



Free Report: 6 Direct Mail Mistakes That Will Waste Your Small Business' Money

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Mistake #1: The poorly targeted mailing list *"I'll send my mailing to everyone in the county and get my name out there."*

How to avoid this mistake: There is nothing more important to a successful direct mail campaign than **Knowing Your Target Market**. It doesn't do you any good to send postcards to accounting firms if you are selling medical supplies. The easiest way to figure out who to target with your direct mail is to look at your current customers. What do your top ten customers look like? What do they have in common? Are they businesses or consumers? Older or younger? Do they all fall within a similar income or revenue bracket? How are they located geographically? Another great (and often overlooked) place to start with a mailing list is your own customer list. It is far easier and less costly to sell new products and services to customers that already know and trust you than it is to generate new sales from a cold contact who knows little or nothing about you. Are you certain you've exhausted all your opportunities with current customers?

Mistake #2: The laundry-list message *"I'll list all the wonderful services and/or products that I offer."*

How to avoid this mistake: Just like with your list, you have to **Know Your Target Market** when it comes to your message. You can send brochures, postcards or letters with the most beautiful pictures or the most impressive list of services, but if there's nothing else to capture your audience's attention, they will not respond to your mailer. One of the most common problems is using a "laundry list" of products and services. **Potential customers do not care what features you have to offer.** What they care about is what benefit those features offer them. Can you save them money? Can you generate more sales for their business? Can you make their job or life easier? Tell your customers what problem(s) you can solve for them. Be sure to be specific with your target market. Dentists face different challenges than Family Practitioners, even though they are both in the medical profession.

Mistake #3: The 'like-everyone-else' selling proposition *"I offer quality, reliability and excellent customer service."*

How to avoid this mistake: You need to differentiate yourself from other service providers. Once you know your **Target Market** and understand how to speak to their specific problems,

you have to communicate what you have to offer to potential customer that no one else does. It's likely that your potential customers have dealt with someone selling a service or product similar to your own. Why should they choose your service over in-sourcing, a competitor or getting their brother-in-law to help them out over the weekend? For instance, Reliant Mailing seeks to set itself apart as the only mail service provider in the area that works with small businesses to create ongoing, effective mail marketing campaigns that generate real results for our clients. What makes your selling proposition unique? It's important to note when discussing this mistake that **everyone expects great quality, reliability and service**. How many companies do you know that market their services or products as standard quality or of questionable reliability? If you are trying to set yourself apart in these areas, be specific about what you offer (i.e. "With our service, your call will always be answered by a live person 24 hours a day, 7 days a week")

Mistake #4: The one-shot mailing *"I'll send my mailer out to 100,000 names and someone is bound to respond."*

How to avoid this mistake: Simply put, **don't send one-shot mailings**. One of the most common scenarios in the mailing business is the small business owner who has caught the "marketing bug" and goes to their printer or mailer with an idea for a postcard and wants to send it to everyone in a 100-mile radius. This is one of the most effective ways to waste your marketing dollars. It cannot be overstated that single-shot mailings do not work. Consider that you, like most people, probably open your mail over the trash can. A mailpiece has a few seconds at best to capture your attention. If it does manage to capture your attention, what are the odds that you've received it at a time when you don't need to make a phone call, have to leave for a meeting or are ready to break for lunch? The odds that a one-shot mailpiece will hit a prospect's desk at the exact moment they are receptive to the message is slim to none. In fact, studies show that, in order for your name and/or logo to register with a potential contact, they need to see it 7 times. It is far more effective (and a great deal less expensive) to mail seven times to 1,000 prospects than one time to 100,000. Repetition and consistency are critical to a mailing campaign.

Mistake #5: The offer-free mailing *"My postcard has my address, phone number and the services I offer. What more does it need?"*

How to avoid this mistake: Include an offer and call-to-action with every piece of mail you send. It is infinitely more difficult to get potential customers to respond when they have no compelling reason to. Sending out a mailpiece with your services and contact information is not sufficient motivation for contacts to interrupt their busy schedules to call you. Offering a discount, free evaluation or a free report, for example, gives a potential customer a reason to contact you. It is equally important that you *tell* your potential customer what you want them

to do. Do they need to call in order to receive a discount, or register on your website in order to receive a free report? A clear call to action coupled with a genuinely valuable offer is critical to the success of your direct mail campaign. Finally, include an expiration date for the offer so that there is a sense of urgency. Otherwise, your mailer may end up in a stack of “things-to-do-one-day” on someone’s desk.

Mistake #6: The uncounted results *“I’ve developed a strong list, a great message and a compelling offer. What more is there to do?”*

How to avoid this mistake: Quantify *everything*. This is not a difficult process. Simply create an Excel spreadsheet to track what you’ve mailed, when and the level of response you received. Many small business owners are guilty of making marketing decisions based on feelings and emotion. Any marketing campaign is going to have some hits and misses, especially in the beginning, but if you track those hits and misses, you get an impartial picture of what works and what doesn’t. Important things to watch for include; which offers receive the best responses; how do response rates change with repeated mailings to the same lists; what are the demographics of contacts who respond to the mailing. Tracking this kind of information gives you a better idea of what motivates your target market and how best to generate interest in your business.

We hope that this report will give you a better idea of how to make direct mail marketing work for your business. Understand that this report is provided to you at no cost and no obligation and you are free to utilize the information however you wish. However, if you would like further help we are happy to provide our services to you and would love to help you put these ideas into action. The foundation of our business is building result-driven mailing strategies for small to medium businesses like yours. If you would like us to help grow your business, call us today at **828-388-1664** or email us at **info@reliantmailing.com**

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