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The Five Biggest Mistakes Companies Make With Postcard Marketing

How to prevent your business from falling victim

With a reported 120% increase in marketing campaign performance when direct mail is included, the results of postcard marketing are undeniable. But what if your company has been trying to implement postcard marketing and is not seeing such drastic results? Are you making errors in postcard design and implementation? The prevalent challenge in incorporating postcards into a marketing strategy lies in creating effective pieces that will yield success once in the hands of the consumer. Far too many companies invest time and money in poorly designed postcard campaigns and see no results. Discover the five biggest mistakes in postcard marketing made by businesses so your company can avoid a roadblock and detour to successful promotions.

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Too much copy

The first fatal flaw that a company can make in postcard marketing is creating a piece with too much text. Postcards have extremely limited space so the ideas represented need to be limited as well. If a consumer receives a postcard with excessive text he/she is immediately inclined to toss it in the wastebasket. Despite the common tendency to over-write an ad, when a few concerted measures are taken an intriguing postcard with the correct amount of copy can be produced.

When designing a postcard the first thing that should be done is define the objective of the piece. Is it a promotion? A new product or service? An announcement? Only one theme or idea should be expressed per postcard. Once a goal for the piece to accomplish is determined, it will be easier to create a succinct message. The next step is to produce a catchy title, reflective of your purpose, it should appear on the front of the postcard to draw the consumer in. The key to successful copy-writing is conveying a message in 3-5 words. Once a title is in place, the remaining copy appearing on the back of the mailer, should be brief and to the point. Only include the most basic information necessary to communicate the message; date, time, place, why the consumer should participate, etc. Copy that prompts sales consists of benefits/features, expiration dates, and calls to action.

Lack of personalization

If a company is successful in creating a captivating postcard, they now face the test of getting the consumer to act. A postcard that catches the viewer's attention and interests them in finding out more is a moot point if it does not inspire the consumer to further interact. The surest way to increase a customer's inclination to act on the postcard is to personalize the piece.

Print in the mix claims that "eight out of 10 consumers state that relevant, personalized content and promotions would increase their loyalty." Learn your customers' tendencies and buying patterns so you can design different postcards for each customer demographic. With the use of one-to-one message techniques and variable data printing every postcard in your campaign can be personalized. Customers' names can appear on the postcard and even the particular photos used and specific words of the pitch can be adjusted to suit their liking. An individual receiving mail that is pertinent to his/her lifestyle and habits will be significantly more inclined to take action on a postcard promotion.

Dirty mail list

Investing in the creation of a successful, personalized postcard is irrelevant if it is unable to reach the desired destinations. One obstacle many companies face is dirty mailing lists, which contain outdated or incorrect customer mailing addresses. With over 40 million people changing their address annually, it is inevitable that address databases will need to be updated.

It is crucial to spend the time, effort, and money to maintain a current mailing list. If you fail to keep recent records, the database will deplete over time, taking your customers and potential business with it. If you are unable to designate an area of your staff to keep contacts current, the United States Postal Service harbors a service known as NCOA (National Change of Address). NCOA offers computer software that will identify "dead" addresses, recognize and correct obvious address typos, discover and test prank addresses, remove addresses that somehow snuck into your database, and eradicate duplicates. By cleansing your mail lists you eliminate wasteful duplicate prints and deliveries to false addresses, as well as increase delivery to the desired customers.

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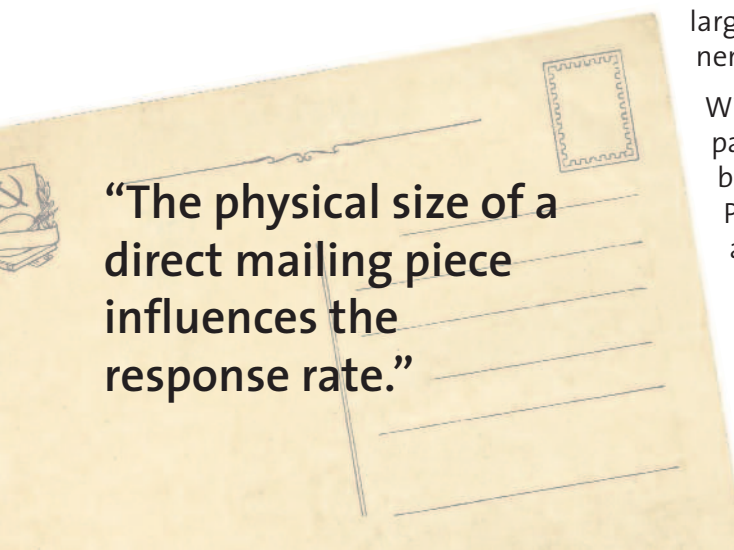
Poor image and photo selections

The single item that is most likely to draw a consumer to a postcard is an exceptional photo. Use selective judgment when deciding what images to incorporate in the postcard design and make certain that the image is relevant to the purpose of the card. As a rule of thumb, one dominant image should appear on the front of the postcard along with the postcard title. The two entities should work together to convey a cohesive an engaging message. Keep images on the back of the postcard to a minimum, as the main focus of the back is to display the copy. Finally, you want to make certain that pictures do not print grainy or blurred. When formatting an image keep in mind that best results are printed at 300-600 dpi.

Printing a small card

The final significant error made in postcard marketing is printing too small of a card. The physical size of a direct mailing piece influences the response rate. Postcards are most commonly seen in two size formats, jumbo, which typically measure 6" high by 9" wide, and standard, which are usually seen as 4"x6". Jumbo postcards normally outperform standard sizes. This is because smaller postcards can get lost in the day's stack of mail and are less likely to reach out and grab the consumer's attention. A larger format also allows for more information, images, and features to be included. The combination of a larger size and the ability to include more pertinent information will yield greater results.

With the prevention of these five mistakes, participating in postcard mailing will prove beneficial to your company. International Paper reports that "direct mail gives advertisers a whopping 13-to-1 return on their investment." Postcards are eye-catching, tangible, engaging, and recyclable. When you know how to create effective pieces, they will do the work for you.

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Postcard White Paper

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