



Marketing Dollars, Direct Mail & Data Quality

Although Internet advertising allowed companies to significantly expand their reach, the growing emphasis has been on getting to know customers on a more individual level. Targeting messages to the right customer at the right time has become even more important. However, it's a marketer's greatest challenge when the message can't reach the right recipient due to incorrect contact information, specifically, out-of-date mailing addresses for direct mail campaigns.

Direct mail marketers need to put data protocols in place to ensure contact information isn't decaying over time and that there are no duplicates, resulting in the same person receiving multiple copies of the same mailing. Not implementing a program to thwart poor data also impedes the ability for businesses to appeal to their customers on a personal level. Implementing data protocols not only keeps your data clean, but it also helps your clients feel like you know them.

The Winterberry Group's Direct Marketing News reported that U.S. companies spent \$11.5 billion on marketing data in 2015. While email data spending increased 35 percent, and display marketing rose 21 percent, direct mail still commanded the bulk of spending with more than \$9 billion. Also, per the Direct Marketing Association (DMA), 70% of Americans say "snail mail" is more personal than the Internet and 56% reported that receiving mail is a real pleasure. Direct mail is also an effective way to woo new customers. 39% of customers try a business for the first time because of direct mail advertising (DMA). Also, according to a USPS study, over 60% of direct mail recipients were influenced to visit promoted website with the greatest influence on first-time shoppers.

Every year there are on average over 140 million change-of-addresses filed with the USPS, as well as, over one million new delivery points added to the network. With human error, there are additional issues with keystroke errors and omissions of new contacts being created; adding to the reason why data deteriorates quickly. Think about all the discarded mail and what dollar amount that equates to. That is a lot of lost revenue and lost connections.

Address correction is by far the most important step in keeping data up-to-date with your marketing efforts. Campaigns will be far less effective if they don't reach the right individuals' mailboxes. Verifying and updated contact information can reduce bad data and human errors, which allows you to make the most of your direct mail budget because it is crucial to have the right mailing information. Changes within your database prevents direct mail from reaching the intended recipients, which isn't a good use of your marketing budget or customer experience. Keeping accurate data ensures that you use the same contact list longer, effectively spend your marketing dollars and appeal to your customers on an individual level.