EDDM really can help to make getting your direct mail out to customers in your area quick and relatively easy. It is a cost-effective option to get your brand in front of everyone who is in the area, and you will have to worry less about segmenting your audience at this point. This could be a good option for many businesses to consider as a major component in their direct mail marketing plan.

### **Conclusion:**

By now, you should have a much better understanding of what direct mail is and why it is so important for your business today. It's not dead. It's alive and thriving, and you can make it work for your business.

However, it is not always something that you will be able to handle on your own. Instead of pushing ahead on your own and making mistakes that could end up damaging your brand, you will want to contact someone who can help.

### **Time for Help from Professionals in the Field**

Sure, you might be able to do some of the work, and you might have some ideas. It takes time and effort though that you might want to put into other aspects of your business. Instead of trying to take care of the entire direct mail marketing campaign, you might want to get some help.



Working with professionals who make it their job to know the ins and outs of direct marketing, and who will be able to ensure that you have exactly what you need to reach the right customers is essential. It can make all the difference in the world in the quality of your marketing materials.

Just make sure that you are working with one of the best in the field who can impart their experience and knowledge to help make your campaign a success. They can make the process easier for you, allowing you to get back to all of the other aspects of running your business.

### **Bonus for You**

We can provide you with a free mail consultation with a direct mail professional to discuss your marketing needs. When you work with a professional it will help to ensure that you are making sure that your direct mail is in the right hands... hands that know that they are doing and that can help your business to succeed with direct mailers.



### **RESOURCES:**

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