

DIRECT FORUM

OCTOBER 2011

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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:

- 1. Here's more proof that Direct Marketing works — especially for charities.**
- 2. How to design a successful DM package**
- 3. Creating and testing a great DM piece — two valid reasons why you should hire a professional**
- 4. When are customers or donors most receptive?**

Here's more proof that Direct Marketing works — especially for charities

Last month I spoke about a study conducted jointly by research firm **Millward Brown, Bangor University** and the **United Kingdom's Royal Mail** that proved that direct mail creates a significantly longer-lasting impression on certain areas of the brain compared with digital marketing and could therefore have a bigger impact on the recipient.

Now another study conducted by **Blackbaud Inc.** reports that the majority of nonprofit donors prefer to give by mail. The only other significant donations received by most charities are donations acquired through online solicitation.

However, a large percentage of these donors, first acquired by online giving, do switch to direct mail giving in subsequent years. And when you convince them to do this, you significantly boost the long-term value of these new donors.

The Internet continues to become increasingly important acquisition channel, but it has still not proven to be as effective for retention as direct mail, so use them both.



The above two-page mailing for **Special Olympics Ontario** called 'OPERATION SPONSOR AN ATHLETE' generated over \$78,000 while a series of four online appeals only generated about \$5,000, but they did succeed in attracting new donors.

How to design a successful DM package

Last month I wrote about how to write a successful letter. This time let me show you a few design techniques to help you improve response.

1. INVOLVE THE READER — Physically

One way to capture your reader's attention is by adding an extra object in the package to make a point.

If you pique your audience's interest enough, they will be motivated to look deeper, become engaged and will be more likely to respond.

Below is a simple example of an acetate sheet added to a Mercedes-Benz mailing done in Germany. It demonstrates the promptness and simplicity with which your windshield glass would be immediately replaced if it chips.



FAST AND EASY. The mailing above showed a picture of the front windshield with a crack through the envelope window. The only piece inside was an insert — a piece of acetate which, when pulled out, clearly demonstrated the simplicity with which Mercedes-Benz would promptly replace your windshield for free if it got chipped.

2. USE AN IMAGE TO MAKE A STRONG IMPACT

It's true, 'a picture is worth a thousand words.'

Here are the front and back of an insert. that proves my point.



Front of insert



Back of insert

3. GET THEM FROM THE START

Sometimes the most dramatic way to relay a message is right up front on the envelope.

Here a great example of one such mailing.

The charity **CrisisLine** used the string and button on the envelope to demonstrate how donors could save lives.

By simply untying the string and freeing the noose from

possible suicide victims, it showed donors how easy and vital it was for them to get involved.



4. USE AN INSERT AS A PROP TO TELL A STORY

Here's a piece I produced for FoodShare using a packet of Sugar as a prop to talk about Diabetes that is affecting so many of our children today.

My friend Michael Johnson of HJC new media refers to this as a 'McGuffen' — the object that drives the story. I have done this with great success for UNHCR, Integra and Interval House to name just a few.



5. USE THE MATERIAL ITSELF TO MAKE YOUR POINT

Here's a great mailing where the piece of wood itself was shipped to talk about **SKILSAW's** capability and the offer available to the customer.



MONA GOLDSTEIN
Canada's first lady of DM

Direct & Personal
with Billy Shlomo

There have been many firsts for Mona Goldstein in a direct marketing legend. She has led an excellent team for 10 years and has been named a top 100 marketing executive for her success over a 30-year career.

At the end of all our articles are the winners and a prize. We'll be back with you in a few days. In the meantime, we'll be looking for your comments on our articles. If you have any questions, please contact us at 1-800-451-1111. We'll be happy to help you.

News Outlook becomes the first business magazine to offer a free trial. The new professional SkilSaw™ with 60° Pro Blade™ Besides angles, this exclusive feature also cuts custom work like a job and a dime. In fact, considering the savings in time and money, this saw could pay for itself after only one job. Available in the "Construction and Home Improvement" section.

SKILSAW
The mark of fine. We make it last.

Creating and testing a great DM piece — two valid reasons why you should hire a professional

I know this may sound self-serving, but be honest. Few business owners or charities have the skill to create a direct mail piece like the ones I have shown here and in my other newsletters. Sure, in-house staff can come up with something at a lower cost, but it will most likely be matched by a lower response. Those who do farm out the project, often end up hiring the person who quotes the lowest price which again may elicit the lowest return. Before you think you are saving money, remember that old adage - "you get what you pay for".

Not testing — dumb or dumber. Then there is the great advantage of testing. It's referred to as "scientific marketing" and that is not hyperbole. Testing and retesting are our stock-in-trade and the basis for Predictive or Deductive Modeling.

Direct & Personal
November 2010

Sharon Oatway
By Billy Shlomo

It's been a long time since I've had a chance to sit down with Sharon Oatway. She's been a part of the Direct & Personal team for a long time now, and she's always been a great asset to the team. She's a professional, a team player, and a great person to work with. She's also a great person to talk to about the industry and the challenges we face as marketers.

Sharon is a marketing executive with over 20 years of experience. She has worked for several major companies, including IBM, and has been a part of some of the most successful marketing campaigns in the industry. She is currently the Director of Direct Marketing at IBM, where she is responsible for developing and executing direct marketing strategies for the company's global market.

Sharon is a frequent speaker at industry conferences and is a member of several professional organizations. She is also a mentor to many young professionals in the industry and is always willing to share her knowledge and experience with others.

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Make a smarter decision. The direct mail industry has no shortage of wonderful pros and great talent. I have been talking about them every month in my column for **Direct Marketing** for over seven years. By using and relying on their knowledge, you can increase ROI faster and spend less money doing it. A body of tested, retested, predictive knowledge is part of what makes direct mail more than “just another medium.”

With today’s tight budgets, gaining an edge is a clear and distinct advantage. So, if you want to get a bang for your buck I suggest investing in a professional for the job.

Direct mail is still the best alternative to talking to your potential prospects or to your donors.

If budget is a problem, many consultants, including myself, will offer an analytical service or a test mailing for a very small fee. The first can identify problems with your current direct mail piece and provide potential solutions. The latter will let you really see for yourself what works best.

When are customers or donors most receptive?

Timing — the importance of talking to your customers at the right time. Here’s a hint that is quite rudimentary — a person with a fresh supply of money is far more likely to buy or be more charitable than one who’s nearly strapped for cash themselves.

So what is the best time to approach customers or donors you ask? It’s simple - it should be just after payday.

Research shows that people’s motives change depending on where they are in their pay cycles. They are most receptive to a sales pitch when they have cash.

Conversely, as the payday slips further away, they are less likely to buy. My recommendation therefore is to try and get your mailing out there at the start or the middle of the month (two average payday periods practiced by most companies) rather than at any other time.



**IT'S
PAY DAY!**

OPT IN, OPT OUT, OPTIONS:

- To unsubscribe, send me an e-mail simply saying, "Please, remove".
- To participate, send me an e-mail with your suggestions.
- To post a comment, please include your name, e-mail address and your thoughts.

Let me remind you again that your name and/or e-mail address will never be shared, sold, circulated, or passed along to anyone else.

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