Common Direct Mail Formats

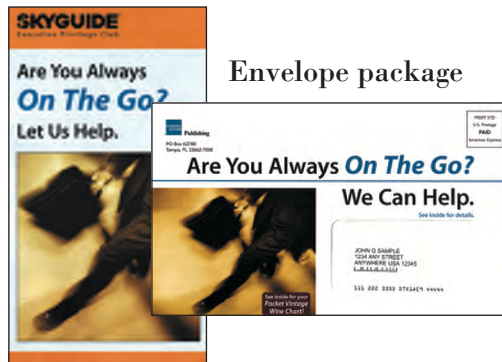**Brochure**

Buckslip

Catalog

Digest booklet

Lift note

Envelope package

Package Inserts

Newsletters

Personalized Letter

Magalog

Postcard and Double Postcard

Self-Mailer

Start Here

Before you can execute any direct mail program, it's important to establish your marketing goals. Pre-established goals will produce more meaningful post-program measurements of success. Ask yourself the following questions:

■ What do we want to accomplish with this direct mail program?

■ Who do we want to reach? What are their characteristics?

■ What are your target customers or prospects like and what types of messages, offers and direct mail designs and formats might they find most appealing?

■ When is the best time to launch this direct mail program?

■ What can we budget for this direct mail program?

Direct Mail Design and Copywriting Tips

The 40-40-20 Rule

The 40-40-20 rule is a standard principle in direct mail. Forty-percent of a direct mail program's success is attributed to targeting the right customers or prospects. Another 40% results from extending the right offer to these customers or prospects. The remaining 20% of a mail program's results are contributed by the design.

Many novice direct marketers spend more time worrying about the design, and less about the most important elements of a successful direct mail program -- making the right offer to the right prospects. However, because mistakes can increase costs and reduce response rates, we offer these tips for the design and production of a winning direct mail program.

Direct Mail Design and Copywriting Tips, continued

Direct Mail Design

It's important to design a direct mail piece that appeals to your target audience and motivates them to respond.

- Colors: Use colors that are attractive to your customers and prospects. For example, bold and masculine colors are better suited for direct mail aimed at young men. Pale pastels are more attractive to teen girls.

- Typeface and Fonts: Choose typefaces that are pleasing to the eye and easy to read. Don't crowd type. Leave plenty of white space to enhance readability.

Copywriting

Response rates rise when copy is written in a style that speaks to your customers and prospects in motivating language. Key points to remember are:

- Personalize the copy, using the customer's name whenever possible.
- Focus on the benefits of your product or service, not the features. This adds meaning for the recipient.
- Use powerful action words and phrases that generate response. Examples include: free, new, save, for a limited time, or exclusive offer.
- Use everyday language that reflects your customers' lifestyle.
- Don't be subtle. Solicit a commitment or ask for a response upfront and near the end of your mail piece.

Choosing Paper and Formats

Your Cenveo representative can recommend paper options and direct mail formats that meet your communications goals and budget and that portray your company's image.

Top Ten Tips to Avoid Costly Mistakes

Don't waste valuable marketing dollars. Follow these tips to increase response rates, reduce costs and avoid production mistakes:

- Use personalization throughout a mailing package to increase response rates as much as 30%.
- Repeat contact information throughout a mail piece or catalog. Don't lose a sale because an impatient prospect couldn't easily locate your contact information.
- When using a window envelope, be sure the entire name/address shows through the window and does not wiggle back and forth. Do not let design art show through the window.
- Be sure reply forms and envelopes are sized to fit inside the outgoing envelope.
- Restrict inks to standard colors on laser personalized mail. Avoid metallic inks or spot varnishes.
- Do not use coated stock for laser personalized mail.
- Do not use background ink screens behind addresses that are greater than 15%.
- Limit the size of the mailing package to postal acceptable standards to qualify for postal discounts.
- Standard Mail is not returned when addresses are incorrect. Using Standard Mail will not facilitate updates of your mailing list.
- Z-fold inserts may slow inserting machines and increase production time and costs.

Glossary - Mail Production

Bangtail A small flap of paper on the back of an envelope that is removed along a perforated line to open the envelope package. Some marketers print a marketing message on the bangtail.

Booklet Booklets come in various sizes. The sizes most often used are digest size (5" x 8") or standard letter page size (8.5" x 11").

BRC Business Reply Card. A BRC can be built into a one-sheet mail piece or produced as an independent piece that is inserted in the mailing package.

BRE Business Reply Envelope.

BRM Business Reply Mail. BRM enables a company to receive replies from customers via First Class Mail by paying for the customer's return postage costs. BRM requires that the company obtain a BRM permit from the post office.

Brochure Brochures are multiple panel or multiple page informational pieces. The most common brochures are: 8.5" x 11" or brochures folded to 3.5" x 8," to easily slip into a #10 envelope.

Buckslip A single sheet that is inserted in a mailing package and is similar to a flyer. A buckslip usually promotes a special offer or announces a response deadline ("if you act now").

Card Deck Cards in a card deck are usually 3.5" x 5." Each card features an offer for a different product or service from various companies that are all trying to reach the same type of customer in a cost-effective way.

Catalog Catalogs are multiple page booklets that showcase multiple products or services. Catalogs vary in size dimensions. Common sizes are approximately 6"x 9," 11" x 6" or 8.5" x 11."

Cleaned List A list that has been processed to remove duplicates, bad addresses and unwanted names/addresses. Addresses are also standardized to meet postal specifications.

Closed-face Envelope A closed-face envelope does not have a window and requires an address label or laser or inkjet addressing.

Digest Size A digest size booklet or letterhead sheet is 5" x 8."

De-duplication A data processing function that removes duplicates that appear between multiple mailing lists.

Double Postcard A double postcard has two halves and is folded to postcard size. Typically one-half may include the reply postcard.

Hand Match Hand matching is a process that uses manual labor to match multiple personalized pieces.

Inkjet Copy or address information that is printed onto a mail piece using spray jets that blow ink onto the paper. Inkjet can be used on most paper stocks.

Insert Any item that in placed in a direct mail package such as a buckslip, lift note, brochure or letter.

Johnson Box A lined box that is placed above the body of a letter. It contains a headline or a summary of the letter's main message or offer.

Laser Variable copy or address information that is placed on a mail piece using laser ink technology. Lasering offers high resolution.

Lift Note A folded sheet that is placed in a mail package to deliver an additional message, such as a testimonial or an additional plea to accept the offer. The lift note got its name because it typically lifts response rates.

Magalog A magalog looks like a magazine and features articles and information, but the pages are also sprinkled with merchandise that is for sale. It's half-magazine and half-catalog.

Merge/Purge A data processing technique to merge several mailing lists and purge any duplicates among the lists to produce one single mailing list.

Offer The purpose of the mail piece, the advertised deal, bargain or special opportunity.

Package Inserts See Inserts.

Perfect-bound A glued binding system for booklets that secures all pages without staples, thread, or punch holes for rings.

Personalization Mail that is personally addressed to the recipient (instead of Occupant). Personalization is also used throughout a mail piece by including the recipient's name or other customer-specific information in appropriate places throughout the copy.

Postcard One of the least expensive mailing formats. Postcards no bigger than 4.25" x 6" receive the deepest postage discount. Larger postcards must either be mailed Standard or First-Class. A double postcard is folded in half and can include a Business Reply Card.

Premium A special gift available to customers who respond to the offer.

P.S. A postscript appears at the bottom of a letter below the salutation. A carefully crafted P.S. increases response rates.

Reply Mail (BRM) See Business Reply Mail.

Score A folding line pressed into a mail piece by a machine to facilitate folding without cracking the ink or paper.

Self-mailer A mail piece that does not have an envelope. Examples include newsletters, brochures, and booklets.

Staple Stitch Staples placed along the spine of a booklet or multi-page pamphlet.

Tabs Circular stickers that seal shut the edges of catalogs, newsletters, booklets or other items with multiple pages. Sealing the edges reduces postage costs because sealed edges permit the item to move through the postal service's automated machines.

Testing Marketers vary the offer, design or types of mailing lists within one mail program to see which offer, design or mail list produces the best results.

Wafers See Tabs.

Window Envelope Envelopes that have an opening to expose an address printed on an insert so the address is visible through the window.

Glossary – Postal Terms

Address Float When using a window envelope the address on the insert cannot wiggle in the envelope in any direction to limit visibility of the entire address in the window.

Address Standardization When the name, address, city, state and zip-code are formatted to meet postal standards. For example, when a list includes the complete name of a state, Address Standardization software will format the state's name in the postal service's standard two letter abbreviation for the state.

Aspect Ratio To receive postal discounts or avoid additional postage costs, the postal service requires that mail pieces meet a specific aspect ratio of length to width to insure that the piece is sufficiently rectangular.

Automated Mail Mail that meets specific postal size requirements can be sorted in the postal service's automated machines and therefore receives a deeper postage discount.

Barcode A barcode encodes an address' zipcode directly on the mail piece. Barcoded mail speeds sorting by the postal service's automated machines and qualifies for postage discounts.

BCS Barcode Sorter. A mail processing machine that automatically reads barcodes on mail pieces to quickly sort the mail. BCS mail receives a postage discount.

CASS Coding Accuracy Support System checks and corrects addresses and zipcodes for accuracy. Invalid addresses are rejected for mailing. This function can be performed by Cenveo.

Carrier Route Mail that is sorted to track the path that a postal carrier follows on a route. This creates efficiency for the postal service and allows the mailer to receive postage discounts.

Co-mingling To obtain postal discounts, mail pieces from one mailing program with a similar mail package may be combined with mail from another mail program to enable all companies to receive deeper postal discounts for their mail pieces.

Delivery Point Validation A validation process that confirms that an address exists or does not exist. For example, DPV confirms new addresses when new housing developments create new homes. DPV also confirms when old addresses disappear, for example when an apartment building is demolished.

FIM Facing Identification Mark. A pattern of vertical bars that appears on the upper right edge of a business reply mail (BRM). The bars are an orientation mark that is used by the postal service's automated machines.

First-Class Mail Mail that is posted at the highest postal rate. If any intended recipients have recently moved and left a forwarding address, the postal service will forward the mail at no extra charge.

Indicia A pre-printed mark on outgoing mail that indicates that the sender has pre-paid the outgoing postage using money in the company's pre-established postal permit account.

Merlin Mail Evaluation Readability Lookup Instrument. Merlin verifies the readability of addresses and the accuracy of the address barcode. Mail pieces that meet established postal standards for readability and accuracy move faster through the postal system.

NCOA National Change of Address. Cenveo's direct mail divisions offer the NCOA service to update a mailing list.

Planet Coding The postal service can provide a code to segments of sorted mail to enable a company to track the progress of the mail along the mail stream. Mail can be tracked to its arrival at post offices and carrier-routes, but Planet Coding cannot confirm when an individual mail piece entered the mailbox of an individual recipient.

Pre-canceled Stamp Stamps that are cancelled by printing placed across the face of the stamp before the piece is mailed.

Sorting Mail that is arranged in a specific order to obtain postal discounts. Sorting is done by zipcode or carrier-route.

Standard Mail Previously referred to as Bulk Mail or Third-Class Mail. Standard Mail receives the deepest postage discounts. Undeliverable mail is not returned to the sender when using Standard Mail.

Total Weight The combined weight of one mail piece and all of its contents. Standard Mail pieces may weigh up to 16 oz. First Class Mail is limited to one ounce and is charged extra postage for each additional ounce.