



The many “...abilities” of Direct Mail

Direct mail has certain “abilities” which allow it to work for you: *flexibility*, the ability to schedule, alter and improve your direct mail effort at a pace of your choosing; *target-ability*, the ability to choose the person’s with whom you wish to communicate; *measurability*, the ability to record and assess the results of your efforts; and *accountability*, the ability to prove the cost-effectiveness of your direct mail campaign.

Flexibility

Simply put, direct mail has the ability to reach 100 percent of the U.S. population in its mailboxes. It is possible to reach nearly anybody at any time with the use of direct mail. Other forms of advertising like TV or print publications require substantial lead time in order to accommodate production schedules. This issue is eliminated with direct mail since the timing is in the control of the advertiser.

When new opportunities arise within the marketplace, your direct mail campaign can be quickly altered to meet the new needs of the market. This ability to adapt to changing market conditions allows for continuous improvement in your marketing efforts.

Target-ability

Direct mail allows us to precisely choose our audience and talk directly to them. You do not have to waste money on people who won’t be interested in your product or service. When you spend thousands of dollars to run an advertisement on broadcast television, you may or may not reach the group of people you want. You’re not talking directly to them. However with a well-targeted and well-written direct mail effort, you are spending money to have a one-on-one experience with the people who you have identified as having an interest in doing business with you.

Measurability

Measurability refers to the ability to determine the effectiveness of a direct mail campaign. Unlike other types of advertising and promotion, direct mail is easily measurable. With good record keeping and a few easy to master mathematical formulas, anyone can quickly determine whether or not a given strategy is working. Later in this book, you will find formulas to guide you in measuring your efforts and response.

Accountability

Tracking your direct mail effort and determining its value makes it a self-funding medium. Your campaign will make you money or it won’t. You can track, analyze and remove guesswork. Direct mail is simple: if you spend “x” amount of dollars, you get “x” amount of return. You know if your campaign is financially effective, and few other advertising methods allow you to measure exact effectiveness. Direct mail gives you that ability.

Confidentiality

While technically an “ality” rather than an ability, direct mail allows you the “ability” to talk to people without anyone else’s knowledge, affording you the rare opportunity to have a one-on-one, private conversation via the mail. Your competition doesn’t know you are doing it, and other people don’t know you are communicating. It also allows one to speak to the customer or prospect without distractions. You can send that message and the audience can read it whenever they choose. Unlike other types of advertising, direct mail even allows the prospect the option of saving the message for future reference and/or a later decision.