



The Direct Mail Phoenix Rises Again

Paired with the latest
technology, direct mail
might be your secret
marketing weapon



Signal Graphics®



When touch is part of the marketing experience, it helps shift the brain into a deeper level of engagement while building knowledge.

SAPPI research study

the mythical phoenix bird rising from the ashes to live again, direct mail often plays a leading role in successful integrated marketing campaigns.

Here, then, is a bird's-eye view of today's smartest direct mail practices. Paired with the latest technology and best practices, this time-honored medium just might be your secret marketing weapon.

Direct Mail: Myths vs. Facts

It's easy to understand why so many integrated marketers shy away from direct mail these days. After all, it's a traditional marketing method that seems out-of-sync with our high-tech world. Compared to cutting-edge digital marketing that can often be harnessed almost instantly, mailings are seen as costly, time-consuming and old-fashioned. But while there is certainly some truth to all of this, it's far from reality. Among the common myths:

- **Direct mail doesn't work for business-to-business marketing efforts.** *Fact check:* Actually, direct mail response rates are higher than they've been in over 10 years. In addition, the Direct Marketing Association's 2016 report noted that "...direct mail response rates blow digital channels out of the water."¹
- **People prefer email to direct mail.** *Fact check:* The open rate for direct mail averages 80-90%, while a good open rate for email is 20-30%.²

1. From "Direct mail response rates are at their highest point in more than a decade." (<https://www.iwco.com/blog/2017/01/20/direct-mail-response-rates-and-2016-dma-report/>)

2. From "Direct mail marketing statistics for small businesses." (<https://smallbiztrends.com/2017/01/direct-mail-marketing-statistics.html>)

DIRECT MAIL USAGE BY INDUSTRY:

71%	Financial services
63%	Consumer Packaged Goods
55%	Retail
55%	Travel or Hospitality
54%	Publishing or Media
50%	Non Profit
50%	Insurance
48%	Healthcare
47%	B-to-B Services
47%	Technology
59%	Other

DMA & Demand Metric,
2016 Response Rate Report



- **Sophisticated data and analytics aren't available for direct mail.**

Fact check: Direct mail experts know B2B marketers can leverage the same data-first approach they already use in digital campaigns.³ Tools for measuring and analyzing direct mail have advanced steadily, applying measurements like market attribution—the science of determining what media are driving purchases.⁴

Why Direct Mail Soars for B2B

From smartphones to smart TVs to streaming and gaming, most of us live a decidedly digital existence. Video chat and online services increasingly replace face-to-face meetings. Still, there is nothing quite like holding something physical in your hands, carrying it into the conference room to share with colleagues or slipping it inside your briefcase to peruse later. Working in concert with your integrated campaign, well-executed direct mail has a tangible appeal and can attract a crowd.

A Purposeful Path to Success

Direct mail lends itself to a variety of marketing goals. Here are five kinds of direct mail campaigns for B2B:⁵

1. **Awareness mailers.** *Best suited for:* Branding initiatives and making a positive first impression. *Call to action:* Light, if any.
2. **Appointment mailers.** *Best suited for:* Converting warm leads into opportunities. *Call to action:* Strong, often with an incentive.
3. **Shareable mailers.** *Best suited for:* Convincing recipients of the mailer to sing your praises. *Typical characteristics:* Something edible such as a box of candy, a tin of popcorn, or a gift card.
4. **Closer mailers.** *Best suited for:* Mailings targeting decision makers, or for existing clients when business has slowed. *Typical characteristics:* Highly branded, personal and memorable, ranging from a bottle of wine to sporting event tickets.
5. **Advocacy mailers.** *Best suited for:* New customers. *Purpose:* Encourage those new customers to become advocates for your brand. *Possibilities:* Branded swag and/or goodies to hand out.

Landing the Right Package

Once you've identified the purpose of your mailing, it's time to decide what kind of mailer you want to send. From standard letter size to postcards, oversized envelopes, and dimensional mailers, each method has a different

3. From "6 best practices for more effective direct mail campaigns." (<https://radius.com/2016/07/29/best-practices-effective-direct-mail-campaigns/>)

4. From "What is marketing attribution?" (<https://www.convertro.com/faq/what-is-marketing-attribution>)

5. From "Why is B2B direct mail so effective?" (<https://www.bizible.com/blog/types-of-direct-mail-campaigns-in-b2b-marketing>)

A few facts from printisbig.com:

Direct mail increases online donations by **40%**

Think print isn't green? There are **20%** more trees in the U.S. today than on Earth Day 40 years ago.

Print is 43% less annoying than the internet. Customers appreciate getting a nice postcard, well-designed catalog, or personal thank-you note in the mail today.

George P. Johnson Experience Marketing, 2014. *The Modern Event Is Now a Strategic Marketing Initiative*, <http://gpj.com.au/the-renaissance-of-event-marketing/>

rate of response. Here are five popular mailing types and their associated response rates:⁶

1. Oversized envelopes: 5%
2. Postcards: 4.25%
3. Dimensional: 4%
4. Catalogs: 3.9%
5. Letter-sized: 3.5%

Keep in mind that while response rates vary, so do mailing costs! Among the key deciding factors are the price of your mailing and its appeal to the intended audience. In many B2B environments, higher investments in direct mail are worth every penny for prospects that offer a greater lifetime value to your company over time.

Developing a Flight Plan

While mass mailings still exist, the trend in direct mail is toward increased personalization, precision-timed mailings, integrated campaigns and accurate measurement:⁷

- **Personalization:** First, pull prospect data from multiple resources, including CRMs, marketing automation platforms and outside resources. Use the targeted data to put together a customized and personal direct mail effort.
- **Timing:** Like many things in life and business, timing is everything for direct mail. Develop offers that meet your audience wherever they happen to be on the customer journey, embellishing the experience by highlighting important touch points.

- **Integration:** When you sit down to develop the creative for a direct mail piece, make sure it works with your overall campaign. Direct mail meshes seamlessly with digital components, such as QR codes, augmented reality, personalized URLs, and more. Also remember that a campaign approach beats a one-shot deal—direct mail is a multiple-impression medium!
- **Measure and optimize.** Always test the performance of your direct mail campaigns. As data rolls in, tweak the creative and make adjustments for the next wave of mailings. Test. Then test again.



6. From "Direct Mail Marketing: The ultimate guide for small businesses." (<https://fitsmallbusiness.com/direct-mail/>)

7. From "6 best practices for more effective direct mail campaigns." (<https://radius.com/2016/07/29/best-practices-effective-direct-mail-campaigns/>)

Brands would do well to reconsider direct mail for their retention and acquisition efforts. According to the DMA, customer response rates have increased year-over-year by 43% but prospect response rates have more than doubled—reporting an astounding 190% increase!

Hatching the Perfect Partnership

There's nothing like direct mail to quite literally get your business into the hands of new prospects and loyal customers alike. But to leverage the full power of direct mail you'll need to have the right team in place.

Signal Graphics' comprehensive direct mail and mailing services give you the flexibility to get a little help...or a lot. We're talking everything from project consultation and management to graphic design and printing—including variable printing for one-to-one marketing. Whether you need help developing or purchasing a targeted list for a specific communication or offering, or if you just want to blanket a market area using the Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) program offered by the U.S.P.S., we're your go-to company.

We can guide you through a spectrum of paper and color options—some of which didn't exist a few short years ago, including textured papers and unique ink colors that will create a "wow factor" for your mailings.

Signal Graphics can even automate your direct mail program. Daily, weekly or monthly, whatever cadence you prefer, everything goes out on time—and at the best possible postage rate. And of course, we provide all the bells and whistles like kitting and fulfillment services.

So for direct mail—or anything in the direct marketing realm—Signal Graphics knows the territory. Allow us to take the weight off your shoulders and enable you to do what you do best—run your business.

Turn Your Marketing Campaign Into a Flying Machine

It's ironic but true: Good ol' direct mail may be the golden opportunity you are looking for to launch your next integrated B2B marketing campaign. Mailing lets you leverage all of the data and analytical tools you may already use in your digital effort—with the ability to stand out from the digital marketing onslaught.

Don't junk this proven, profit-producing medium. Embrace the unlimited possibilities direct mail holds to help your sales take off.