

10 KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL DIRECT MAIL MARKETING CAMPAIGN

1. Mail to the right people.

Having a strategy in place before building your mailing list is the most important key to any direct mail marketing campaign. Think about those who have the most potential to become residents of your community, and base your process of building targeted lists on geographic trends, competitive locations, perceived or real barriers to where people will move in your local area, financial means necessary to live at your community, and a likely age when people will first consider a move to your community.

2. Be sure you have a clean list for best results.

Mailing to the right people means not only selecting those most appropriate for what you're offering, but also not mailing to those who have requested to be removed from your list. Consider what processes you currently have in place to keep your lists clean and free of duplicates and people who have requested no further contact. Regularly keeping your list up to date means that your information will actually be reaching your audience.

3. Create enticing copy for each audience.

Make sure your message is compelling, engaging and appropriate for your audience. For example, events are a great way to draw people in for the first time, while a letter about special offers or discounts might be better suited for those already familiar with your community.

4. Don't bury your message.

It's important to capture your readers' attention quickly, or else it may soon wind up in the trash bin. Consider ways to highlight the call to action and make it easier to find and read. Graphically pleasing and clean pieces help draw attention to your message.

5. Pique interest with teaser copy.

Consider ways to make people want to open each envelope or mailer. Remember, if they don't open the piece, they won't see the message that's inside. Adding teasers to the envelope is a good way to pique interest from the start.

6. Make it personal by using variable data.

People are drawn to their name being used in the copy of a mailer they receive. In fact, research has shown that this tactic generates response rates 3 to 10 times higher than traditional mass mailings.

7. Create a sense of urgency.

Don't forget to give someone a reason to respond to you with a specific and timely call to action. For example, you could ask them to RSVP for an upcoming event or call by a deadline to receive a special offer. It's important to capture their attention immediately and encourage them to act today, instead of waiting for tomorrow.

8. Understand the importance of color and font size.

The use of color and font size are two critical things to consider when putting together direct mail pieces, especially for older adults. Having the right mix helps ensure that more people will see and read your mail piece.

9. Create ways for your mail piece to live on in other media.

A unique web URL or QR code that connects to another medium not only supports the interactive experience, but it drives people to a page on your website (event listings, testimonial video, photo gallery or simply the home page) to learn more about your community. This can easily and cost effectively be done with a unique URL (ILoveDirectMail.com, for example) in keeping with the theme of the piece – plus an added bonus of being able to track traffic driven by the piece.

10. Track response. Measure success.

We recommend tracking metrics based on “buying unit” or household response totals, rather than, for example, the total number of people who come to an event you mailed an invitation for. Your response percentage numbers will be more accurate using this approach – not skewed by guests or how many attendees brought a spouse or guest with them. Over time, this data will prove valuable in making decisions about how to best spend future marketing dollars.