

## Seven Keys to a Successful Direct Marketing Campaign

So you're developing a direct marketing campaign. Prepare to be judged on the results. The good news is the numbers don't lie. And the bad news? ...the numbers don't lie.

Whether your plan involves direct mail, email, direct response ads, or even the somehow still effective infomercial, here are a few things to consider that will help ensure a positive return.

### 1. Target Practice

Here's a bold statement: It doesn't matter how slick the campaign looks or how perfectly pithy the copy. If the campaign isn't targeting the right audience it's missing the mark completely. Occasionally, I receive a mailer from a company trying to sell me new hardwood flooring. I'm a renter, so as you can imagine that goes straight to the trash. It's necessary for brands to do the research to avoid wasting time and money. Market to the most likely prospects for the best return on investment (ROI). How will the brand know when they see them? One of the first rules in direct marketing is this: The next customer will look an awful lot like the last customer.

### 2. The Big Idea

Bona fide ad genius David Ogilvy once said, "Unless your advertising is based on a big idea, it will pass like a ship in the night." When navigating the murky waters of direct marketing, consider that ship *The Titanic*.

So what's the big idea, anyway? Something that will stop people in their tracks and make them think. Why's it so important? The average person is exposed to over 3,000 commercial messages a day. A big idea helps cut through all the chatter. Occasionally the big idea is about the product being sold, but more often it's about the consumer. After all, people tend to pay attention when something resonates with them.

### **3. Adding Value**

What if you went to a fortune teller and s/he predicted that in half an hour you'd be paying them \$50? Regardless of your views on psychic phenomenon, I think we can all agree that's a rip off. You wanted to hear about your future, not theirs! The same applies to a direct marketing campaign. It should be about the prospect first and the product second. Brands need to offer tips, valuable information, or even entertainment. If that is done successfully, I predict the marketing efforts will prove successful.

### **4. Channeling Your Inner Corleone**

Much like the Godfather, the goal in direct marketing is to make the prospects an offer they can't refuse. The offer is not a rock bottom price, exceptional service, or even a revolutionary product. The offer is that extra incentive that drives people to act, whether it's by filling out a business reply card, going to a landing page or calling an 800-number. Moreover, sell the offer over the product. So by all means, the offer should prove irresistibly appealing to your audience – like free brains for zombies, for example. Mmm...

### **5. Trust Issues**

Credibility is critical in a competitive market. A brand may feel as if everyone knows and understands them, but chances are they don't. Even in the case of Apple, they still have to prove that the product lives up to the hype. For these reasons, brands should ensure that their identity is reconfirmed with every customer interaction. And don't forget to include goodies like statistics, case histories, client lists or testimonials.

### **6. Test With the Best**

Testing is more than just a method of judging winners and losers in a direct marketing death match. By determining what worked and what didn't, brands can make a more accurate forecast of where to spend marketing dollars in the future. Test, test again, and then test some more. Still not convinced? American Express devotes approximately 15% of its budget to testing. Companies that test have a huge advantage over those who don't bother spending the time and resources on this necessary step. Period.

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## **7. Call In an Expert**

Every campaign is an extension of a brand. If it's viewed as "just direct mail", it needs to be rethought. That mail piece may be the only part of the company that someone will actually hold in their own two hands. That quick email blast is far from inconsequential. It's surprisingly easy to offend a customer. Before you trust your valued customers or your valuable leads to an agency or marketing company, make sure they know their stuff.

If you need guidance, please feel free to contact evōk advertising at 407.302.4416 or visit [evokad.com](http://evokad.com).



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