



YOUR PRACTICE

Speed Up Your Marketing With Snail Mail

Rob Berman; Cindy Donaldson

To the displeasure of printing companies across the nation, we've heard many doctors say, "Direct-mail marketing is dead and expensive, so why bother?" Well, it's not dead and it doesn't have to be expensive. The great thing about direct mail is it's now more a novelty than it used to be - especially with millennials who grew up in the digital world.

According to Gallup, 41 percent of Americans look forward to getting the mail every day.¹ Those are some pretty significant numbers. That doesn't mean every piece of mail gets read, just like every email isn't opened. Yes, it's a number's game - the more you send, the more people will open your mail. You don't need elaborate direct-mail campaigns, such as those done by nonprofits that include free address labels, but you do need to make what you send catchy and relevant.

And the Numbers Say...

The return on investment (ROI) is extremely positive - on average, you get a 13 to one return-on-investment ratio.² That means you gain \$13 in revenue for every dollar of expense invested. Of course, you will need to track where any new leads come from or use some specific key words in your mailings to identify a connection to measure success.



Unfortunately, we cannot print a Google Analytics report for snail mail – you must do it the old-fashioned way! You need to ask your new patients how they heard of you. It may seem awkward at first, but the more your team and you perfect the skill, the easier it becomes. Don't shortchange this key measurement piece – it's important!

Inside Secrets to Success

There's a way to conduct your direct-mail campaign ... and a way *not* to proceed. Here are the inside secrets to making your campaign a success:

1. *Be Specific.* Who are you going to mail to and why? Regular drip marketing for branding purposes is much more economical when done via email than snail mail. You want to save your print and postage dollars for something very specific, like a new service or product – a new laser, an event such as a seminar or a webinar, or an incentive to bring in new patients. Know your target patient profile: age, gender, location and income.

2. *Have a budget.* Do your homework. Get quotes from printers, designers, mail houses and list providers. Some offer all-in-one services: they will design, print and mail, often at affordable prices, as they group together projects and take advantage of economies of scale.

3. *Understand it's not a one-off.* The most effective direct-mail campaigns have multiple touches over a specific period and are often backed up with other forms of marketing, such as digital, radio, billboards and print advertising. We strongly suggest at least six drops over 3-4 months – one every few weeks. That schedule will give you the biggest bang for your buck. Your effort will be driven by budget and what you send, which leads us to #4...

4. *Postcard, letter or package?* Depending on your budget, you may choose to do an oversized postcard allowing several "hits"; or if you want to make a big splash, perhaps by sending out a package to prospective patients – everyone will open a box!

Sending letters in small quantities? Hand write the envelopes to increase engagement. You may also consider sending something priority mail via the U.S. Postal Service, as these will absolutely be opened compared to just a letter with regular postage.

5. *Be visual.* Regardless of the form of direct mail, there is no need to write a novel's worth of copy. You need to capture someone's attention in a nanosecond. Be bold, visual and succinct in the message you want to project. We are huge fans of pictures telling your story, especially when using postcards as your medium.

Using packages or letters? Include photos in your copy, add in some testimonials with pictures of your patients (don't forget to get permission!), or even a gift - such as a magnet, Post-It notes or some other novelty.

6. *The call to action is critical.* Going back to #1 - be very specific on what you want the reader to do. Call for an appointment? Register for a seminar? Refer a friend? The idea is to get them to contact you for some reason.

The Power of Postcards

So, what's our favorite form of direct mail? We'd have to say postcards. They are inexpensive to print and mail. Plus, even if they get tossed in the recycling bin, the intended recipient saw your brand and probably your message! Postcards are also easy to drop off in various places such as your referral sources, local businesses and even in your waiting room.

Make a postal carrier happy - help them preserve their jobs by adding in a direct-mail campaign or two to your marketing mix. You might be pleasantly surprised with the results.

References

1. Newport F, Ander S. "Four in 10 Americans Look Forward to Checking Mail." Gallup Poll results, April 2015.
2. Morris D. "10 Print Marketing Statistics You Should Know." *DMR Business Statistics*, July 2020.

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