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How to design an effective direct mail post card?

Direct mail postcards are always found to be the most cost effective means of conveying business messages to customers. But the attempt would be fruitful only when the message reaches the target market as expected. Before attempting to design an effective direct mail postcard, it is advisable to have a well planned target list generated. Designing a common or general direct mail postcard for all your customers is an age old style and elicits very poor response from the customers. Whereas, customized postcards are something that brings about good responses. Below listed are few key points that can be used as a check list before designing and forwarding the business postcards to the customers.

- **Information Gathering**

Though this initial step might be time consuming, it plays a vital role in direct mail postcard marketing as one need to know about their customers before sending the postcards to them about the services. The more information you have about them and their needs, the more likely you are to get a response back from them.

- **Right Postcard For The Right Person**

Customized direct mail postcards always get special attention from the customers. It's a fact that more generalized and inapplicable marketing materials sent out to customers frustrates them and they eventually loose interest in reading your postcards. For instance, a potential lead who receives a postcard about the updation and upgrade of the subscription even before he/she has signed up would feel the company to be very unprofessional which is incapable of identifying and sorting its customers appropriately. Such situations would definitely result in low response rates and you might be wasting money on postcards that would not get the attention of your customers.

- **Attention Seeking Design**

As the quality of the design and the content in it are always associated by readers with the reputation of a company, it is essential to pay close attention to



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it. Always do remember that your customers start their day with the receipt of your sales message in a postcard. One should remember that the postcard which reaches their customers without a cover should be able to work wonders at the first glance of the customers. Side-A of your direct mail postcard is what should impress your customers with a mesmerizing picture or a clever promising statement. A simple and clean design is less likely to be faulty and cumbersome than a heavily designed postcard. Inclusion of a compelling photograph does help as research shows that it initiates the viewers to go ahead and read the content printed on the postcard.

- **Crispy Content**

A captivating title would also help in gaining the attention and interest of the customers. The content should not be too heavy or repetitive that would make the customers lose interest in reading further. Side-B is completely meant for crispy content that should talk about your services and motivate your readers to take action. A brief description about the services and benefits would suffice.

Researches show that direct mail postcards which directly try to close sales through the postcard receive very less response than the direct mail post cards that announces some interesting offer to the customers and directs them to proceed with the next step. The customers can be directed to your website where they can get a wider picture of your services or products and their benefits.

- **Paper And Print Quality**

The print quality as well is equally important. Once the design is ready with the content and the database, the postcards should be printed. When the designing part is complete, it is advisable to check the design and content for errors with someone from the target audience. The effectiveness of the design can be enhanced based on their feedback.

The overall postcard design includes one more important decision, which is the paper quality. The technical jargon used by paper vendors is C1S (coated one-side stock) which is the cheapest paper quality in which 8 points of text can be



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typed. This type of paper is much lighter when compared to the 10 points quality paper. But heavier stock is more durable and has an upscale look and feel. There is also 12 points coated two-sided stock (C2S) which is expensive and can be best used for two sided fully colored postcard designs.

Printing is yet another important phase that gives the final touch for quality output. Depending on the number of direct mail postcards you are planning to print, the postcards can be either printed from a professional print center or can be printed at home using a desktop inkjet printer. For quality output, it is best to convert all the photos in full color print designs to CMYK from RGB. All other files and swatches can as well be converted to CMYK. These might be files that were created using Adobe Illustrator, InDesign or Quark. It should also be noted that no 'spot' boxes are checked before printing.

Yet another essential point to remember is that fade or light color pictures and lines might disappear during printing. So, it is recommended to have a minimum of 0.25 pt thickness for the strokes/lines to be visible. For images, the recommended screen / fill value is 5%.

- **Safe Delivery**

As the main purpose of designing the card is to reach your customers, finding out a reliable delivery service provider becomes much more essential. USPS would be the best option to be used but it would be appropriate to check their norms for postcards before designing the postcard. The most common point to be kept in mind while designing the direct mail postcard would be the dimension.

- **Post Delivery Follow Up**

Follow up is the most crucial and critical phase which would decide on the success of the direct mail postcards sent to the customers. It should be made sure that all the calls and enquiries from the clients who have read the postcards are answered. A dedicated telemarketing team can be allotted to answer the specific queries of the customers. Customers who do not get back to you can be called



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and asked for their feedback. This way you will be able to convert a potential lead into a customer.