



notes

Volume 9 Number 2 The JOHN ROBERTS COMPANY

direct mail

- 2 Inspiring response**
- 3 Planning tips**
- 4 Creative folding**
- 5 Customized market mail**
- 6 Direct mail data processing**
- 7 Production partnership**
- 8 JR direct mail gallery**



Michael Keene, President, The John Roberts Company

When you take on a direct mail project, John Roberts is your partner, start to finish. Our knowledgeable account reps work with you to give a great concept form, on time and on budget. Ask about the technical possibilities! Our team of experts will show you the possibilities, give your project the attention it deserves and produce a product that gets results!

High-Response Applications Call For **High-quality Communications**

In the direct mail world, response rates are king. Every detail of a direct mail piece – from the quality of the paper to the use of coatings or specialty folds – is aimed at drawing the attention of recipients and stirring them to action. From a design standpoint, anticipated response rates are what drive the complexity of the piece. That’s why campaigns intended to draw interest in big-ticket luxury items, or those aimed at your preferred customer list, will take advantage of intriguing designs and high-quality production.

It’s in these markets where response rates are highest and image is of utmost importance. Vibrant colors, UV inks, specialty coatings, higher-grade papers, unique dimensions and even non-paper substrates can all be used to add appeal and generate interest. While these may increase mailing and production costs, they will be far outweighed by higher responses and increased revenue.

A beautiful design and quality production are only part of the equation for high-end direct mail success. Accurate, up-to-date databases, knowledge of the latest postal regulations and high-quality imaging capabilities can improve response rates and increases relevance with recipients.





Getting Started: Helpful Planning Tips

A unique promotion for Wilson Leather, shown above and opposite, draws attention to Wilson's nation-wide retail presence and fall product line. A dramatic interior fold and a well-developed theme make the piece a stand-out.

1 Have your printer perform color-critical scans – Low end scanners work just fine for everyday scanning purposes. For print projects requiring high-resolution, color-critical scanning, however, they're not the ideal solution. Images and text scanned at too low a resolution can lead to "ghosting" when printed. This may not be visible until a piece is actually printed. A printer with high-end scanning capabilities can achieve optimum results at a negligible cost.

Very often, color correction goes hand-in-hand with color-critical scanning. If your high-quality direct mail project includes products that must be matched perfectly, you may want to spend the extra time and money to send your printer the actual products your communication features. Color correction is never more accurate than when the prepress technician has the actual product in hand.

2 Request a pre-production mock-up – No matter how simple or complex your project, you'll want a pre-production mock-up to help you verify its accuracy as it moves from computer screen to paper. The more progressive printers will gladly use their CAD systems to produce mock-ups and precise electronic files of your design idea. At this stage, your printer will verify the production feasibility of your project and make design suggestions to ensure it will be produced within your time and budget constraints. You can then use these files to easily drop in your artwork. This workflow helps you avoid using design concepts that require costly handwork or may otherwise bust your budget.

3 Select the proper paper –

Paper selection is influenced by a host of factors. In addition to achieving the proper look and feel for a specific piece, postal regulations, finishing and binding requirements, production schedule and overall budget all factor into the paper selection process. Keep in mind that paper should achieve two main objectives: Help convey the appropriate image to your recipients, and perform properly in the mail stream. Let your printing and mail services provider help you choose a paper that will do both for your project.

Design Spotlight

Creative Folding

There are many ways to create intrigue with high-quality direct mail pieces. While eye-catching design, beautiful printing and an attractive offer or appeal go a long way toward boosting response rates, creative folding styles can do just as much to ensure your pieces get some serious eyeball time. Here are a few examples:

Cross Folds – In this folding style, four (or more) panels fold into a center panel. Cross folds are ideal for self-mailers that contain a CD or DVD disc or an affixed membership card, magnet or other item.

Gate Folds – Gate folded pieces are comprised of parallel folds that fold inward from opposite directions to meet at either a center panel (“open gate”) or center fold (“closed gate”). Gate folding is great alternative for brochures or for booklet covers, as they call attention to additional text or graphics. Gate folds can also be glued to hold additional items such as CD or DVD discs.

Parallel (Roll) Folds – Roll folds can be used to build intrigue as recipients unfold each panel to reveal your message. Roll folded pieces can include a perforated panel that allows recipients to send back a reply card, or keep handy key information such as a web address.

There are literally hundreds of possible folding varieties and sequences that can be used for direct mail applications. Let the experts at John Roberts help you navigate these possibilities by involving us as early as possible in your planning process. Very often, we can work with your concept to help you design a mail piece that takes maximum advantage of automated folding, gluing and inserting capabilities.

Designers need not worry about a lot of additional work when preparing files for UV printing. Files simply need to be sent in as they would be for traditional printing. Any adjustments that need to be made will be taken care of at John Roberts.

techtip

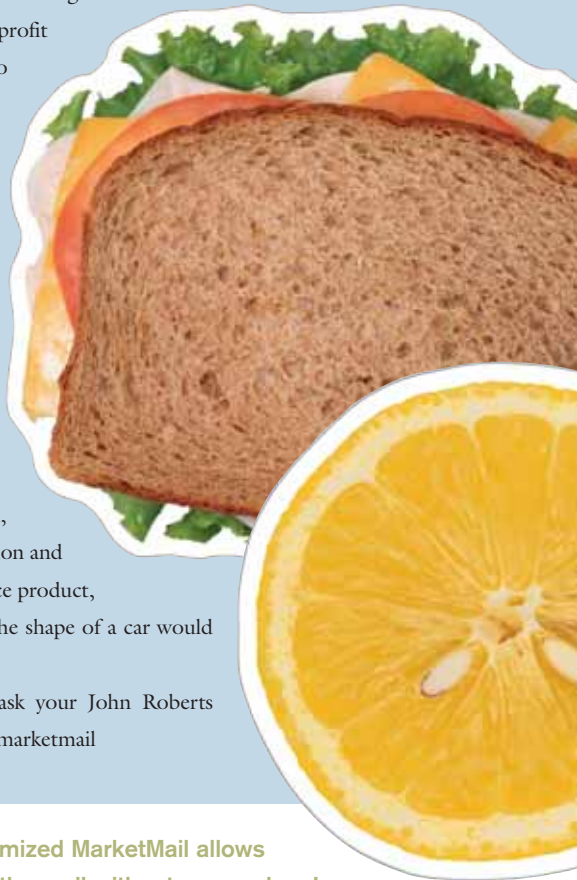
Customized MarketMail

Direct marketers are constantly looking for ways to make their mail pieces stand out in the mailbox. Unusual shapes or dimensions are a great way to grab attention, but have been costly to mail – until now. Last year, a new postal classification called Customized MarketMail (CMM) went into effect that allows marketers to create unique designs that won't break the budget.

Here are the details on Customized MarketMail: Pieces may be up to 12" high, 15" long, 3/4" thick and may weigh up to 3.3 ounces. Postage rates are \$0.574 for Standard Mail and \$0.46 for Nonprofit Standard Mail. Pieces must be drop-shipped or delivered to all appropriate destination delivery unit (DDU) facilities for handling. The total mail drop must contain a minimum of 200 pieces (although not every DDU must receive 200 pieces).

The main benefit to CMM is that pieces can be almost any shape or dimension. That lets designers get away from the standard rectangle to create more unique and, hopefully, more response-inducing designs. Under previous mailing regulations, any pieces under 3.3 ounces or less than 3/4" in thickness were deemed unmailable if the pieces were odd-shaped (non-rectangular) or contained die cut holes or other shapes. With CMM, you're free to create mailpieces in shapes that garner attention and clarify your appeal. Are you promoting a new auto insurance product, or the grand opening of a car dealership? A mailpiece in the shape of a car would really stand out in the mailboxes of your recipients.

For more information on Customized MarketMail, ask your John Roberts account representative, or visit www.usps.gov/customizedmarketmail



A new postal classification called Customized MarketMail allows unusually shaped pieces to go through the mail without an envelope!

Careful Data Processing is Essential for Direct Mail Success

An eye-catching design and enticing offer are only part of the total direct mail package. Many “behind the scenes” processes contribute to its success, including prepress, printing, personalization and mail processing. Of course, the success of a mail campaign can only be measured when responses start pouring in! Keep these data processing tips in mind so your mail campaign is handled properly before and after it drops:

Take advantage of personalization options –

Not long ago, “sophisticated personalization” was confined to basic elements such as name, address and salutation. Today’s computing technology allows personalization into the most complex databases. Laser or inkjet printed variable content can now make a mail campaign pertinent to the needs of individual recipients, increasing relevance. Consider including information about buying preferences or history, contributions, family size, geographical considerations and much more.

The quality of your design can go beyond personalization. Printers with the latest inkjet imaging capabilities can handle a wide variety of mail piece shapes and stocks, including non-paper substrates. If personalization is limited only by the

amount of information in your database, personalized mail piece designs are limited only by your imagination!



Consider pre-printed shells for personalized campaigns –

To keep costs down and schedules tight, consider preprinting one shell for projects with multiple versions. Today’s flexible laser imaging technology allows you to create many versions from a single template during the personalization process. Widely available software allows black & white copy and digital image changes on the fly between versions. The flexibility of this software means that all versions of a carefully-planned project can be produced in a single run while preserving mail sort order and postal discounts.

You may want to design shells for a specific geographic region represented in your database. For example, a holiday mailing to California recipients may not resemble the shell design for the same campaign on the East Coast. By tailoring design shells to specific geographic segments, you increase relevance beyond demographic data.

“NCOA” your files at least twice a year – To get the most value from your mailings, minimize undeliverable mail. There’s no such thing as a “perfect” list, but verifying house files and membership lists regularly against an updated National Change of Address (NCOA) file will help eliminate bad or outdated addresses. The John Roberts Company can perform NCOA/Address correction and CASS Certified Zip+4 services on your lists prior to mailing.

Follow-up to your house file – Looking for a boost to your bottom line? Consider a follow-up mailing to your house file or preferred customer list. These will almost always outperform a mailing aimed at prospects, and are a particularly good idea if you mail to your list less than once a month.



JR Expert: **Tony Hoholik**

VP of Sales & Marketing, The John Roberts Company

Tony Hoholik, Vice President of Sales and Marketing at The John Roberts Company, knows that response-critical direct mail applications require a little more attention and planning than high volume prospecting campaigns. He believes that the range of printing, finishing and data processing capabilities at John Roberts makes them ideally suited to handle these high-end direct mail projects.

“Image is typically of utmost importance for these pieces,” explains Hoholik. “These campaigns are highly targeted to a specific market segment, and they must be of sufficient quality to induce a response.”

According to Tony, one of the most valuable aspects of John Roberts is their ability to handle a campaign from the design stage all the way to the mailbox, without forcing customers to use multiple service providers.

“High-quality campaigns can be complex to plan and produce. When it comes to keeping such a project under budget, an experienced printing, finishing and mailing partner can be an invaluable asset. Whether it’s selecting an appro-

priate stock, navigating the myriad postal regulations or simply helping a customer create a design that will draw attention, John Roberts can help clients save money and yield a better finished product every step of the way.”

When asked to point out the most important John Roberts advantage, Tony says it’s tough to pick just one. However, he says the company’s ability to combine high-impact design with automated production helps customers get the biggest bang for the direct mail dollar.

“Our goal is to help customers transform their design concepts into reality using the latest in automated workflows. The most progressive printers use CAD design tools to optimize customers designs to the production equipment and provide an electronic file into which the customer can simply drop their artwork and text. Getting your printer involved early in the design stage is the key to optimizing production efficiencies and avoiding costly, time consuming handwork.

“It’s the best of both worlds—high quality production without the high costs.”



A simple format becomes powerful in these bi- and tri-fold direct mail promotions printed for Patterson Dental Supply and Thompson/West. Bold color and a non-standard finished size make them stand-outs in the daily mail sort. The Patterson piece, at far left, puts a glow on travel with spot UV coating.

Shows & Tell

direct mail

This JR project showcase features direct mail design from simple to complex. All projects started with strong design, then gained functionality and appeal with production-related features such as UV spot coating, unique folds and perforations for discount cards, tear-off reply cards and, in the case of our own promotion — a fully functioning camera! John Roberts partners with clients to print, finish, address and ship direct mail. List management and storage services make the partnership full-service.

Simple and effective, these mail promotions for Wilson Leather employ energetic, high-quality photography, clear language and serious discounts to draw shoppers to retail outlets. JR maximizes results for Wilson using both web and sheetfed presses for direct mail production.





1

1 In this promotion for USAllianz, the primary headline is visible to any viewer. A simple fold and partial panel create a touch of drama and draw the recipient inside to learn more.

2 Strange, but true: this paper camera works. The interesting 2-color piece, designed to appeal to all customers but especially creative types, includes directions and all pieces needed to construct the camera.

3 Postcards are simple and can make a strong impression. Series such as this duo for USAllianz can be printed at JR, stored and mailed at customer-designated intervals.

4 The orange self-mailer below, produced for Wilson Leather, is a companion to the dramatically folded piece shown on page two of this newsletter.



2



3



4



The JOHN ROBERTS COMPANY

9687 East River Road • Minneapolis, MN 55433

1-800-551-1534 • www.johnroberts.com

PRSRRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID
JRC

The JOHN ROBERTS COMPANY

direct mail

