

12 Building Blocks To Better Business-To-Business Mail

Whether you are creating your direct mail promotion in-house or farming it out to a professional copywriter, the following checklist should be helpful in gauging the potential impact of your package. Too often, marketers are fussing over the fine points of what can and cannot be said, and they forget the forest for the trees. By glancing over the essential points below, you will be able to assess whether your promotion meets the basic requirements for a fully realized direct mail package.

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1 Sell hard and fast!

Make sure your message and offer come across loud and clear... If you are mailing a standard direct mail package, that means they need to be on the carrier envelope, Johnson box, and on the first and last pages of your salesletter. People will only give you a few seconds of their attention, so it is imperative that they quickly understand what it is you're selling and why they should buy it.

2 Set a problem and offer a solution.

Identify the challenge/hurdle/problem your prospects are facing in their work and then position your product as a solution to it. In other words, keep the focus squarely on how prospects will benefit from your product. Write about your product as though it were the only, the best, or the most suitable solution to their problem.

3 If you're marketing a magazine, newspaper, website, or other information product, don't get bogged down in the editorial. Stick with the benefits.

It's very tempting to tell prospects what they'll find in the product. Of course, you want to give them some details, but focus on what the information will do for them, rather than on what it is. (When you focus too much on content, you risk giving people the option of saying, "those particular stories/topics don't interest me.") Leave the details to their imaginations. Sell the sizzle, not the steak.

4 Longer is better.

Studies have repeatedly proven (and results consistently shown) that the longer your salesletter is, the better the response will be. Don't just pad your letter, however. Repetition is okay, but make sure what you're saying is always on the money. (Remember: Most people only skim letters, so repetitions often go unnoticed.) If your product or service is complex, you will most likely want to explain it in a number of different ways, so that everyone has a chance of understanding its full scope.

5 Take special pains with your P.S.

This is your last chance to get the prospect hooked. Many people automatically skip to the end of the letter to see who signed it, so the P.S. may also be the first thing they read. Make sure your P.S. encapsulates your entire sales pitch, reiterates the major benefit(s),

and tells them about any special discounts, premiums, and deadlines to respond.

6 Identify what motivates your audience most.

Are they looking for power, wealth, or affluence? Will your product make them more intelligent, richer, or more attractive? Try to identify what it is that your prospective buyers are most interested in or concerned about, then find as many ways as you can to describe how your product will give them what they want.

7 Be as concrete as you can.

Language that is concrete and tangible is always more powerful than abstract words. A magazine “chock full of tips and tactics” is more compelling than one that is “informative.” Software that you can navigate “with a few clicks of your mouse” is more enticing than one that is “easy to use.” Write so that prospective buyers can actually envision having the product and putting it to use. The same is true of the benefits – if the product can make you 57% more efficient, or 105% richer, then say so. Statistics and numbers can give your argument strong backing. Use sixth-grade words even when you’re tempted to use more sophisticated language.

8 Testimonials make a difference.

Endorsements by satisfied customers will enhance the status of your product and tell people that their colleagues are already using and enjoying your product. Keep testimonials brief, to the point, and as illustrative as possible. Unique wording can be an asset. Get permission to use the person’s name, title, and company beneath the testimonial. Without these, your quotes are far less compelling.

9 Test discounts and premiums.

Will your audience respond better if they are offered a discount or a free gift? Very often, a premium that is closely tied to your product can enhance the value of your product and cause prospects to make a decision to sign up. Or, if they’re cost-conscious, try offering a discount on their trial subscription/product use. If you can’t decide which strategy to adopt, you may wish to test one against the other in a mailing campaign – or offer both in the same package.

10 Use cutoff dates for special offers.

If you give your prospects forever to respond, they’re more likely to take that much time ... and never answer. Give them a time-limited offer and they’ll make a decision faster. If you’re offering a premium, the cutoff date will make your premium seem more timely (and, hence, more desirable) as well.

11 Make sure your message is tailored to your lists.

You’re wasting your time if you tell your prospects something they don’t want to hear or need to hear. Look over your mailing lists and try to get a feel for exactly who these people are. You may even want to give a few typical prospects a telephone call to better identify their positions and their professional needs.

12 Sell, sell, sell.

Don’t be afraid to sound like a used-car salesman. Even though you should never stray from being completely credible, you should also never miss an opportunity to sell your product or service. Push yourself into promoting your product more often than you would think is polite – then you’ve probably reached the right balance! Always think of and describe your product in the best light – as though it operated in a frictionless world with perfect, all-knowing people using it.



211 Mount Vernon Avenue Second Floor
Alexandria, VA 22301
703-548-8206
Fax: 703-548-8041