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# PRINTtips

## Let's Keep in Touch... Six Ways to Stay in Contact



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**M**arketing experts agree: the basis for developing new business, whether new work from an existing customer or the first job from a prospect, is to communicate with them. Experts also agree that the more different kinds of communication tools a business or organization uses, the more efficient the outreach and the more likely it is to successfully reach the person targeted. Relying on only one or two methods to make contact is risky when the person you want to reach has voice mail and the “delete” command to avoid phone calls and e-mail, and may not participate in all forms of social media. To help you improve your chances of having a successful communication, we offer six ways to contact customers and prospects.

### #1: Direct mail is alive and working well

It was true yesterday and is true today... direct mail works. According to the Direct Mail Association (DMA) Factbook for 2013, 65% of consumers of all ages have made a purchase as a result of direct mail, and the response rate for direct mail continues to be higher than for electronic mail. Some reasons for this outcome are:

- There is less competition for reader attention in the mailbox than the inbox. First class mail reached its peak volume in 2001 and has been declining ever since. This means fewer mail pieces overall being delivered to homes and businesses, making a direct mail marketing



piece more visible. Conversely, the volume of e-mail continues its rise.

- E-mail can be blocked, labeled as spam, or deleted without opening. If the e-mail message is never delivered or read, it is useless. In contrast, a direct mail piece can be designed so it doesn't require opening, thereby automatically exposing the reader to the message.
- E-mail has replaced direct mail as a source of annoyance. As early as 2006, a survey conducted by the University of Georgia Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication found that most people regarded spam as more intrusive and irritating than direct mail.

### #2: Phone calls... people still like to talk

Phone calls — not telemarketing, but a person-to-person call — is still an effective way to reach a customer or initiate contact with a prospect.

## Let's Stay in Touch... Six Ways to Stay in Contact (cont.)

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*“...a printed newsletter has greater intrinsic value.”*

*“A trade show allows a business to reach more prospects in less time than it would take to make individual sales calls.”*

On the telephone, voice tone adds another dimension to the words, conveying more than the words alone. In his 1967 study *Inference of Attitudes from Nonverbal Communication in Two Channels*, Dr. Albert Mehrabian found that voice tone and spoken words together account for 42% of effective communication.

Certain communications, particularly those that are sensitive or confidential, are best handled with a phone call and the two-way interchange it enables. Finally, some matters can be handled more quickly with a phone call than with e-mail or texting.

### #3 Social Media to Attract

Social media can be a leading traffic generator to your web site. Without social media, a business's inbound traffic is limited to customers who are already familiar with it or prospects that used the right key words in a search engine. By adding social media profiles and sharing content from your web site — blog posts, videos, etc. — you give the audience a reason to click through to your site and begin engagement.

Social media can be used as a customer service platform and a forum to interact with customers. It is a powerful tool for customers to promote a brand they like (though it can also be a way for customers to discipline a business for real or perceived poor customer service).

Chris Reitermann, Ogilvy & Mather CEO for China, reminds marketers that they don't have to use all social platforms. Instead, use a main platform and build around that, then expand to two or three where you can dominate.

Facebook provides a place for customers and prospects to interact with the business and so is often the first social media profile a business develops. Keep it regularly active by making important announcements, answering questions, or issuing reminders.

Twitter is for quick, frequent updates about your business and is a place to engage with individual customers by answering questions and providing

product support. YouTube is a useful way to provide instructional videos or explanations, and from it a business can easily post the video to Facebook or Twitter.

### #4 Printed Newsletters Add Intrinsic Value

Because it is more expensive and difficult to produce than an e-mail letter, a printed newsletter has a greater intrinsic value. It also arrives with all graphics and photographs in place and without distortion or editing by browsers. Digital printing has brought the price of printing a newsletter — especially printing one in full color — to within the budget of most businesses.

A printed newsletter is very versatile. Mail it to customers, use it as a leave-behind on prospect sales calls, place it in your reception area, and use it at trade shows. A printed newsletter will get multiple views from your customers during its shelf life of 30 to 90 days, and may even be archived by your customer in a folder or binder.

### #5 Live Events Take You to Where They Are

If done wisely, participating in a live event like a trade show or vendor fair can be a way to generate leads and promote brand awareness. Look for smaller shows that are vertical, or are aimed at a specific industry that represents your target audience. A trade show allows a business to reach more prospects in less time than it would take to make individual sales calls.

Another benefit of trade shows is providing the opportunity to visit with current customers and nurture the relationship. Whereas it may be difficult to get face-to-face time with a busy customer in his or her office, at a trade show there are fewer demands on the customer's time.

There is also a residual benefit from trade show participation. According to data from the Center for Exhibition Industry Research, 87% of attendees will pass along some of the information they obtained at the show, and 64% will tell at least six other people about it.

### #6 Email to Establish Expertise

Sending an e-mail newsletter regularly can

## Let's Stay in Touch... Six Ways to Stay in Contact (cont.)

establish your business as an expert in its field.

Unlike a printed newsletter, an e-mail newsletter should be short (i.e., a few hundred words), provide relevant content that shares insights on a single topic, and be accompanied by a visual. Use an e-mail delivery service with an opt-out feature (like Constant Contact or MailChimp) to be sure you comply with the CAN-SPAM Act of 2003.

Content written for an e-mail newsletter can be used in other ways. Upload a copy to a section of your web site or post it as a link to your social media channels. Collect issues on the same topic together and publish as an e-book that can be downloaded for free from your web site.

### Communication is a Multi-faced Activity

Communicating regularly with customers and prospects through multiple channels establishes the basis for an ongoing relationship. Informative, relevant content is the key to attracting and keeping readers. We can help you format content into a printed newsletter and a direct mail campaign. For more information on our communication services, contact us at 513-248-2121 or visit us on the web at [tgiconnect.com](http://tgiconnect.com).

*“Communicating regularly with customers and prospects through multiple channels establishes the basis for an ongoing relationship.”*

## Communication Vocabulary

**Blog:** a contraction of web log. A publicly-accessible web page that serves as a personal journal for an individual or business.

**CAN-SPAM:** Legislation signed into law in 2003 by President George W. Bush in response to a growing number of complaints over spam e-mail. Requires compliance in three areas: content, sending behavior, and ability to unsubscribe.

**Click-through rate:** a measure of how often a visitor clicks on a web advertisement and is taken to the advertiser's web site.

**Direct mail:** printed matter (such as post cards, flyers, or brochures) prepared for the purpose of soliciting business or contributions and mailed directly to individuals or businesses.

**Drip marketing:** a communication strategy that sends (i.e., drips) a prewritten set of messages to prospects or customers over time. Often distributed via e-mail.

**Marketing channel:** a selling method that connects the seller to the buyer without a middle man.

**Spam:** irrelevant or inappropriate messages sent on the internet to a large number of recipients.

**Social media:** any of a variety of web-based platforms, applications, and technologies that enable people to interact online.

**Social media listening:** the process of identifying and assessing what is being said about a company, individual, product, or brand on the Internet.

**Social media optimization (SMO):** the process of increasing awareness of a product, brand, or event by using a number of social media profiles to generate viral publicity and drive traffic to a web site.

**Spam filter:** a program that detects unsolicited and unwanted e-mail messages and prevents them from getting into a user's inbox.

**Trade show:** an exhibition organized so that companies in a specific industry can showcase and demonstrate their latest products and services.

**Web analytics:** the study of the impact of a web site on its users.

*“Click-through rate: a measure of how often a visitor clicks on a web advertisement and is taken to the advertiser's web site.”*



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## Direct Mail Marketing Remains Strong

**D**irect mail marketing remains a powerful tool for generating leads and selling products and services. If your direct mail program is not providing the results you expected, here are some ideas for improving response rate.

- **Target an audience.** Rather than mail to your entire customer list, select a subset that share like characteristics, then craft a message likely to appeal specifically to them. When prospecting, use a list of people whose characteristics match those of your best customers.
- **Provide a compelling offer.** Incentives and pricing are fundamental influences on the decision to buy. If you have an offer that provides clear savings, incorporate it into

the message. Create a sense of urgency by adding a deadline for responding or limiting the offer to a certain number of buyers.

- **Use a well-designed mail piece.** The mail piece should be professionally designed using proven principles to attract attention and lead the reader through the sales message. For example, a Johnson box on a letter functions like a headline to draw attention, while a P.S. is a frequently-read comment that reinforces the main point of the letter.
- **Interact with other marketing channels.** Use a direct mail post card to drive traffic to your web site. Use social media to alert customers and prospects to be expecting something in the mail.

*“Incentives and pricing are fundamental influences on the decision to buy.”*