

How Brands Can Use Direct Mail To Help Break Through Digital Clutter

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Forbes Business Council
Aug 9, 2023

In an uncertain economic environment, it is common for businesses to cut their marketing budgets as they tighten their belts and focus on the tactics that drive the most return on investment. According to a survey of 43 multinational companies by the World Federation of Advertisers ([via Insider Intelligence](#)), almost 30% of respondents said they are cutting their 2023 marketing budgets, with 74% citing the economic downturn as the major influence on this choice. Whether your marketing budget is in the millions or thousands, a renewed focus on efficient spending is a must.

This increased attention to budgets has led to a [surprising shift](#) in spending to more traditional advertising tactics that can help marketers cut through the clutter of digital techniques. As a result, direct mail is one tactic brands are leveraging to stand out and get noticed by customers.

Why Brands Might Consider Direct Mail

Many people are bombarded with endless advertising messages on their screens—from sales DMs on LinkedIn to automatically playing videos as they scroll Facebook. Ensuring your marketing message is delivered at the right

time to the right person is becoming more and more of a challenge as advertising costs and competition increase.

In contrast, a physical piece of mail is something many look forward to. In a [USPS survey](#), 72% of Gen Z respondents said they're "excited to discover what the mail brings every day," and 38% of those surveyed visited an organization's website after receiving a relevant piece of direct mail. Furthermore, about 70% of Gen X survey respondents said they believe mail is more personal than digital communications.

I believe it's that personal connection that drives the success of physically mailed items. Specifically in B2B settings where an ongoing personal connection is key, your emails could be hitting spam folders or ignored. Half of consumers ages 35 to 54 said direct mail "feels more important than receiving an email from a brand," according to a [survey](#) of 2,111 U.S. consumers by Lob and Comperemedia (registration required).

You also don't need a prospect to "opt-in" to your mailed communications like the digital world, but that makes what you send all the more important to ensure a positive interaction. Based on my experience leading a corporate gifting company, I've found that's why today's direct mail sometimes includes corporate gifts.

Customer acquisition is highly important for the long-term strategic growth of a business, but acquiring customers can be more expensive than engaging and retaining current customers—a challenge with decreased marketing budgets. The cost of acquiring new customers is often said to be five times higher than the cost of retaining existing customers. By shifting some of your focus on customer retention, you can maximize the value of current customers, greatly

improving your annual recurring revenue—an important focus when budgets are limited.

Mailed messaging gives a relevant reason to engage with your current customers and shows a personal touch that is highly valued in B2B relationships. Consider celebrating the wins of your customers, like new product launches, work anniversaries or even birthdays, by giving them a thoughtful gift with a reminder of any updates from your business. They might not click on your latest newsletter, but they will be delighted to open that box of goodies.

How To Get Started With Direct Mail And Corporate Gifts

Customize with data.

Just like the work you do with your digital marketing efforts, direct mail and gift-giving start and stop with data. From prospect to lead, you will want to track your contact's intent, needs for your product or services and personal attributes to aid your outreach. Whether through survey collection or a good sales conversation, keep track of your prospect or customer's interests. For instance, do they like the outdoors? Do they have a sweet tooth? Do they staunchly support ESG values? Once you know what your customers care about, you can customize your gifts and messaging.

Find the balance in your marketing mix.

Direct mail shouldn't be planned in a vacuum. When you set out to create a marketing plan, develop direct mail and gift-giving tactics as one arm in a data-driven, multi-channel strategy. To do this effectively, you will need ways to track the success of your "offline" campaigns and how they interact with

your digital campaigns. Successful tracking strategies include driving your direct mail recipients to a specific vanity URL, encouraging the use of a code for your call-to-action or leveraging QR codes to simplify digital follow-up. Your customer relationship management system can capture your prospect or client across their journey from offline to digital and back again to effectively drive conversions throughout the mix.

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