

# DIRECT MAIL TIP



As you know, direct mail is a highly effective marketing method for entrepreneurs and small businesses, even with the prevalence of Internet-based marketing. Here are some ideas for an effective direct mail campaign that will help you grow your business:

## Make a Commitment

Direct mail marketing is a commitment that pays off over time, so a one-time approach is not likely to get you the results you want. Budget for several mailings that can build upon each other to help you achieve your marketing goals.

## Make a Plan

To make your marketing efforts worthwhile, you want to make them as strategic as possible, so it's important to have a plan, which should include three key components:

**A Marketing Calendar.** A long-term game plan, laid out by calendar year, will allow you to center marketing efforts around various awareness days and other special days on the calendar (for example, National Cut Energy Costs Day, which occurs on Jan. 10 in 2017). In addition, your marketing plan will help you map out how to integrate your direct mail campaign with your other marketing efforts. For example, today it's a natural fit to use direct mail marketing to drive people to your website, blog, or social media pages.

**Objectives for each mailing.** Develop clear, measurable objectives for each mailing. How many responses do you expect and in what time frame? What will you do if this is not achieved?

**A follow-up system.** Be clear about how responses to your mailing will be handled—and the time frame in which you'll do so.

## Know Your Audience

The more you know about your target audience, the better. At the most basic level, there are two categories of information you should try to obtain:

**Demographics.** Whether you're targeting building owners, specifiers, or contractors, simple information such as geographic location and industry sector can help you tailor your message to a more specific audience, or to reach as wide an audience as possible.

**Desires.** Really think about your target audience. What do they think and want? And what do you want them to think and want as a result of your mailing?

**Consider your content.** Be clear about what you want to communicate in your mailing, so that you can make your message as clear and simple as possible. In addition, remember that many people won't read past the first line or two, so you'll need to engage your audience immediately with an attention-grabbing opener. Finally, you'll need a clear and concise call to action to close out your message. Let your recipient know exactly what to do next.

## The "CIA" Approach To Marketing

Every marketing campaign consists of three areas of focus:

**Creative** — Pictures are priceless. We like to use our senses when making decisions. As a general rule of thumb, your recipient will not spend much time reading a letter-type format.

**Incentive (or Offer)** — Your recipient wants to know one thing: "What's in it for me?" Every campaign should contain some sort of offer, such as a free estimate.

**Audience** — You could have a great creative piece with an appealing incentive—but if you target the wrong audience, you won't get much bang for your advertising buck.

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