



John Roberts

DIRECT MAIL

Direct Mail: 5 Best Practices for Healthcare



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Overview

As we all know, the use of digital marketing in all verticals, including healthcare, continues to increase, however, traditional marketing like direct mail marketing methods aren't entirely obsolete, far from it.

In this white paper, we are going to go back to the basics of direct mail, review current marketing trends and statistics, explore how healthcare marketers are using direct mail to grow their business and the top 5 best practices to integrate in your next marketing campaign.

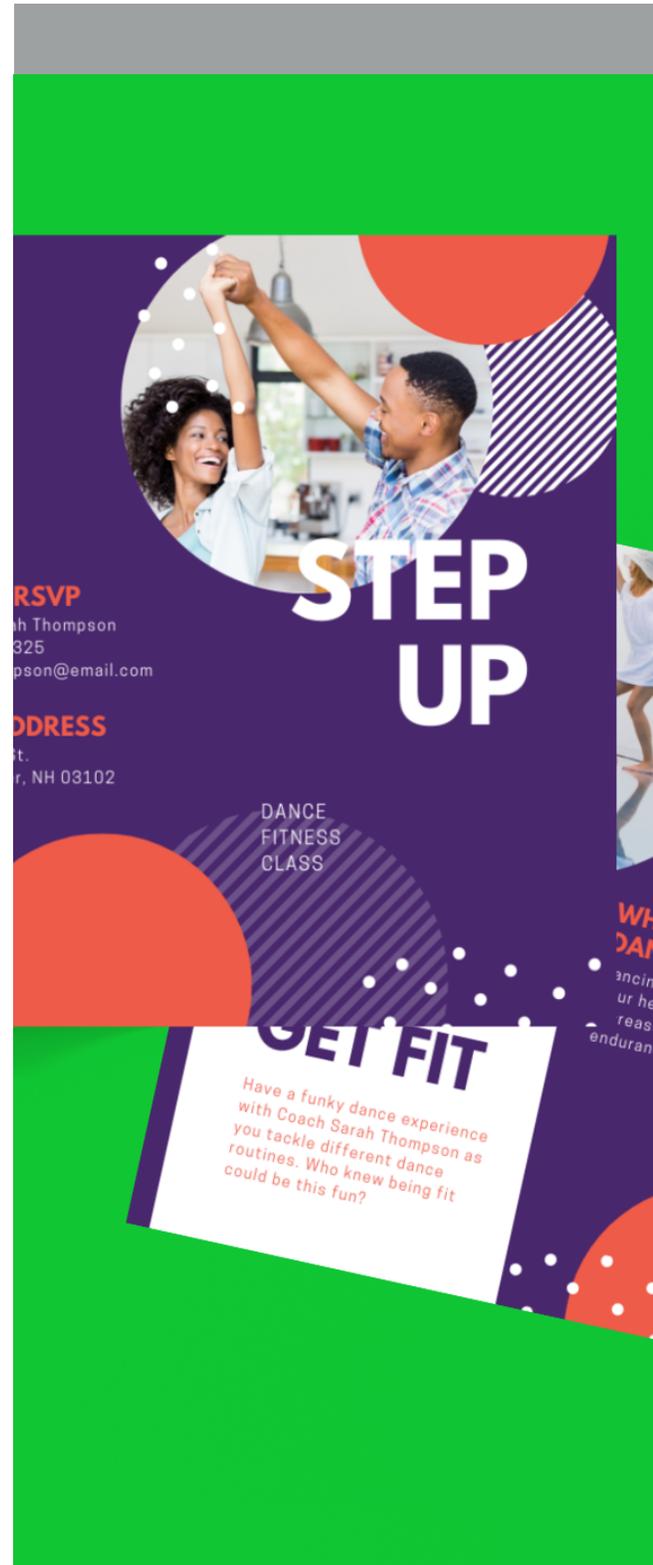
Direct Mail Marketing: What is it exactly and why does it matter?

Direct Mail Marketing is a common form of direct marketing and may be employed by for-profit businesses, charities and other non-profits, political campaigns, and other organizations. Direct Mail encompasses a wide variety of marketing materials, including brochures, catalogs, postcards, newsletters, and sales letters.

... Ooooookay, thanks Wikipedia, that was super helpful. But what does Direct Mail Marketing mean to you and why is it important?

Let's take a quick look at the basics...direct mail marketing is a strategy used by healthcare marketers to engage with prospects and customers by sending actual tangible items in the mail. This can range from good ole printed mailers to dimensional packages, corporate swag, or countless other physical items.

At its core, Direct Mail Marketing is a valuable way to connect with prospects, leads, and clients in a meaningful, memorable and very personal way.



LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT SOME

DIRECT MAIL MARKETING STATISTICS

77%

77% of consumers sort through their physical mail as soon as they receive it. (USPS Delivers)

SORT THROUGH

90%

The direct mail open rates reach up to 90%. (CompuMail)

OPEN RATES

70%

70% of consumers say direct mail is more personal than digital interactions. (Fundera)

MORE PERSONAL



AND A FEW MORE

DIRECT MAIL MARKETING STATISTICS

75%

75% of millennials say receiving direct mail makes them feel special. (USPS)

FEEL SPECIAL

89%

89% of financial and health insurance services industry professionals use direct mail. (Data & Marketing Association)

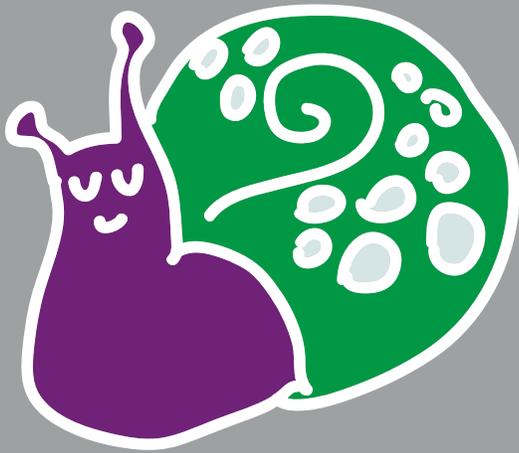
INSURANCE

43%

Printed marketing material is 43% less annoying than online marketing to Americans. (OptaMark)

LESS ANNOYING





VS.



PRACTICE #1: INCLUDE MAIL IN YOUR HEALTHCARE MARKETING

CHAPTER

02

Snail Mail? Isn't Digital Marketing More Applicable in 2021? That is a completely valid question; is Direct Mail a worthy opponent for Digital Marketing in today's world?

Since the introduction of mass emails to customers, Marketers have questioned whether email is a more effective marketing strategy. With the convenience and speed of Digital Marketing, many people anticipated the eventual demise of physical Direct Mail Marketing campaigns.

While one could argue that Digital Marketing has to be more effective; it's simply more accessible - Consumers are constantly at their computer, have their phone in their hand, and are somehow logged in and connected digitally throughout the majority of their day. Consumers are more connected than ever, spending over five hours a day on their

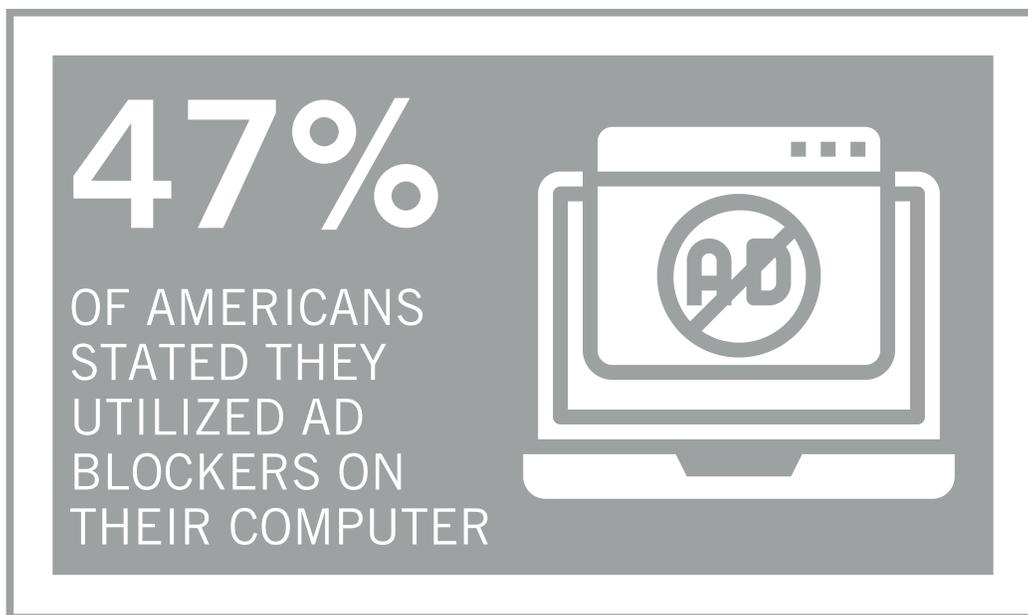
smartphones alone! Heck! - most of us check our phones before even getting out of bed in the morning.

Given this, healthcare marketers have pushed a massive surge in Digital Marketing and online outreach efforts. However, this copious amount of digital content has subsequently caused an increase in digital overwhelm by patients and consumers.

In fact, nearly three-quarters of consumers say they feel overwhelmed by email advertising. During a 2020 survey, 47% of Americans stated they utilized ad blockers on their computer; 29% said that they have downloaded ad blocking software on their smartphones.

In short, Americans hate junk mail. We're overwhelmed by it, our inboxes are overflowing with it, we're begging to be free of it.

With this escalated aversion to Digital Advertising, healthcare marketers are finding themselves in fierce competition for the attention of their prospective audiences. Simply being heard is becoming more and more difficult; much less gaining the trust and loyalty of the consumer. In response to this dilemma, many smart-minded healthcare marketers are sending their message to where it can still be clearly received-- To the Mailbox.



Source: Statista Research Department, (March 1, 2021), "Ad Block Usage in the U.S. by device"

PRACTICE #2: TARGET YOUR AUDIENCE

While Digital and Social Marketing are all the rage and certainly won't be going anywhere anytime soon - This essentially makes Direct Mail even more appealing to the average consumer and patient. Isn't standing out the name of the game in healthcare marketing?

Here are just a few proof points to ponder:

- 80%-90% of Direct mail actually gets opened, while only 20%-30% of advertising email gets opened... on a good day.
- 70% of Americans say physical mail feels “more personal” than emails.
- 66% of Direct Mail is opened and read; only 33% of advertising emails are ever even opened.
- Studies show Direct Mail has a stronger emotional impact over Digital Marketing-- Resulting in a stronger recall.
- The response rate to Direct Mail pieces is 3.7%. As opposed to 1.9% Mobile, 1% Email, 1% Social Media, and .02% Internet Display.

With the rise of Digital Ad Blockers and our ever-declining attention spans, it's time to bring back Direct Mail Marketing and put it in the forefront of your Healthcare Marketing Toolbox.

In case you simply skimmed through the above information, and all you saw was “Blah, blah. Numbers, percentages. Yada, yada”, then following is a spiffy little summary to make things more clear as to what you should be integrating within your healthcare marketing...

TARGETED MARKETING

Utilizing your client's demographic information, you can target the audience and market directly to their needs. For example, a Medicare office could send direct mail to households with individuals above the age of 62 offering a consultation to learn about their new benefits that are now available to them.

CUSTOMIZED MESSAGES

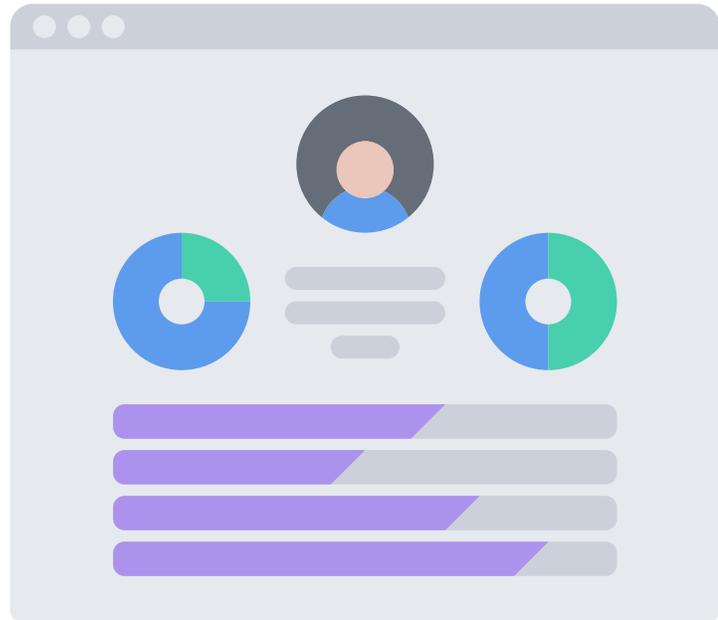
By integrating customized messages, you can utilize your data and speak directly to your audience in your marketing. Examples of health care businesses affected by seasonality include:

- ENTs: More than 50 million Americans suffer from allergies every year. Otolaryngologists could increase their mailing quantity and offer discounts during active allergy seasons.
- Dermatologists: During the spring and summer, dermatologists might look to provide offers for those wanting to look their best for bikini season.
- 24-Hour/After-Hours clinics: These clinics could benefit during colder months, flu season or back to school — offering later hours for busy parents, for example.
- Pharmacy and local stores like CVS and Walgreens can use imagery and offers that specifically pertain to their customers.



ROI & Result Tracking

Think of marketing as an investment, not an expense. Every dollar you put into a marketing campaign should bring in at least \$1.01 in revenue to your business. Otherwise, it's a waste of time and resources. Direct response marketing has the benefit of being highly trackable. With the right metrics in place, you're able to see exactly how a campaign is affecting your medical practice. If a campaign isn't achieving the desired results, you're able to see how and why, so you can adjust your approach in future campaigns.



Improved Patient Experience



Medical professionals care deeply about helping people and following marketing best practices isn't just good for your wallet – it benefits patients too. This is vitally important today, as consumers are inundated with medical options. As a result, people are using the internet to find answers to what's ailing them and pinpoint the best kind of provider. A Pew Research Study found 77 percent of people looking for health-related services start with an online search.

04

PRACTICE #3: TAP INTO THE INNER POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Unlike the digital clutter we all do our best to avoid, Direct Mail Marketing does something unexpectedly wonderful - It taps into the inner positive psychology of receiving a physical gift. Don't you still deep down, enjoy getting the mail?

206 billion pieces of mail delivered by the hardworking USPS every year tell me that someone does! And my guess is that a great deal of those 206 billion pieces making their way into our mailboxes are Direct Mail Marketing.

Direct Mail response is on the rise! Consumers still enjoy getting direct mail that personally pertains to them. In actuality, when the power of Direct Mail is harnessed and targeted correctly, it's no longer perceived as "junk mail". Here are just a few of the reasons customers still enjoy the act of receiving mail:



HOME DELIVERY

Mail is delivered right to their home, through no effort on their part. Let's face it; there is something we like about the anticipation. (Surprise! Guess what came in the mail today!) Plus, if they are signed up for Informed Delivery, you get double the impact through both print and digital.



OPTIONS GALORE

It can be fun! Direct Mail offers options galore - Like kits, dimensional mail, and unique packaging options. Don't be afraid to get creative and think outside the box when designing your next healthcare marketing piece. While unique mailings may have a higher price tag, they also produce much higher "open rates".

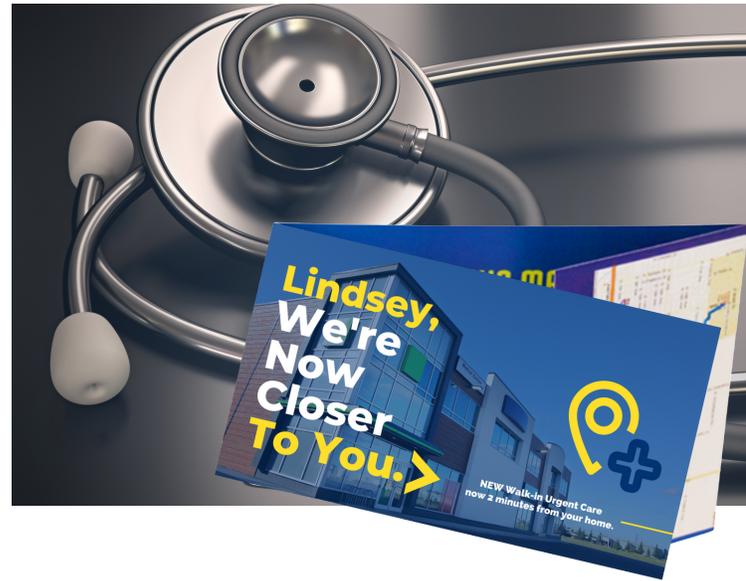
SAVE MONEY

Direct Mail pieces are usually a way to save money (Who doesn't like saving money?!) Think of coupons-- There's something about being able to physically hand an offer in and receiving that instant gratification.



INFORMATIVE

Healthcare direct mail can be informative. People by nature are curious and want to be kept up to date with the latest information supporting their health.



SAVE APPEAL

It's easily saved for future reference or use. Direct mail is a bit like a note on your refrigerator door - Even if immediate action isn't taken, your message still lingers (perhaps in a pile of mail on a desk for weeks) until they are ready to respond.



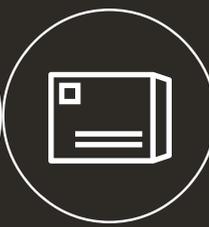
TYPES OF DIRECT MAIL



POSTCARD



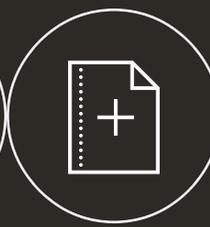
LETTERS



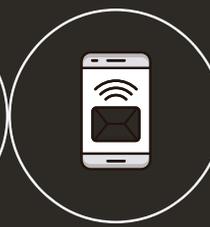
SELF-MAILERS



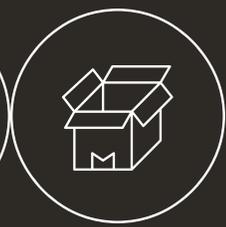
CATALOGS &
BOOKLETS



CIRCULARS,
INSERTS & WRAPS



INTERACTIVE MAIL



PARCELS &
DIMENSIONAL MAIL

CHAPTER

05

PRACTICE #4: UTILIZE THE RIGHT FORMAT FOR YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

If you strategically tailor the types of Direct Mail Marketing specifically for your target audience, personalising the campaign, you can almost guarantee high response rates. If done correctly, Direct Mail can be enticing and interactive for your customers and prospective recipients.

There are many components to be considered when creating your top-notch quality Direct Mail material. One of these considerations is the initial physical appearance- - The size and shape of the materials you will deliver your message on.

When broken down, there are six types of Direct Mail:

- Postcards: Postcards are clear, concise, and to the point. They are ideal for a brief message to your target audience. Typically used for reminders and special offer campaigns, postcards are one of the more effective marketing tools that can be used for a variety of products and services.

- Letters: If you require confidentiality, the traditional letter is often the best option. Lead letters can be highly personalized (the key to all good direct mail marketing strategies). They can also be a part of a larger Direct Mail marketing campaign, featuring correlating brochures or catalogs
- Self-Mailers: Self-mailers, or leaflets and brochures, are most typically used to attract and entice customers. This Direct Mail marketing format is self-contained, usually closed with an adhesive tab, and uses no outer envelope. They are hugely popular in enticing prospective customers, as they can include more details, visuals, and even promotional material.
- Catalogs and Booklets: These typically consist of multi-page pieces with a bound edge. They are best for presenting an abundance of products and/or marketing content. Catalogs are hugely popular and subsequently boast a high audience engagement rate. Catalogs are a spectacular Direct Mail format idea for those who are not fully aware of a brand, or the services they offer. Similarly, a catalog can also be a welcome addition for continued clients, keeping them up to date with the latest offers.
- Circulars, Inserts, and Wraps: This type of print is ideal for boosting overall awareness or driving traffic to store locations, a destination, or a website. Circulars are most commonly used as an efficient and cost-effective way to widely distribute print coupons or advertising specials for consumer products.
- Interactive Mail: Integrate Informed Delivery or Augmented Reality into your next campaign.
- Parcels or Dimensional Mailers: A dimensional mailer is regarded as an upgraded version of brochures and leaflets. They provide an in-depth, and often exclusive, overview of your brand, with an impressive response rate. Their usually unique design helps grab the recipient's attention, subsequently coming in at a higher price tag. This particular mailer is best suited for sending to a small group of high-value prospects.

PRACTICE #5: USE YOUR DATA & INTEGRATE PERSONALIZATION

As with all aspects of successful marketing strategy, timing is everything with an effective Direct Mail campaign. In order to gain the maximum return on your investment, it's vital that the right content is sent to the right people, in the right places, at the right time. The best way to put the odds in your favor is to keep your database relevant and up-to-date.

Accurate data not only helps you correctly identify your target audience and their interests, but also help you avoid costly missteps on building out mailing lists.

If a healthcare organization distributes direct mailers regarding the latest in Pediatric care to the residents of an assisted living community, for example, it's likely to be a wasted effort assuming very few of those particular residents will be in need of those types of services. Keeping up-to-date data would help such a company locate neighborhoods filled with young families who would greatly benefit and utilize their services.

Having the correct data will help you determine which stages of life your target customers are in and how to best meet their current needs. Direct Mail Marketing (as will all marketing in general) is most effective when you can offer compelling evidence that your brand fills an identifiable need for your target audience.

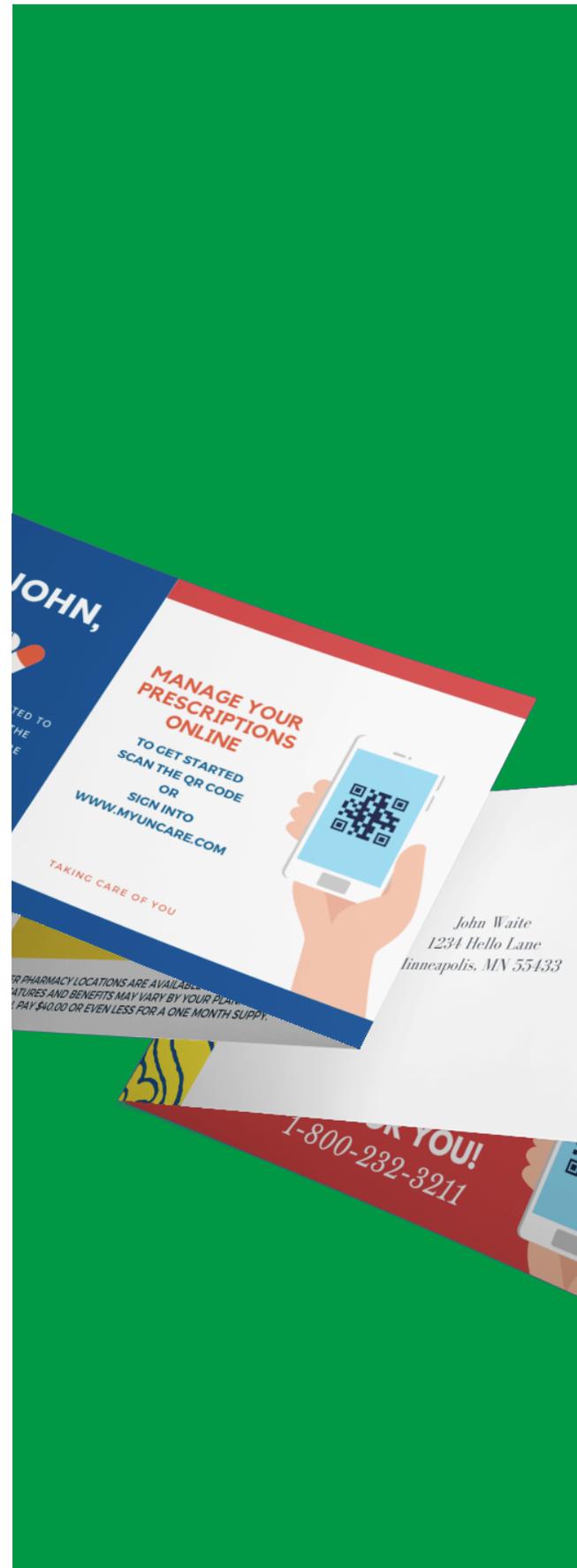
The Power of Personalization

Personalization is one of the most important and powerful aspects of Direct Mail Marketing. It creates a one-on-one connection with the recipient that builds and cements a relationship in a far more compelling way.

Everyone wants to feel special. Taking an individualized approach with Direct Mail can create that warm fuzzy feeling for current and potential customers alike. In turn, rather than seeing your mail as “junk”, they’ll feel like you really took the time to know them and understand their wants and needs.

Personalization takes time to successfully implement, however the return on that investment speaks volumes in a multitude of ways.

When you break your target audience into narrower niches, tailor a personalized offer for each person, it will truly supercharge your marketing efforts. Your content will have a higher success rate resonating with your audience and undoubtedly generating sales down the road.



Personalizing like a Pro

I believe it was Shakespeer who famously wrote, “What’s in a name?”-- Well William, everything.... Everything is in a name.

In fact, simply adding a person’s name and full color in a Direct Mail marketing campaign can increase response by a whopping 135%!

And that’s not all!-- By adding a person’s name, full color and more sophisticated database information can increase the response rate by up to 500% vs not doing any of these things. Targeting customers on a one -on-one level responses rates up to 50% or more.

As it turns out, names are indeed quite important when it comes to Direct Mail. Truth be told, merely including a customer’s name could quite possibly make all the difference between fostering meaningful relationships with your customers and having them look elsewhere for business.

But what is it that makes personalization such a powerful tool?

The answer lies in our residual memory-- Think back to when you were young, when Mom or Dad would come in from getting the mail, hand you something and simply say “It's for you”. How did that make you feel? It didn’t matter if it was a birthday card from Grandma, a letter from a friend, your new TeenBop magazine or a Direct Mail offer-- As long as it had your name on it, it was something special.

BONUS: IT'S WORTH THE WORK

Regardless if you're sending out Direct Mail, company swag, corporate gifts, customer rewards, or other creative Direct Mail pieces-- Consider how you want your customers to feel when they receive your item.

Assuming you want them to feel happy, valued, and inspired to take action-- Going the extra step to personalize each direct mail piece that is sent can most certainly elicit these emotions. In addition, personalization helps establish a stronger bond between you and your customer. This is profoundly important when you consider the fact; consumers with an emotional connection to a brand have a 306% higher lifetime value.

You may be thinking-- Direct Mail seems like a lot of work, now I need to personalize it too?

Granted it can be easy to feel overwhelmed by all of the moving parts of Direct Mail Marketing. Sourcing, logistics, shipping, and tracking will all keep you on your toes. In addition to the time spent on researching data, making sure the right Direct Mail item is sent at the right time, with the right message.

However, whether you are sending out 10 packages or 10,000 packages, each and every package will eventually be opened by one individual at a time. Every piece of Direct Mail is an incredible opportunity to genuinely connect with consumers on a human level.

Today's consumers are no longer fazed by generic, unimaginative marketing campaigns. Recent research shows that 58% of consumers want that personalized experience. A fact that can't be ignored when strategizing your next Direct Mail campaign.

And here's some food for thought-- Personalization is not just for your customer benefit. Be prepared to reap those benefits as well!

But don't take my word for it, let's take a look at some stats shall we:

- Forrester uncovered that 77% of consumers have chosen, recommended, or even paid more for a brand that provided a personalized service or experience.
- In addition, 88% of US marketers reported seeing measurable improvements due to personalization efforts-- With more than half reporting a lift greater than 10%

These numbers undeniably prove just how effective personalization can be in influencing your customer to engage with your product, not to mention how detrimental it can be to not be utilizing this approach.

Simply put, why wouldn't you add personalization to your Direct Mail healthcare marketing strategy?

CONCLUSION

Direct Mail advertising is still one of the most effective and profitable ways to reach out to new and existing customers. It allows you a unique platform where you are able to communicate one-on-one with your target audience. Tangible forms of communication bring a sort of trust along with them. This can't be said for Digital Marketing, which can be sent to a plethora of people across the globe at the click of a button-- Direct Mail requires a personal touch. Direct Mail accounts for the largest US-based channel of advertising, coming in at an astounding \$38.5 Billion spent in 2018 12 -- Yes, Billion...With a "B". The numbers prove that this form of marketing still works, even in times of email and countless other forms of online advertising.

Direct Mail is an interactive form of communication that customers can touch, feel, and experience. That's simply something Digital Marketing just can't match up to. Regardless of the specific form of Direct Mail Marketing you choose to use, the fact that it is tangible truly makes all the difference.

Looking at all of the data surrounding Direct Mail Marketing, it's easy to understand why it's a tried and trusted strategy for delivering steady sales growth by building lasting relationships with consumers.

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