

How to Increase Direct Mail Advertising Response Rates, Even During the Anthrax Scare!

By Nathan Cain

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A couple nights ago, I was watching the evening news. There was a piece about the anthrax scare. The story was about the fact that everyone is scared to open their mail.

They showed a few clips of people checking their mail with much trepidation. One woman walked up to her front door and found the mail lying on her doorstep. Instead of picking up the mail and walking inside to see what she received, she used her foot to shuffle through the mail and she kicked away any mail that she thought was the least bit suspicious.

Being in the marketing business, I couldn't help but think that she was kicking away some valuable direct mail pieces. I felt sorry for the small business owners and marketing managers that put their time and energy into creating a mailing, only to have it kicked away to decompose outside.

I also thought about all the business people that saw that news story and made up their minds that they wouldn't be using direct mail for a while.

Please don't make that same decision! Although you should use caution in this time of national crisis, you should under no circumstances pull back in your marketing efforts.

Next week every mailbox in the United States is going to receive a direct mail postcard from the U.S. Postal Service. It has a message from the Postmaster General and information on what to look for if you suspect a letter or package may contain a harmful biological agent.

Click here to preview the message they are sending.
http://www.usps.com/news/2001/press/pr01_1019postcard.htm

In view of this public service announcement, I believe there is also a need for a list of Do's and Don'ts for direct mail advertising.

Lets start with the Don'ts:

• Don't send unsolicited mail in an envelope.

Only use an envelope if you already have a relationship with the recipient.

• Don't send any mail without a legitimate return address.

Use a complete return address including company name.

• Don't use any fonts that look hand written.

Make every effort to make your mailing look as professional as possible. Now is not the time for sending "friendly" or "silly" mailings.

• Don't send any types of unsolicited boxes.

Nothing you send should be covered or concealed. The recipient should be able to tell right away that they have received a promotional item.

• Don't put restrictive endorsements such as "Personal" or "Confidential."

Instead make every effort to make your mailing look as innocent as possible.

Direct Mail advertising is still one of the best ways to gain new customers and keep your old customers!

Consider these facts:

81% of Americans read a newspaper.

96% have a phone.

98% have a TV.

100% HAVE A MAILBOX.

If you want to stay ahead of this economic decline you must continue using direct mail advertising.

If you want to increase your direct mail advertising response rates you must put the following Do's into action.

Do's:

• Do send postcards -

Of the different types of direct mail pieces available the following performed best in the category for pieces immediately read:

#1 Postcards (76.1%)

#2 Letter-size envelopes (74.3%)

#3 Flyers (67.6%)

#4 Catalogs (67.1%) (USPS)

• Do attach magnets, phone cards, or other promotional items to postcards -

Studies show that a typical sales call costs a company more than \$300. Direct Mail with promotional products like magnets, phone cards, or non-magnetic items attached can decrease the cost of securing a single sales appointment by almost 65%. (USPS)

Trade show traffic increases nearly 300% when a pre-show direct mail piece includes an attachable, such as a magnet, phone card, or non-magnetic item. (SAAGNY)

• Above all else... Do use common sense.

Imagine yourself in your prospects shoes. When you are looking down at the mail on your doorstep, do you kick it out of the way or does an innocent looking post card and a free refrigerator magnet catch your eye?

The author, Nathan Cain has more ideas that will help your business marketing efforts. Visit his company web site at <http://www.Web-Magnets.com>

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