

TOP TIPS...

...14 must do's before sending direct mail

Let's be honest – being successful with a direct mail campaign is not as easy as it looks, but don't be disheartened; once you know how, direct mail is an essential tool and should play a vital part in your marketing plan. That's why MarketingFile have put together these top tips to follow when preparing your 'DM'. Remember – if you're not happy with any of your answers to the following, then **DO NOT SEND YOUR DIRECT MAIL**; tweak, modify and amend until you are!

Pretend you're the recipient

At first glance, does your direct mail look interesting? Does the headline/title grab you and make you want to read on to find out more?

What's the point of it?

What do you want your customer to do now? What is the aim of your direct mail? Try to keep to this point and don't confuse your audience by including too much information on other things. If you go off on a tangent then so will your reader – don't lose their attention, keep them focused on what it is you want them to do.

Hard hitting, interesting and desirable

Present your offer in a way that's going to make your reader sit up and pay attention, make them want what you're offering.

Nice package!

Make sure your direct mail package 'flows'. Do all the elements appear to fit together as though intended? Or does it look like 'odds and sods' just thrown together?

Read me! Read me!

Does your DM scream read me NOW? Because if it doesn't, the chances are, it probably won't be read later either!

What's the first thing you see?

The letter is the most important part of your DM as two thirds of your audience will make a decision based on it – so make sure any other inserts you may have in the envelope come after your letter.

Needs, wants and desires. Does your letter acknowledge your audience's needs?

Your customers will only take an interest in your letter if you recognize their needs and offer them a solution – if there's nothing in it for them, there won't be a sale.

Why should they?

Your DM must clearly convey why your customers should do business with you. You've brought to their attention that they need what you're offering, now ensure they don't go elsewhere for it.

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder

Try to avoid filling your direct mail with 'pretty pictures' just because you like them – if they have no significance to the copy then they probably shouldn't be there. Only include images and graphics that improve or support the copy.

Just a note

Include a brief outline of your 'story' in your reply device. Does your fax-back form, sign-up sheet, or voucher state everything your reader needs to know and clarify what they need to do next?

It's a one time only offer

Have you given your readers a reason to reply now? It's best to coax your audience into action now, rather than give them time to go away and forget about it.

Reply now!

Have you made it painfully easy for your readers to reply? Be sure to offer every possible option: Phone, fax, email or postal etc. This should increase the number of responses you receive.

Would you?

Take a step back and look at your direct mail, or indeed, ask a colleague to take a look at it for a fresh opinion – if you received this through the post would you respond? Whether it's a 'yes' or a 'no', consider the reasons for your answer and act accordingly.

Go back and re-read the previous 13 tips

Once you have addressed all of the above, go back and check again. You never know maybe you missed something!