

## How to Entice Prospects to Open the Envelope

The Direct Marketing industry has its fair share of gurus – great ad men like David Olgilvy, Herschell Gordon Lewis and John Caples, whose best practices have influenced advertising for half a century. The following tips are based on their practices and DMN3 experience in enticing prospects to *rip open the envelope*.

- ◆ **Place a compelling message near the address.** Eye flow studies show that 70-80% of the time, mail recipients scan the address area first. This is the place for enticements, clues to what's inside, offer highlights, words of appreciation, branding/positioning statements, etc.
- ◆ **Try the 1-2 Punch.** On average, mail recipients spend only 7 seconds with the envelope. Most of that time is spent opening it – so the back of the envelope is valuable real estate indeed. Try placing the offer-message on the front of the envelope and offer-expires deadline on back.
- ◆ **If it's FREE – say so.** One of the Cardinal Rules of Envelope Copy calls for liberal use of this word because it WORKS – especially if the FREE thing has perceived value and it's inside the envelope! If your offer includes anything free, then go ahead, use this word and watch the magic unfold.
- ◆ **Make them curious.** Use open-ended questions or incomplete sentences to entice the prospect to seek more information. Provoke curiosity by stating a problem and suggesting the answer is inside. Example: *"You don't have to go it alone..."* (outside message) *"You have a trusted financial advisor to lead the way."* (inside header)
- ◆ **Don't promise the moon.** Talk up the offer, but not so much that the prospect is let down when they read what's inside. Remember that seducing someone to open your envelope isn't the victory – getting a response is your goal.
- ◆ **Use declarative language.** Prompt the recipient to rip open the envelope by simply directing them to do so – "See inside for more details," or "OPEN NOW." Phrases like these are often used in direct response marketing because they really work. It's OK to tell the recipient clearly what you want them to do.
- ◆ **Test!** There's only one way to find out which envelope design, message, or offer works best for each audience – and that is to test. Your end objective is to gain the most sales or quality leads for the least amount of money invested. When you test, be sure to limit the "difference" to one element only per test segment. For example, test headline only vs. headline and envelope size. One element, a split run, and a reliable quantity will give you a scientifically valid test that can be trusted. For meaningful and trustworthy statistical results, make sure you get a minimum of 50 responses per test segment.

Copyright © 2006 Direct Marketing Network – All rights reserved.