

Yeckity Yak

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How Personalized Should Your Direct Mail Message Be?

Changes in technology over the years have launched direct mail personalization to increasingly complex and powerful levels. At the most basic level, personalization involves changing the salutation or name, in addition to the address on each direct mail piece. More complex targeting involves different “versions” of a marketing message combined with the basic personalization. Finally, there is fully customized printing, where the mailing list data can trigger the proper text, images and layout for a given mail recipient.

But beware! Using personalization does not mean that improved response rates magically occur! Personalization by itself is not the most important factor! The significant aspect is the offer and how relevant it is to the recipient of your mailing.

Relevance through personalization provides the opportunity to position an offer that is more likely to appeal to a greater percentage of your audience because it is tailored to the perceived needs of individuals.

Some campaigns just naturally fit the potential benefits of using data to drive personalization . . . others may be best served using traditional direct marketing tactics and production methods. Even though they are likely to generate better ROI, highly personalized direct mail can be complex and expensive and may not fit all campaigns.

Got a personalized direct mail project you’d like to talk about? Give the pros at Yeck Brothers a call at 800-417-2767 or local at 937-294-4000.

PERSONALIZE WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW . . .

If you already have a successful campaign and don’t feel the need to “start over” with a personalized effort . . . you can easily retrofit variable elements to your current campaign. Begin by dividing your list into segments, then decide what offer or call-to-action would motivate each group and start replacing static elements with variables. It sounds complicated . . . and it can be . . . but you’re not alone. We’re the experts and can help you develop and expedite a personalized campaign.

The Keys to Relevance Amidst ‘Digital Hullabaloo’

As we were researching and writing this issue of Yeckity Yak we came across an article that we thought was relevant and important enough to share with you . . .

Posted by Mike Ertel – March 13, 2013

March is a crazy month. As if spring fever and wildly unpredictable weather weren’t enough, the NCAA Men’s Division I Basketball Championship is just around the corner. Yes March Madness is here. Aside from spiking your interest in the excitement of bracket busters and early favorites, you might be wondering how this relates to topics we typically cover.

The answer lies in the digital madness that surrounds us.

In a [recent article from Direct Marketing News](#), author Dianna Dilworth tries to put this situation into perspective by saying, “Despite all the digital hullabaloo in marketing today, the direct mail business is expected to grow 1.4% annually for the next five years to \$13.8 billion, according to IBISWorld’s ‘Direct Mail Advertising in the U.S.’”

Dilworth is on to something with her description. Between email overload and social media fatigue, the digital marketing landscape can sometimes bring madness to mind. Some digital channels are invaluable to the overall marketing mix, of course. And the most successful campaigns often utilize a cross-channel approach. But direct mail remains a proven and well-rounded medium that is actually preferred and responded to by a large percentage of consumers.

So what can direct marketers do to stay relevant in today’s world of “oft-distracted, multichannel customers?” Consider these three takeaways from Dilworth’s article on the evolution of direct mail:

Make it personal. Debora Haskel covered this topic in depth with her article comparing the subtle differences between personalization and relevance. The bottom line is creating an offer that not only places the right variable data on the mail piece (name, images and personalized response mechanism), but delivers the right message, at the right time, and provides a compelling solution to the recipient’s problem.

Plan holistically. It’s important to optimize the call to action of any direct mail piece. This holds true for cross-channel campaigns that include QR codes or other digital fulfillment. The days of leading recipients to a company’s homepage, as opposed to a mobile-optimized landing page or microsite that specifically targets the offer, are over. Click-to-call actions must also be set up for fulfillment – don’t drive the recipient to a call center if it’s not set up to handle consistent traffic.

Remember those special days. Customer acquisition and loyalty programs often receive added muscle from effective trigger programs. Not only can they target your best and most loyal customers with additional points or rewards, but they can also center around birthdays, which Dilworth calls “especially effective for connecting with customers on a personal level.” She also calls out the importance of sending physical mail, as opposed to email, for these special occasions. Direct mail continues to prove itself as a widely effective and preferred medium despite the digital madness in today’s marketing landscape, but it must continue to evolve and stay relevant. As marketers, these strategies are a great place to start.

Going Postal . . . so you don’t have to

Here’s what’s happening at the United States Postal Service . . . In an effort to make direct mail more cost effective and appealing, the USPS has announced several postage discount programs for 2013. You can get more information at <http://1.usa.gov/Se9pj0>. And, as always, call Yeck Brothers at 937-294-4000 for details on any of these postal discount promotions.

DIRECT MAIL TIP:

You can find some of your best ideas in your own mailbox! When a mailing catches your eye, keep it! Tear it apart and understand what you liked about it. Use the things you learn from your own mailbox on your direct mail efforts.

One Call . . .

Looking for help with your next direct mail and/or e-mail campaign? We can help you with strategy, lists, creative, implementation and analysis!

Call us today at 937-294-4000.

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