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# PRINTtips

## Winning New Customers with ... Direct Mail



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*Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose. The more things change, the more they stay the same.*

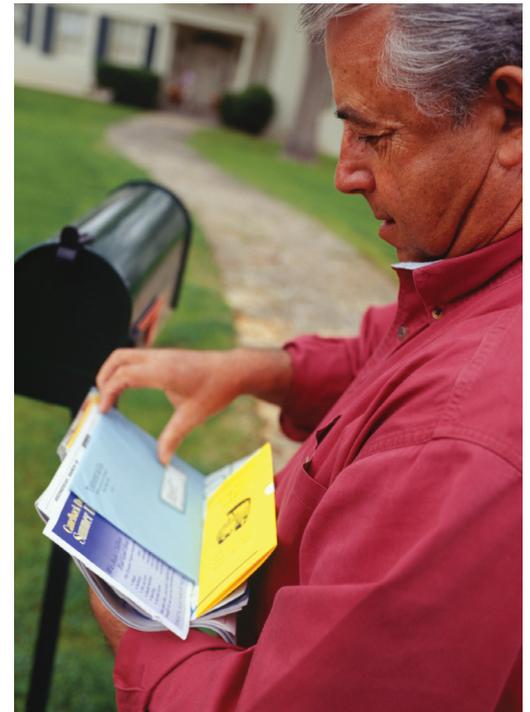
—Alphonse Karr, French critic, journalist, and novelist in the mid-1800s

**W**hen it comes to attracting new customers, this famous epigram perfectly describes the process. New tools like social media represent the changes, while the fundamentals of customer service and outreach using direct mail remain the same.

### The Solid Base: Customer Service

The primary objective of customer service is to keep customers coming back. A satisfied customer has no incentive to look elsewhere for the product or service you provide and will, therefore, return to purchase again. A satisfied customer might also provide a recommendation to others to use your business or provide a referral to your business.

Truly great customer service is invisible to the customer. It is the framework for all transactions, but is never in the forefront. Your customer places an order and it is fulfilled on time, as ordered, and at the agreed-upon price. This kind of dependability – meeting customer expectations consistently and quietly – is the ultimate customer service experience and trumps the occasional above-and-beyond effort needed to solve an unexpected problem or respond to an emergency. If you are great at performing in a crisis but inconsistent in day-to-



day performance, you are not delivering a great customer experience.

Remarkable customer service begins when you enhance quietly consistent routine performance with extra touches – anticipating the customer's needs, turning a job around on an impossible deadline, or providing a creative solution to a problem. Remarkable customer service creates future business.

### Get the Word Out:

#### Tell Your Story with Direct Mail

Once you have mastered the basics of remarkable customer service, it is time to get the

## Winning New Customers With ... Direct Mail (cont.)

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*“A direct mail campaign can be designed to create suspense or incorporate humor or appeal to emotion ...”*

*“You can magnify the effect of traditional direct mail by adding elements of social media.”*

word out to potential new customers. Especially for businesses without a large marketing budget, direct mail remains a cost-effective and easy way to communicate with customers and prospects. Like great customer service, direct mail is a fundamental of attracting new customers.

Here are the reasons why direct mail marketing still works:

- **You control the outreach.** As a first step in finding new customers, look for businesses or individuals whose demographic profile matches the profile of your best customers. The logic is simple: if the prospects resemble your best customers, it is likely they already have a need for your product or service. Furthermore, if you are providing an excellent customer experience along with the product or service, you have a point of differentiation from your competition that you can talk about.
- **You control the message.** Direct mail allows you to tell your story in the way you think is most effective.

A direct mail campaign can be designed to create suspense or incorporate humor or appeal to emotion – all known to be effective ways to get prospects to respond.

- **There isn't much competition in the mailbox.** These days there is much less competition for a prospect's attention in the mail box, especially when compared to the volume of messages delivered via social media.
- **Mail is a physical media.** The brain responds differently to physical and digital media. According to a 2009 study by Millward Brown research company, physical media like a direct mail piece leaves a “deeper footprint” in the brain, involves more emotional processing, and produce more brain responses connected with internal feelings.
- **Direct mail can be put aside to read later.** According to Epsilon's 2012 Channel Preference Study, 73% of U.S. consumers and 67% of Canadian consumers indicated they

prefer direct mail because they can read the information at their convenience.

Direct mail is effective with both an older and younger demographic. The results of a study conducted by ICON (a division of Epsilon Targeting) entitled *Finding the Right Channel Combination: What Drives Channel Choice?*, found that people in the 18-34 year old age bracket prefer receiving messages about certain types of products and services in print rather than online. The survey was conducted using 2500 U.S. and 2200 Canadian households. It also indicated that consumers of all ages believe information sent via mail is more private than when sent via e-mail.

### Use Direct Mail Creatively: Add Social Media

You can magnify the effect of traditional direct mail by adding elements of social media. Here are a few possibilities:

- **Direct mail and a web site:** Use a letter, post card, or other mailer to point the target audience to a web site, either the company's main web site or a secondary site set up for a specific purpose. At the web site, make something of value available – a downloadable white paper, video, or slide show about a new product or service – that rewards the customer for his visit.
- **Direct mail and video.** A video is a good tool for providing instructions, demonstrating something, describing a concept that may be hard to grasp without visual input, or providing testimonials. As with the web site example, use the direct mailer to highlight the availability of the video.
- **Direct mail and e-mail:** Use e-mail to alert customers to the start of a direct mail campaign such as membership renewal, or a “save-the-date” for an upcoming event. E-mail an image of the mail piece, tell customers when to expect it, and what to do when it arrives. If there is a deadline for action, e-mail customers to remind them of the deadline.

## Winning New Customers With ... Direct Mail (cont.)

- **Direct mail and Twitter:** Use direct mail to enroll new Twitter followers, then keep them interested with exclusive special deals or offers.

### We're Direct Mail Experts

Call on us to help you integrate social media

marketing with direct mail. We have been providing direct mail services to our customers since 1980, and we are good at what we do. For more information or to set an appointment, call us at 513-248-2121.

*“We have been providing direct mail services to our customers since 1980, and we are good at what we do.”*

## Vocabulary of the Graphic Arts

**Blog:** a contraction of weblog. A web site on which an individual or group of users regularly record opinions or other information.

**Facebook:** a social networking website started in 2004. Originally designed for college students, it is now regularly used by businesses.

**Google:** brand name of the leading Internet search engine.

**LinkedIn:** a business-oriented social networking site launched in May 2003.

**Millennials:** the demographic cohort following Generation X; sometimes called Generation Y. Born between 1980 and the mid-2000s, Millennials are the largest generation in the United States, representing one-third of the total U.S. population in 2013.

**Social bookmarking site:** a web site based on the interaction of “tagging” web sites and searching through web sites bookmarked by others.

**Social media site:** a website that both provides information and an opportunity for interaction.

**Social networking site:** a web site based on interaction by connecting with friends, commenting on profiles, joining groups, and participating in discussions. Example: Facebook, Pinterest.

**Social news site:** a web site based on interaction by voting for articles and commenting on them. Examples: Digg, Reddit

**Social photo and video site:** a web site based on interaction by sharing photos or videos and commenting on user submissions. Example: YouTube, Pinterest.

**Social proof:** a method for making a decision based on non-rational factors; determining what is correct by finding out what other people think is correct.

**Twitter:** an instant messaging system for sending brief text messages (up to 140 characters) to a list of followers.

**YouTube:** a video-sharing website for users to upload, share, and view videos; founded in 2005.

**Word of mouth advertising (WOM):** the unpaid spread of a positive marketing message from person to person.

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## Social Media and Word-of-Mouth Marketing

*“... word of mouth compares favorably to traditional advertising as a way to create new customers.”*

**S**ocial media has added a new dimension to old-fashioned word of mouth advertising. Always an effective method because of the built-in element of trust, word of mouth compares favorably to traditional advertising as a way to create new customers. However, the drawback is how long it takes to reach enough people.

Enter social media. Reviews on web sites like Amazon and Yelp expand the reach of anyone willing to give a testimonial. Even though you don't know the reviewer, the tendency is to trust what they say more than an advertising message put out by the business. This is especially true

for Millennials who as a group are suspicious of advertising. Word of mouth testimonials on social media are a logical outcome of a great customer experience.

Of course there is a downside to word of mouth advertising on social media sites – the business has no control over what is said. Unfortunately, dissatisfied customers are more likely to post negative warnings than satisfied customers are to make recommendations. Distortions and untruths can be difficult to combat and may cause unfair damage to a business's brand and reputation.