



DIRECT FORUM

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Direct Forum is a free e-mail newsletter containing useful direct marketing tips, news updates and how-to information. It's convenient, informative and I am not trying to sell you anything!

This month's topics include:

- 1. THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS CONSUMER FATIGUE, ONLY MARKETING FATIGUE.**
- 2. KNOW THE 'HOT SPOTS' OF YOUR DM PACKAGE.**
- 3. AN UPDATE ON 'DIRECT MARKETING' MAGAZINE.**

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS CONSUMER FATIGUE, ONLY MARKETING FATIGUE.

Don't just blame the recession, there are other factors at play when trying to market to consumers.

Consumers live complex, rapidly changing lives, so understanding them and current trends that influence them is important.



Here are four significant new trends that are impacting practically every industry.

- Trend 1: The population is aging.**
- Trend 2: Society is becoming more culturally diverse.**
- Trend 3: Family structure is shifting.**
- Trend 4: More choices are at hand; new technology is changing the way we do things.**

In this issue, I will talk about the first two and cover the other two in the next issue.

Trend 1: The population is aging.

People are living longer creating a bigger division of older population. This is not only the biggest emerging market but also perhaps the most lucrative one. Baby boomers are not just a spike in numbers they are also about a

change in attitudes:

- Having matured in the swinging sixties, when women burned their bras and men abandoned three-piece suits and wore their hair long, they are used to breaking rules;
- This is not one homogenous group;
- They are ready to pay for services that make their lives easier.

That last point is the most important one in reaching them. These are busy people not willing or ready to retire. Many have been caregivers both to their own children and their parents so anything that could make their lives a bit easier appeals to them.

Just one concrete example: look at the astronomical growth of convenient frozen meals in the supermarkets and specialty food stores. The service industry will continue to grow providing new ways to ease their load.

Trend 2: Society is becoming more culturally diverse.

A quarter of the population in Canada is now made up of immigrants. The largest group comes from the People's Republic of China, followed by people from India.

They are:

- Most comfortable among their own countrymen;
- Family and community oriented.

First you need to decide which cultural group you want to engage because each group presents its own challenges and opportunities.

Be aware of norms, traditions and other cultural nuances that are unique to your target group.

Relate don't translate. What works well for Canadians is not necessarily going to work for new immigrants.

On the other hand if it is based on human psychology it could work.

For example: Fighting dental cavities is universal, however, don't just translate your most successful package but place communication into cultural context.



You could be targeting people whose previous toothbrush was a twig from a neem tree.

There are two ways to reach new immigrants:

1. Through their associations, places of worship and community leaders. Treat these leaders, their organizations and community members as partners. Build shared ownership. Engage - they relate best to shared authority. Work with trusted allies and influencers.
2. Family means everything to them. If you can engage their children you will engage them.

However, here's a word of caution: nothing happens fast with these groups; maintain a long-term perspective.

KNOW THE 'HOT SPOTS' OF YOUR DM PACKAGES

What are the 'hot spots' of your direct mail package?

They are the parts that you want your readers to be drawn to, to pay attention to.

Every day, writers battle with the shrinking attention spans of their potential customers.

They hope that the prospect will read a full sentence, maybe a few paragraphs and even, if they are very lucky, an entire page that they have painstakingly crafted.

How anachronistic.

Every writer that uses any form of marketing communication needs to acknowledge this attention-span problem.

They also need to acknowledge that they need a good designer or art director.

A good designer can lead the reader to what is important without overpowering the content.

In a world drowning in information overload you need to attract your target audience's attention and that's where a good designer comes in.



People remember less than 10% of what they read – but more than 50% of what they see.

Direct mail, unlike an ad or a TV spot is tactile. It is three-dimensional and can appeal to all five senses: sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste.

And yet these are seldom used. Most users of direct mail fail to take advantage of the medium's added dimensions.

So do yourself a favour.

The next time you hire a writer or even write the piece yourself, get the help of a good designer.

If not, it'll be like buying the finest foods and then letting a fast food cook, not an executive chef, prepare the meals.

AN UPDATE ON 'DIRECT MARKETING' MAGAZINE

Last month I mentioned that the publication **Direct Marketing**, would be discontinuing my monthly column, **Direct & Personal**.

Well! I just got another email from the new editor, Amy Bostock, who wants me to continue.

So look for **Direct & Personal**; the next issue features an interesting gentleman named John Anderson of Siris Solutions Group

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