

Is Direct Mail Obsolete?

The advent of digital communication has given those in the marketing industry a fresh new playground in which to test direct marketing strategies. After all, everyone loves the Internet, and with email access in everyone's pocket or purse, direct marketers are rich in opportunities to deliver messages to large groups of people quickly and at a reasonable cost.

So, now that the Internet has been a staple in the world's personal and business environment long enough for trends to develop, can we definitively claim that digital marketing is likely to bring about an end to direct mail?

According to data compiled during an 18-month study conducted by [Britain's Royal Mail MarketReach](#), it's not time to write direct mail's obituary just yet. Using multiple research methods, Royal Mail MarketReach found that, in spite of our increased reliance upon digital communication, people "are still physical creatures that thrive on human contact and stimulation. Giving, receiving, and handling tangible objects remain deep and intuitive parts of the human experience."

In other words, people like to touch the things they interact with.

Among Royal Mail MarketReach's findings, 69% of participants admitted to opening mail packages featuring a promotion or special offer. Additionally, participants valued something they could see and touch 24% more highly than something they could only see (such as email or television advertising), 57% of participants claimed that receiving mail makes them feel more valued (compared to only 17% who feel this way about email), and 60% said the best mail advertising helps keep the sender's brand top of mind.

It seems that getting, opening, and interacting with mail is still a common, habitual, and even enjoyable activity for many people. Postal mail tends to be associated with a sort of hopefulness that email has yet to match. Plus, nobody has ever complained about pop-ups interfering with the ability to open an envelope, and regular mail doesn't come with the risk of computer viruses!

The verdict? It's not time to give up on direct mail after all. The key is to make sure your piece is one of the items that falls into that 69%. Among the strategies recommended to do that are developing a strong, recognizable brand, performing campaign tests before implementing a large mailing, focusing efforts on multi-channel marketing, and personalizing mailings to increase the chances that the recipient of your direct mail piece is likely to be interested in what you have to sell.

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