

# Five Strengths of Direct Mail

**No matter what the project, finding the right tool for the job is important. For marketers, direct mail can be an effective tool for reaching your audience and getting your message heard.**

## FIVE STRENGTHS OF DIRECT MAIL

To paraphrase Mark Twain, the reports of direct mail's demise are greatly exaggerated. In fact, direct mail has so many strengths that 80 percent of marketers use it to promote a product or service and 28 percent of marketers say they will be using direct mail more in the next year. Variable data printing (VDP) and other technology that allow for more targeted messages make direct mail a stronger means of marketing than ever before.

### 1. DIRECT MAIL IS VERSATILE

Direct mail can take many forms. From post cards and product samples to catalogs and tri-fold brochures, the pieces that arrive in the mailbox are a mixed bag.

Direct mail's numerous formats are a bonanza for marketers, who can develop marketing pieces that burst through the clutter and grab attention with pieces that have appealing, consistent design and clear calls to action.

Direct mail also allows a business to keep in touch with its current customers as well as attract new business.

For example, a dentist's office might send a series of post cards to a client during the year: a birthday greeting; reminders of twice yearly checkups and cleanings; a special cosmetic dentistry offer; and an announcement of a new office, location or service.



**DIRECT MARKETING**  
TRANSACTIONAL  
INTERACTIVE  
FUNDRAISING  
FULFILLMENT

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*“28% of marketers say they will be using direct mail more in the next year.”*

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Need more info for your next direct marketing project?

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A heating and air company seeking new business might send mailers to homeowners to remind them to have furnaces cleaned or cooling systems tuned up and educational flyers about the toll that dirty filters take on heating and air systems.

## 2. DIRECT MAIL TOUCHES AUDIENCES

There is nothing tangible about email marketing. Direct mail, on the other hand, is all about touch and feel. The U.S. Postal Service has asked its customers how they view their mail and surprisingly, in a technological age, people say they still look forward to their mail. In fact, 73 percent say they prefer to receive marketing message by direct mail. People like to read mail and, often, they keep it around. One study found that consumers kept a quarter of the direct mail pieces they received for 30 days or more.

## 3. DIRECT MAIL APPEALS TO ALL AGES

The postal service found that people of all ages—not just those over 50—like to get mail. And when the mail comes, it gets quick attention, unlike emails that might go unopened or unanswered. Most people say they make collecting and sorting the daily mail a priority. The U.S. Postal Service's annual Household Diary studies show that even the younger, digital generation is influenced by mailed marketing messages. Some 76 percent of that audience said they had made a purchase based on something they had gotten in the mail.



## 4. DIRECT MAIL ALWAYS COMES THROUGH

Email communications are not always reliable. Firewalls, spam filters and other issues can block the messages we send. But direct mail sent through the U.S. mail does go through. If a mailing list is up to date, a marketer can be assured that a mailing landed in an intended recipient's mailbox and that they saw the piece. In comparison, Americans say they read only 22 percent of their email and that 84 percent of the email they receive is considered junk.



## 5. DIRECT MAIL ALLOWS FOR PERSONALIZATION

Direct mail allows marketing to be targeted in a number of ways.

Targeting begins with mailing lists. There's a list for most every audience a marketer hopes to reach. If a company has a new shopping cart to sell to grocery stores, it can buy a mailing list for grocery stores. If a garden center wants to let vegetable gardeners know about the newest in seeds for the summer season, there's a mailing list for that.

Direct mail is also becoming increasingly personalized because of variable data printing (VDP). VDP allows a marketer to take a mailed piece and personalize it in myriad ways—from adding the recipient's first name in the greeting to changing the picture used on the piece. For example, a department store could send a post card featuring a new purse to a female customers; the same post card, for a male customer, would feature a sports coat. A restaurant with multiple locations in one city could design a map that would pinpoint a different restaurant location, depending on the recipient's address.

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*“Consumers keep 25% of the direct mail pieces they receive for 30 days or more.”*

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Variable data printing is an investment that pays. Studies have shown that personalized marketing messages produce profits and revenues that are 31 percent higher than generic messages.