

Target Marketing

Top 5 Ways to Personalize Direct Mail

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If I were to ask a group "What would interest you and capture your attention with a direct mail piece?" I guarantee that I would get lots of different answers. All of us have opinions, some stronger than others on certain subjects, but those opinions are what drive each of us. **The power of direct mail is that we can create individually personalized pieces** so that Tom has an offer that interests him, and Sue has a different offer that interests her. The best part is that the pieces can look identical except for the offer message. This can help you save money while increasing your response rate.

How To Use Personalized Data:

- 1. Name:** The quickest and easiest way to start personalizing is to include the name. Not just in the address block, but as part of the offer. Use first name so that you are using a conversational tone. This should not be your only form of personalization on the piece, but it helps to include the first name. (Just make sure that it is the right name!)
- 2. Gender:** If you have an offer that appeals differently to women than to men, this can be a great way to segment your offer. In many cases women look at products and services differently than men. Use that to your advantage with targeted offers. (Make sure that your data on gender is correct, sending the wrong message can make people angry)
- 3. Past Purchase/Donation History:** Use what you know about each person to personalize their offer. If they bought peanut butter, reference that when offering jelly. If they made a donation previously, note that donation amount and ask if they can help with an increased amount this year. (Make sure that you make logical associations between a past purchase and a current offer. Don't send me an offer for coffee when I bought tea, it may mean that I don't like coffee.)
- 4. Reminders:** If there is an average use time for your product or service, create incremental reminders to customers that they should be ready to buy again. Include a coupon for another purchase, and make sure to have an expiration date to create urgency. (Be careful not to over remind people. Sending too much direct mail can have a negative effect.)
- 5. Location:** This can be used to entice people to join their neighbors and buy the same things. (The "Keeping Up With the Jones'" mentality) Point out that others on the block have purchased your product or service, and they should not miss out.

The trick to doing this correctly is the database. You need to be collecting information about your customers/prospects in order to give them better offers. The better the offer, the less likely it will be considered junk mail and thrown away. Do not waste your money sending direct mail to people who don't want it. Your database is your goldmine. Treat it with the utmost care and constantly make changes to it.

If you don't have much information in your database, start small. Look at the list above and see what you can do with the information you do have. There are profile list services out there to help you learn more about your customers. If you use list profile services, remember the information is more of a generalization to categorize people. Do not use the information as a fact, since it could lead you to assume incorrectly about what people like and dislike. **Personalization can be the catalyst to catapult your direct mail response to the next level.**