



VOLUME 19, NO. 9, SEPTEMBER 1997

Table of Contents

1. Marketing Matters: How to Get Your Direct Mail Past the Saboteurs, Screens, and Gatekeepers

Marketing Matters

How to Get Your Direct Mail Past the Saboteurs, Screens, and Gatekeepers

by David A. Shore, PhD, Assistant Dean and Director, Center for Continuing Professional Education Harvard University, School of Public Health

In my last column I identified 23 techniques you can use directly on your envelope or brochure cover to overcome inertia. The purpose of these techniques is to encourage potential registrants to take immediate action on your offer. In this column I will focus on a crucial step in direct marketing that takes place even before that moment of choice for your direct mail recipient. Our first challenge is to get your direct mail piece past the saboteurs, screens, and gatekeepers—all those who would keep your mail from reaching your target audience. I will also introduce the Post-it Note technique, along with an invitation for you to submit your proven strategies and techniques for increasing the likelihood that your piece receives the serious attention it deserves. My next column will provide an in-depth analysis of the Post-it Note case.

It's Crowded in There

Forget all those reports about the death of direct mail. They are no more true than the long-predicted demise of live, on-site CPE programming. Both are alive and well.

Direct mail, the marketing medium of choice in CPE, is already very popular, and its use continues to grow rapidly. The most current annual survey of direct marketing methods by DIRECT: The Magazine of Direct Marketing Management found 90% of all business-to-business marketers use direct mail (other than catalogues), while 45% use catalogues. Direct marketing budgets allocate 49% to direct mail other than catalogues and an additional 42% to catalogues. Looking to the future, 55% of all B-to-B marketers expect to increase direct mail other than catalogues, 37% expect no change, and 6% anticipate a decrease in direct mail. A full 78% of respondents expect the profitability of direct mail to increase or remain the same, while only 14% project a decrease. For catalogues, 75% of respondents expect profitability to remain the same or increase, while 15% project a decrease.

Sales from direct mail rank second only to telemarketing among the top nine channels of direct marketing. Advertiser spending on mail is projected to more than double to \$80 billion over the next 5 years, and the category will take a greater share of all marketing media dollars. Despite all of the direct marketing options currently available, the popularity and success of direct mail, like the persistent Energizer Bunny, just keeps going and going and going.

The Marketing Challenge

The Direct Marketing Association has calculated that, on average, we are exposed to 25,000 marketing messages a day. Of these, about 18,000 are ignored, another 6,000 blur past our mind, 500 are recognizable, 20 are remembered, and 1 may be acted upon. One can liken our CPE suspects and prospects to distant targets, with us, the CPE providers, bombarding our targets with concise darts of information. Thankfully, for many CPE providers the challenge isn't locating the targets; the real challenge is breaching the defenses of exceedingly busy professionals.

That Little Post-it Note and Much, Much More

Have you ever received a mailing with a Post-it Note from "D"? You know, the direct mail package that fools the recipient into thinking he or she has received a copy of a newspaper or magazine article from a colleague. It arrives in a simple, white #10 envelope with a Post-it Note on the article saying something like, "Holly, I thought you'd be interested in this. It really works!" Signed "D." Of course, the article is a cleverly disguised promotion.

It's easy to see why this technique works: it gets opened...it gets read...it engages the reader to think about it...the article has credibility...and the product comes with a personal endorsement! In short, it follows the AIDCA formula I shared in the July 1997 Almanac. Why not consider an advitorial for your next CPE activity-complete with yellow Post-it Note, "Holly, I thought you would be interested in this program. It really changed the way I practice!" Signed "DAS."

The Post-it Note is an innovative way that direct marketers distinguish their mailers. Next month, I will elaborate on the Post-it Note case as we continue to uncover the secrets of success in direct marketing.

Tales From the Field

Please share your successful techniques for getting your pieces noticed. Write me at dshore@sph.harvard.edu or via fax, 617-432-2121.

This column is supported in part by a grant from Hoechst Marion Roussel.

Alliance Almanac

Editor in Chief

Karen M. Overstreet, M.S., R.Ph., E.L.S.

Associate Editors

Donald E. Beahm, M.D.

Robert J. Cullen, Ph.D.

David Erickson

Gerald H. Escovitz, M.D.

Mickey Luckman

Howard S. Madigan, M.D.

Brian O'Toole, Ph.D.

Joseph W. Ray

John F. Saari, M.D.

Linda Saunders

David A. Shore, Ph.D.

K. M. Tan, M.D.

Deborah Teplow, D.M.A.

Tad Teranishi

1996 Board of Directors

James C. Leist, Ed.D., President*

Joseph S. Green, Ph.D., President-elect*

Melvin I. Freeman, M.D., Treasurer*

Nancy L. Bennett, Ph.D.

Michele Y. Burpeau-DiGregorio, Ph.D.

Robert C. Fore, Ed.D.

Martin P. Kantrowitz, M.D.

Robert E. Kristofco, M.S.W.

Albert N. May, M.D.

George D. Oetting, Ed.D.

Judith G. Ribble, Ph.D.

Henry B. Slotnick, Ph.D., Ph.D.

Joan E. Sondag, M.B.A.

Patricia E. Spencer, Ph.D.

Patrick Sweeney, M.D., Ph.D.

*Executive Committee

Headquarters Office

Bruce J. Bellande, Ph.D. - Executive Director*

Marcie Valerio - Managing Editor

Rose Ellen Basile - Designer

The *Almanac* is published monthly by the Alliance for Continuing Medical Education, 60 Revere Dr., Suite 500, Northbrook, IL 60062. Tel: 847/480-9085. Fax: 847/480-9282. E-mail: f.m.acme@applelink.apple.com. (ISSN#1076-3899.) The views expressed in the *Almanac* are those of the authors and are not intended to represent the views of the Alliance or its membership.