



Getting Customers To Pay Attention, Engage & Convert

Do More With Direct Mail



Direct mail is NOT dead.



INTRODUCTION

With the evolution of marketing technology and the undeniable clutter in the advertising space, many marketers and business owners have become skeptical of direct mail marketing.

And rightfully so. Consumers have had to deal with too much “junk mail” for a long time. Never mind that direct mail can get expensive quickly, with the cost of production and postage.

But ... with everyone else shifting their efforts to email and social media, marketers have a new opportunity to make an impact in the mailbox.

Direct mail is NOT dead. In fact, it has the potential to be more effective than ever before, when paired with the technology to target mailings to very specific groups and the ability for customers to interact with their mail.

From fragrance dots to variable data printing to QR codes, we'll walk you through three important strategies in the direct mail process.

CONTENTS

Making the Case for Direct Mail	3
Strategy 1 – Engage The Senses	4
Strategy 2 – Personalize For Results	8
Strategy 3 – Integrate With Digital	12
Are You A Believer Yet?.....	17

If the goal is to use digital platforms to move customers toward conversion, why bother with direct mail?



MAKING THE CASE FOR DIRECT MAIL

Why not just start with an email, search or social media ad?

Because direct mail gives people something tangible to hold on to, engage with and save.

A 2009 study by Millward Brown, which sought to explore the neuroscience involved with direct mail found that "... greater emotional process is facilitated by the physical materials than the virtual."¹

In other words, a tangible marketing piece (postcard, letter, etc.) engages the emotional part of the brain more than a virtual message, often leaving behind a more lasting impression. Prospects tend to retain messages better when they have something physical to hold – and direct mail provides this physical element.

Whether you're sold on direct mail or not, read on to learn what we know about direct mail that can transform it from junk mail to relevant, effective marketing.

Before you can expect your audience to convert, you must capture their attention.

STRATEGY 1 – ENGAGE THE SENSES

Part of direct mail's power comes from the fact that people typically look at every piece of mail they receive to get the documents they're waiting for, like bills, statements or invitations. Encouraging as this may be, it also means your direct mail piece has less than a few seconds to grab the recipient's attention and pique their interest.

To keep your audience looking at your direct mail piece (and going back to it), create something that engages their senses.



An effective design will encourage recipients to stop on your piece as they flip through their mail.



Naturally, your direct mail piece should first engage your audience's sense of sight.

As you design the piece, imagine that it's a billboard – only in sight for a few seconds before the view passes it by. And keep this in mind:

- Use eye-catching, relevant images to convey the product, service or brand you're selling. Disruptive images may be attention grabbing, but won't offer much return if the connection to your message isn't clear.
- Keep headlines and blocks of copy short and easy to read. Think about the size of the font, too. It's important that your direct mail piece doesn't look like an instruction manual.
- Don't skimp on color. Black and white printing may be less expensive, but adding color to communications can improve comprehension by 75%² and readership by 40%.³

After the piece is designed, try the *at-a-glance* test.

Objectively look at your piece to see if, with one quick look, recipients will be able to tell what you're selling, why they should want it, and what to do next.

With direct mail you can incorporate elements that engage your audience's sense of touch.



Direct mail is one of the few marketing mediums that give your audience something tangible to hold.

The paper you choose, special finishes, and scratch-off offers are all great ways to use touch to grab a prospect's attention.

PAPER – What kind of paper will you use for your postcard, self-mailer, or newsletter? What impression will it give? Heavier, matte stocks usually denote luxury or high-priced goods, for example. Many postcards use a glossy cardstock that looks professional and will hold up well when processed by Postal Service machinery.

TEXTURE – A creative way to engage the sense of touch is by using different finishes to create texture within the piece. UV coating is one option that creates a glossy, plastic-type texture. Applied in certain ways, UV coating can create many effects, including snakeskin or an embossed look. You can also use it to highlight elements of your design or draw attention to certain products or features.

SCRATCH-OFFS – Beyond changing the feel of the piece, a scratch-off offer can engage your audience by giving them something to do. Scratch-offs are eye-catching, easy to apply, and can be added in different shapes and colors. They are a great option for advertising a promotion or contest.

Scratch-offs also have a psychological appeal. The idea of “winning” a special offer or prize can entice prospects to act on the offer, even when they might have otherwise overlooked the coupon.

Smells are known to evoke strong emotional responses.

Another way to appeal to your audience's senses is through the nose. Whether you're promoting a product or service, think about the many ways you can enhance your message with a fragrance.

In fact, the olfactory system is directly linked to the limbic system, which is responsible for processing emotion.⁴ And a fragrance can be used to strengthen the emotional impact of your marketing message.

There are many ways to add fragrances to a direct mail piece: fragrance dots, scented paper, or scratch 'n' sniff. A practical application is to give prospective customers a sample of the scents available for your product (i.e. laundry detergent, dish soap, candles).

If your business is service-based, think about what scents might evoke emotions that customers feel when they visit your storefront or office. A spa or salon might use an aromatherapy-like fragrance. Or an auto stop might use the smell of new tires to remind customers to schedule regular maintenance. Be creative, but make sure the connection to your business is clear.

When done correctly, engaging the senses can capture attention and boost the impact of your message. And direct mail is one of the few types of advertising that can engage multiple senses at one!



Today's advertising space is more cluttered than ever before. So it all comes down to relevance and appeal.



STRATEGY 2 – PERSONALIZE FOR RESULTS

Once you've gotten your audience's attention, the next step is to give each person a message that resonates. However, today's advertising space is more cluttered than ever before.

Consumers are confronted with countless marketing messages each day – in the form of direct mail, emails, television/radio commercials, in-store messages, search ads, text messages, social media and native advertising.

With the constant barrage of "buy-me" messages, how does a consumer decide which ones to act on?

It all comes down to relevance and appeal.

So how does one make a direct mail piece truly relevant? PERSONALIZATION IS KEY!

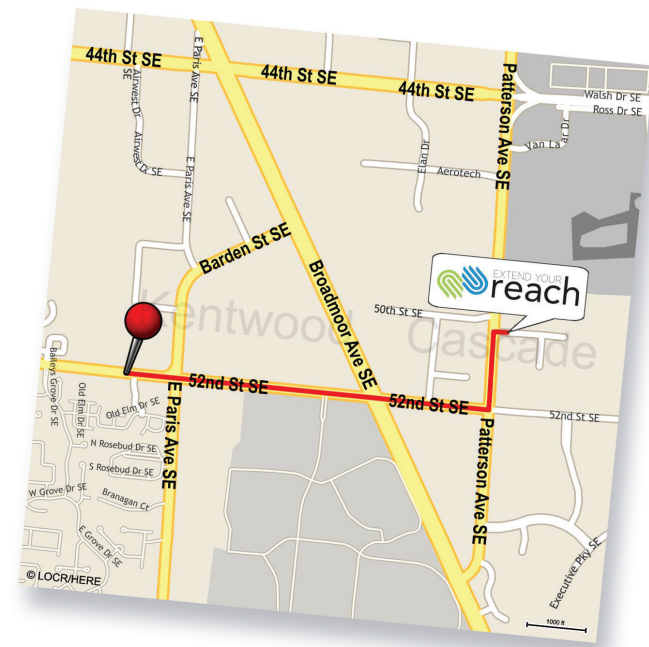
In the old days of direct mail, advertisers sent the same mailing to all households in a given area, regardless of message or demographics. Today, big data and variable data printing (VDP) give us the ability to easily target messages for individuals, rather than the masses.

VDP is technology that applies “if/then” statements to change the text, graphics and colors on a direct mail piece –all while it’s on the press. Driven by data, VDP means that you can personalize direct mail based on what you already know about your customers and prospects.

Practical uses include:

- Embedding a recipient’s name in the creative of the mailpiece
- Sending a birthday card with a coupon
- Featuring product recommendations based on past purchase (think about the success of Amazon and Netflix in this realm)
- Adding customized driving map from the recipient’s home to your nearest storefront or office (see sample at right)
- Changing images in a mailpiece based on the prospect’s age, gender, family or marital status
- Providing a personalized URL (pURL) and/or QR code for digital conversion (see pages 13-14)

Personalization piques interest and aids in engagement and message retention.



VDP applies IF/THEN statements to change text, graphics and colors on a direct mail piece – while it’s on the press.

*“What’s in it for me?”
That’s where appeal comes in.*



An effective appeal addresses a need, evokes an emotional response to it and then presents the product as the solution.

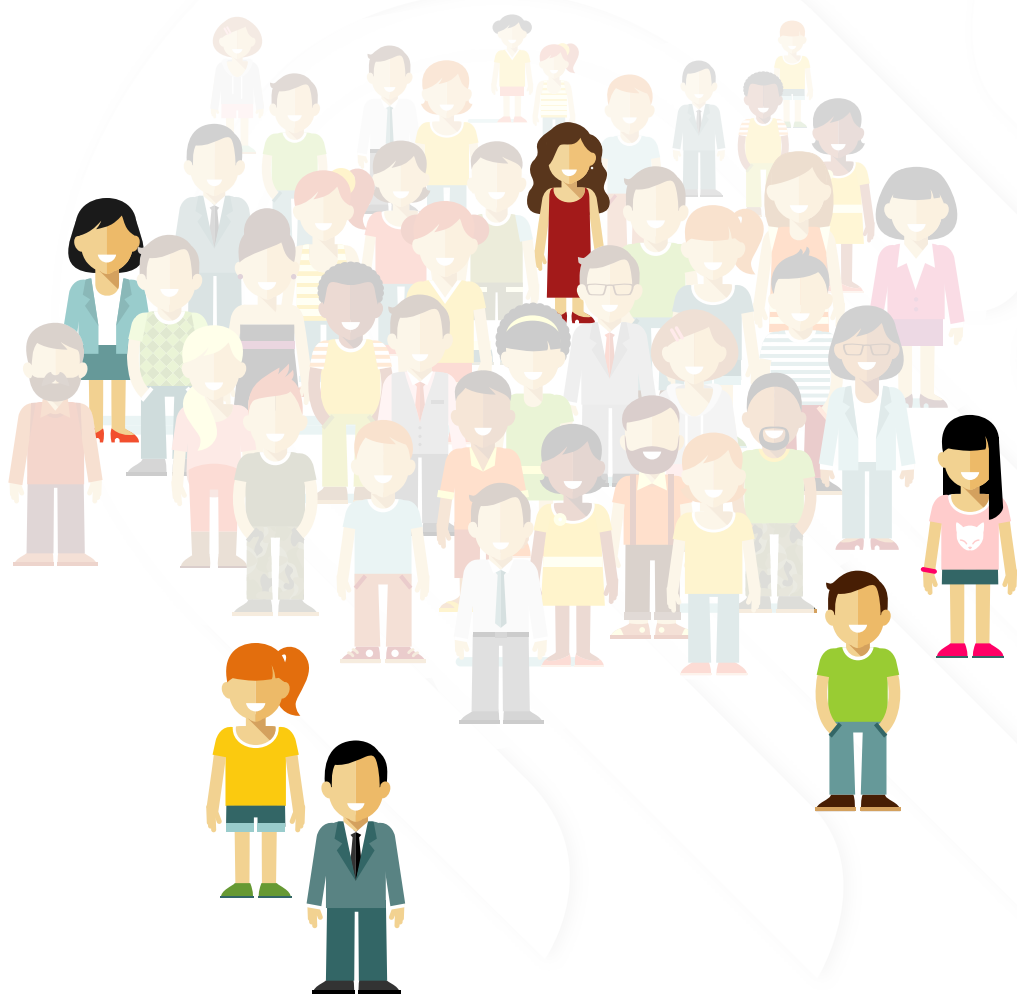
Getting prospects to read your message is the first step in convincing them to convert. The second is to answer the customer’s inevitable, and often subconscious questions:

“What’s in it for me?”

Your business likely sells a product or service to solve a problem or fill a need. The key to crafting an effective appeal is to address that need, evoke an emotional response to it, and then present your product, service or brand as the solution.

Does your product provide relief from frustration? Your appeal may highlight that frustration. Inversely, you could focus on the relief the recipient feels once he or she uses your product. Other emotions that often motivate prospective customers include joy, desire, responsibility, fear, appreciation, pride or disgust.

It's important to segment your audience and communicate with them based on their individual needs or problems.



Keep in mind that it's not enough to offer the right product to the right person; the appeal of the direct mail piece should be personalized based on your recipient.

An emotional appeal might resonate more with one group over another (men versus women, men with families versus bachelors, etc.). So whether your product applies to a broad consumer base or is meant for a niche demographic, it's important to segment and communicate with your audience based on their individual needs or problems.

Think about the last direct mail piece you received – was the subject relevant to you? Did the content of the mail piece compel you to take action?

As you prepare your next direct mail campaign, put yourself in the shoes of your consumer and see if you can answer an emphatic “Yes!” to both of these questions. If not, give yourself a day and then take some time to think about how you might provide a more personalized, relevant message.

Your ROI will thank you.

*Your marketing efforts
are only as good as what
people do with them.*

STRATEGY 3 – INTEGRATE WITH DIGITAL

While personalized, relevant mail can create an interest in your product or service, the crucial next step in the process is to move your audience toward conversion.

Digital integration is a key part of any marketing campaign because of the idea that your website is your “home-base” – the place that customers will go to convert. Even if your website doesn’t have an e-commerce section, it likely contains a list of brick-and-mortar locations or contact information that customers can use to make a purchase. This is why our focus is on integrating mail specifically with digital tools.

So if you’re running a direct mail campaign, how can you integrate it with your digital marketing efforts?



QR codes offer significant potential to engage your customers.

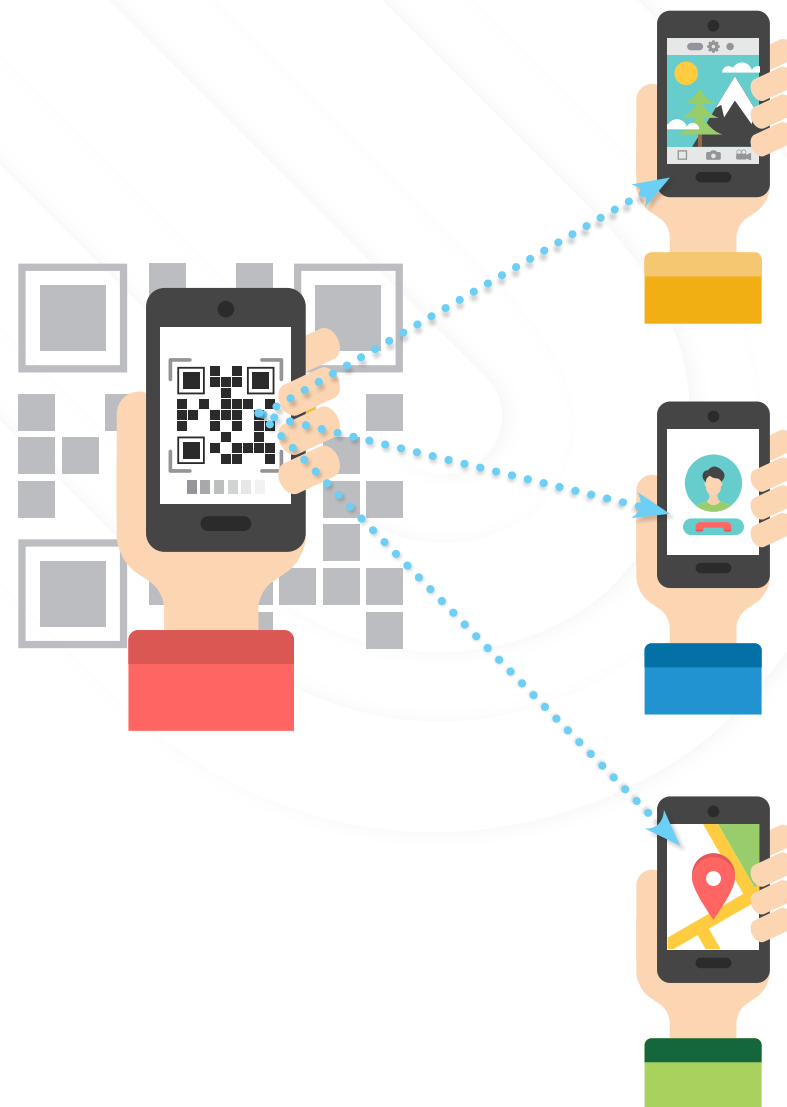
Quick Response, or QR codes, are small, graphic squares. These scannable, 2-D barcodes have more storage than a traditional UPC.

QR codes have been around since 1994, but only broke into the United States in 2011. When scanned by a smart phone app, QR codes can:

- Guide the viewer to a webpage/landing page
- Take the viewer to a digital storefront
- Open a map/directions
- Dial a phone number
- Store bank account information for quick payment
- Being playback of a video
- Download an app
- View plain text

QR codes can be customized with your logo and/or brand colors. They can be used as the main creative for a direct mail piece or serve as just a small element in the overall design.

Whether you're trying to drive traffic to your website, or want to educate more people about a certain product, QR codes are a convenient way to engage prospective customers.



NFC provides a convenient, single-step method to instantly connect recipients to your digital presence.

Near Field Communication (NFC), like QR codes, connects print pieces to the digital realm. But unlike QR codes, NFC does not require a reader or an app.

The same technology used for platforms such as Google Wallet and Apple Pay, NFC is communication that occurs when a user taps or waves his smart phone over an embedded RFID chip or NFC-enabled paper.

There are countless ways to use NFC. RFID chips can be programmed to:

- Open a webpage
- Map a location
- Call a designated phone number
- Save a new contact in the user's phone
- Update social media statuses
- Follow a social media account
- Register for a loyalty/rewards program
- Show product specs, availability, locations
- Add a product to the user's shopping cart
- Load coupons or deals

One thing to keep in mind with NFC: As with all marketing, targeted, relevant content will always be more effective. Rather than guiding recipients to a generic landing page, provide content that is tailored for each specific segment. NFC has a lot of potential, but if customers land on a page with little explanation of what to do next, you'll miss out on conversations.



Using pURLs makes it easy to track response rates.



just4you.com/EYReach

Personalized URLs (pURLs) are another way to connect your direct mail campaign to a webpage and drive customers toward conversion.

A pURL typically incorporates the recipient's name or other key details into the actual web address of a landing page. Most often, this landing page is customized specifically for a direct mail recipient.

There are a few reasons why pURLs are effective:

1. They are attention-grabbing. Imagine seeing your own name tacked on to the end of a website URL ... would you be interested in checking it out?
2. They allow you to customize the digital experience for each visitor. With a pURL, you can direct the prospective customer to a personalized landing page with relevant, useful information. Consider using pURLs to provide applicable coupons to members of your loyalty program, to show product recommendations in your e-commerce site, to point customers to your nearest location or to set a pre-filled contact form.
3. They make it very easy to track your response rate. Because there is a separate URL for each recipient, you can track who has viewed your landing page, and any other steps that the visitor took once they reached the page.

Incorporating digital elements into your direct mail piece, including QR codes, NFC and pURLs, helps easily connect prospects to your digital presence – removing barriers and moving them toward conversion.

With the right elements, you can create mailpieces that people will read, keep and act on.

ARE YOU A BELIEVER YET?

There it is, folks: several ways you can do more with direct mail. If you started reading this as a skeptic, we hope you've changed your mind about direct mail. If you were already a believer in the power of direct mail, hopefully you learned something new about how you can take future campaigns a step further.

Whatever you thought before, hopefully you can see that direct mail holds more power than most marketers realize. With the right elements, you can create mailpieces that people will read, keep and act on.

From the first time a prospective customer spots your direct mail piece to the scanning of a QR code, think about ways you can make your campaign engaging, relevant and actionable. These three factors will play a major role in the success or lack thereof of the campaign.



TALK TO US.

Whether you're ready to start planning your next campaign or just want to know more about what we do, we'd love to hear from you.

Email Us info@extendyourreach.com

Call Us 616.247.1177

**Connect
With Us**



Grand Rapids

4850 Kendrick Street SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49512
616.247.1177

Lansing

4908 Contec Drive
Lansing, MI 48910
517.887.7545



SOURCES

http://www.millwardbrown.com/docs/default-source/insight-documents/case-studies/Millward-Brown_Case-Study_Neuroscience.pdf

Successful Meetings, The Power of Color, Virginia Johnson, June 1992, pp. 87-90

Marketing Communications, David Embry, October 1984

http://www.sirc.org/publik/smell_emotion.html