

# Direct Mail vs. Digital Marketing

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Digital marketing has become firmly established in the everyday lives of millions of people around the world. Modern technologies make it possible to deliver your message at the right time, in the right place, and for the right audience. Today's Internet provides every business type with the opportunity to create an advertising campaign.

But, it can be a double-edged sword. The average Internet user is overloaded with information on a daily basis. According to the latest research, the average person sees more than 10,000 ads per day. Hundreds of emails are flooding our inboxes, pesky ad posts are constantly popping up in our Facebook feeds, and more and more websites are displaying annoying full-size banners before users can enter the site.

This online advertising overload is forcing an increasing number of people to use ad blockers. More than 11% of all Internet users are already using such software, especially among younger generations. However, a closer look at the remaining 89% does not

paint a rosy picture for the effectiveness of online ads. A surplus of information has produced an effect called "banner blindness". Users simply no longer notice banner ads and only consume the content that they came to the site for. As much as 53% to 92% of advertising budgets can be spent on advertising that will never be noticed.

All of this supports the fact that, despite the development of personalization and targeting technologies, the response rate of digital advertising has stagnated at a low level. People simply ignore unnecessary information, and marketers are constantly forced to come up with new ways to improve their response rates.

# Direct mail is back?

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Throughout the rise and normalization of online ads, direct mail has continued to be an important marketing channel, even though its death was predicted from the very beginning of digital marketing's development. As advertising on the Internet began to offer more ways to reach customers, direct mail remained as a traditional mainstay, always occupying a chunk of the marketing budget. However, once the congestion of digital marketing boiled over, direct mail campaigns became identified as a reliable source of leads for new business. In fact, it has become more efficient than many have predicted. Here are a few reasons why:

## 1. Feeling of reality.

Despite the fact that more spheres of human life are occupying an online space, the sensation of touching something real still invokes positive emotions in people. Studies show that advertising messages found in mailboxes help establish a stronger relationship with consumers.

## 2. Less competition for the mailbox.

An increasing number of publications have recently begun to refrain from printing subscriptions, resulting in less competition for a person's attention. The average American receives more than 100 emails per week, while the figure for physical mail is closer

to 16. Of course, a lot of this mail is quickly thrown in the trash. However, unlike the spam filters of email clients, the recipient must manually discard physical mail, so contact with the recipient is almost guaranteed in direct mail's case.

## 3. Younger generations love mail.

Yes, it may sound surprising, but direct mail is actually quite popular among millennials. In fact, 87% of millennials like to receive real postcards and letters. Response rate to these letters is also quite high, more than 10 times greater than for digital advertising. This may be one of the keys to reaching a generation that will soon have a trillion dollar buying power.

## 4. New technologies in direct mailing.

Direct mailing techniques today enjoy the same opportunities that have become a success factor for digital marketing. First, success is highly dependent on personalizing and tracking the effectiveness of mail campaigns. The inexpensiveness of digital printing has allowed printers to fully utilize the personalization of advertising messages in order to increase the effectiveness of direct mail campaigns. The use of targeted offers and the ability to track them – this is what advertisers value today.

# Bridging the gap between technology and direct mailings

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All of these factors indicate that the rumors of direct mailing's demise are slightly exaggerated. With the right approach, it is still a great way to attract customers. In some cases (think of loyal and repeat customers), it may surpass "traditional" channels such as email or retargeting.

Generally speaking, this is how an order for a direct mail dispatch is processed:

- a. Create and approve design;***
- b. Prepress and printing workflow;***
- c. Delivery of mail via postal services.***

The conventional printing workflow has been disrupted since the rise of digital printing. Postal service providers like USPS receive a large volume of business from direct mail and are constantly improving the dispatching and delivery process. These conditions are perfect for an online editor that can make personalized direct mail possible for businesses large and small. Customer's Canvas is a powerful W2P editor that has been created to fill this gap.

# Creating direct mail campaigns with ease

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Most marketers these days are taking advantage of the benefits of digital marketing, such as the self-service convenience of creating advertising campaigns online. It may take only 10 minutes to set up an advertising campaign on Facebook or with Google's AdWords. For a long time, direct mail marketing was mostly an option limited to big businesses that could afford the significant costs of setting up such campaigns. Everything has changed since then.

Improvements in web-to-print technology have made it possible to create a design for a direct mail campaign just as easily as one would create an ad banner for a website. Customers can arrange images, logos, and custom text of any shape within an online editor in their browser. Designs can be created from scratch or through pre-designed templates, which is similar to the digital marketing routine. However, unlike digital marketing, the design must be printed after it's finished. The approval of the final layout before sending it to the press has long been a headache for managers on both sides of the project, resulting in the loss of working hours for business owners. By using a modern online web-to-print editor like Customer's Canvas, the customer does not need to have the final design approved via email. They can simply do it right in the editor.

# Direct mail personalization with variable data printing

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Adding a person's name in a direct mail piece can increase response rates by 135%. Adding more sophisticated personal information can increase this rate even higher. Digital printing allows you to print personalized messages without sacrificing speed. The personalization process of direct mail is quite similar to personalizing email messages. The marketing manager simply edits a template online in the web-to-print editor and fills it with images, logos, text, or QR codes. To make the mail piece more personal, it is possible to mark certain sections of text that should be personalized with special tags. For example, to personalize a recipient's name, you must add the {first name} tag.

The data to fill these tags is taken from the customer's user database – directly from their ecommerce systems or from prepared spreadsheets – and is associated with the delivery address. Marketers can personalize the name, company, or even an image for each mail piece. Moreover, they can send unique tailored offers, as well as track the effectiveness of the mailing campaign using personal QR codes or PURLs, which are also inserted by using special tags.

# Meeting the requirements of printing process

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In contrast to the design process for an online banner ad, the requirements of the printing process must be taken into account for direct mail. Bleed lines, color schemes, spot colors, and other variables need to be dialed in correctly for each job. Using a web-to-print editor helps to ensure that the designs created by the customer are printed correctly, and that their clients receive the mail exactly as it was designed.

Personalization means that each mail piece has its own unique design tailored to individual recipients, thus they should each be exported to a separate print-ready file. In the case of variable data printing, the number of files may reach the thousands, requiring a high-performance online editor to get the job done accurately and efficiently.

# Conclusion

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New technologies are enabling businesses to run direct mail campaigns when they previously could not afford it. This high level of accessibility will encourage more customers than ever to include this channel in their marketing mix. Therefore, the success rate of direct mail as well as the ease and relative affordability of creating a campaign with a web-to-print online editor will prove to be a great opportunity for printing companies everywhere.