



The Anatomy of a Successful Direct Mail Letter

Having a life of its own, the successful direct mail piece has critical anatomy that makes it work:

- Envelope
- Opening
- Offer Preview
- Selling Copy
- The Offer
- The Call to Action

Envelopes—It's what's on the inside that counts...or is it?

The direct mail letter is the most popular method of using direct mail. The envelope is the most overlooked component of any letter. Typically, a business picks a #10 white envelope, puts the logo in the corner and away it goes in the mail. This can be a dreadful mistake. Remember the purpose of the envelope is to deliver the message inside; however it's a means of advertising you should not overlook.

The Opening

A strong opening can make or break a direct mail letter. Readers will decide to continue reading or not based on their perception of the opening. Just like the lead of a news article, the opening should grab the reader's attention and create interest.

The Offer Preview

Many readers will read the first paragraph or two of your letter but may not read the entire content. Thus you must use these paragraphs to preview the offer and give them a reason to continue investigating your letter's contents.

Selling Copy

The selling copy is the talking points of your sales letter. How does your product or service help solve your customer's problem? Why should the customer buy from you instead of the competition? This is your opportunity to inform the customer and differentiate yourself.

The Offer

Here is your opportunity to explain your offer in detail. Do so as concisely as possible without leaving questions unanswered. Direct mail only works if the prospect's questions are readily answered. Be sure to include any "fine print" here including specific conditions or qualifications required in order to receive the offer.

The Call to Action

Never close your letter without asking your audience to do something! You sent a direct mail piece so you could get a response, so solicit that response, whether it's asking them to buy your product via mail, go to your web site, call your company, or use a coupon on their next purchase – be sure to ask the question.