

Secrets To Structuring Your Mailing

< Previous Strategy

In your previous Success Marketing Email I have been discussing mailing formats. Specifically one of my favorites which is the 'sneak up' approach and one of my least favorites, which is the billboard envelope.

Now, let's switch gears a bit as I would like to talk about what is probably the most difficult aspect of direct mail marketing to teach. Of course, this is the actual structure of the mailing piece. The reason it's difficult is that direct mail is still not an exact science. There are many things we know about direct mail that have been established through scientific testing and statistical analysis but there is still a large portion of the process that relies on the intuition and knowledge of customers of the person creating the piece.

That's why professional direct mail copywriters with good track records can command extraordinary fees because it is impossible to identify and duplicate what they do. And even the top pros applying all their talent and experience have losers too. So I'll be the first to admit to you that I cannot teach you how to be certain of putting together a successful direct mail piece. I can however, tell you how to tremendously reduce the likelihood of creating an unsuccessful one and that's what this email is about.

Each piece - the letter, the brochure and the response device - has a structure and the same structure is appropriate for all three. In fact, not only should the same structure be used but you should repeat your entire sales story in all three pieces. Not word-for-word of course but so that the reader could order after only reading the letter not the brochure, or the brochure not the letter, or the order form without reading either the letter or the brochure.

Now this is a real insider's secret to making direct mail work so do not overlook the importance of this. You can't control the customer's behavior. You can only prepare for as many different variances in customer behavior as possible. The piece of structure starts with an opening. That opening might be the headline, the first sentence or two of the letter or what's called a 'Johnson Box,' above the start of the copy. Whatever the opening is it must at least do one of these three things:

- 1: Telegraph the offer.
- 2: Emphasis the best aspect of the offer.
- 3: Target the reader.

In your next Success Marketing Strategy I will go into detail and explain the importance of all three aspects of the opening to your direct mail pieces.