

Guide to Direct Mail Marketing.

A Quick Introduction to Direct Mail

First things first, you'll need to get to grips with direct mail, including what it is, what does well (and what doesn't), and how it can fit in effectively with the rest of your marketing strategy.



What is Direct Mail?

Direct mail is a style of marketing that involves sending print through the post, either to your customers' homes or to their businesses. It will normally include a promotional message, product or service descriptions and a discount code or voucher.

Popular direct mailers are letters, catalogues and flyers, although postcards are becoming increasingly popular.

How Much Does Direct Mail Cost?

Here's the beauty of it – direct mail can cost as much or as little as your budget allows. When you print marketing materials online, you can make things a little more cost effective by choosing thinner paper, or ramp things up with special finishes like velvet and gloss lamination.

Flyers are a great gateway mailer, and they're extremely budget-friendly even for long runs. Booklets are a highly effective way to say more, and do more with your mailer. It's all about finding the right one for your business.



HOW TO MAKE SURE YOUR DIRECT MAIL IS GDPR COMPLIANT

To create a GDPR-friendly direct mail campaign that runs smoothly, you'll need to think about the following:

1.

Tick-in Box

If your mailer is requesting personal information, you'll need to include an opt-in tick box – not an opt-out box! Next to this, clearly state how you're planning to use their data.

2.

Avoid Coercion

You can't offer an exclusive discount for signing up to receive marketing – if your mailer promotes a discount, it should be available to anyone.

3.

Say What You're Doing with the Data

You need to tell people how you're using their data, and how they can opt out of receiving your marketing.

4.

Keep a Record

You must be able to prove explicit consent from your customers, so if you're gathering data from your mailer, for a competition for example, keep a physical and digital record of their consent.

Is it Worth it?

Our recent study into how far we trust marketers with our data revealed that flyers are seen as the most trustworthy form of advertising (21%) compared with online ads, which were voted most intrusive (43%).

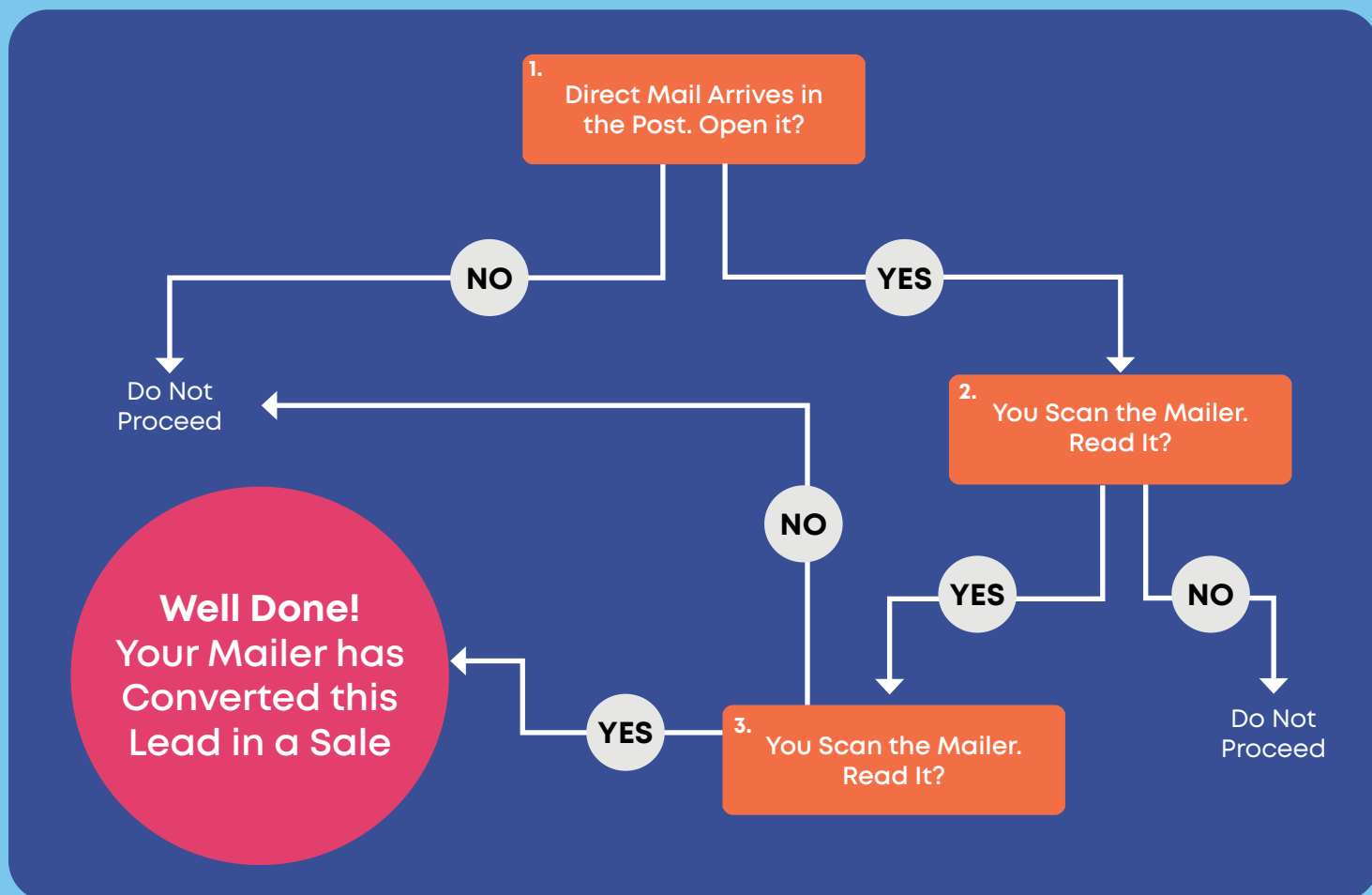
This is supported by further research by The Direct Marketing Association, who found that direct mail boasts a 4.4% response rate, vs email marketing which fell short at just 0.12%. That means for every 1000 people, 43 more people will interact with your direct mail compared to your emails.

Whoever said print was dead clearly never ran a direct mail campaign!



The Direct Mail Process.

Every piece of direct mail you send will go through the same process and hit the same barriers along the way. Each time a challenge is met, the risk being thrown away. Here's a glance of what goes on when you send a mailer.



To Open or Not to Open?

Now that is the question. The first barrier your mailer will face is whether or not the recipient will decide to open the envelope. Unbranded envelopes tend to do well – it looks less like a sales-y letter then. It also helps if your mail is ‘lumpy’.

Lumpy mail is where there’s something with an unusual shape in the envelope and it entices the recipient to open the letter. Try putting something a little bulkier in with your mailer, like a small magazine or some branded merchandise.

Design to Impress

Well done! Your mailer was intriguing enough to open. The next challenge is whether it will pass the ‘scan’. When we scan a document, we’re using the lazy part of our brain. This is where a visually-grabbing design comes in handy.

Think bright colours, bold fonts, and as much visual information as possible – infographic-style illustrations and graphs always do well since they’re so easy to digest. Keep text to a minimum and make sure the reader understands the main point you’re trying to make at a glance.

Content is King

That's it – you've got them hooked with the design! Now it's time to really 'wow' them with your words. Along with attention-grabbing headlines and clear, easy-to-read writing, the key to effective sales copy is a strong call to action (CTA).

This is the bit of your mailer that tells the reader exactly what you want them to do. These words especially well if they prompt immediate action by playing on the customer's FOMO (fear of missing out), for example:

- Call now to talk to one of our specialists
- Redeem your discount in store today!
- Buy now before it's too late
- Follow us on social media and keep up with the latest news
- Hurry – Renew your membership today!

See more top tips on how to write effective sales copy for your direct mail here:

<https://www.instantprint.co.uk/printspiration/marketing-with-print/how-to-write-effective-sales-copy-for-your-direct-mail>

What Happens if a Barrier Isn't Passed?

When you reach a barrier (or you hit a 'no' in our chart), one of three things could happen: the recipient stores the piece of mail for another day and the process starts again wherever it ended; the recipient passes the piece of mail to someone else, in which case the process begins with the new recipient; the mailer is binned.

Can You Recover from Being Binned?

When it comes to direct mail campaigns, failure is not an option. No, really! Around 80-90% of direct mail recipients will scan or read each piece before throwing it away (Small Biz Trends), but this doesn't mean you're getting nothing from the other 10-20%.

If you send a piece of mail, like a postcard with a voucher on it, and a recipient doesn't necessarily need your business at this moment in time, there's nothing to say they won't in the future.

They're now highly aware of your brand. So, if there comes a day when they do want your product, they might visit your website or store and buy something – which would never have happened without that piece of direct mail.

To increase the likelihood of this, it's always best to have some kind of follow-up plan in place. Whether that's sending another piece of direct mail after a month, sending an email, giving them a call, or some combination of them all, the follow-up is essential to ensuring you're at the forefront of your customers' minds.



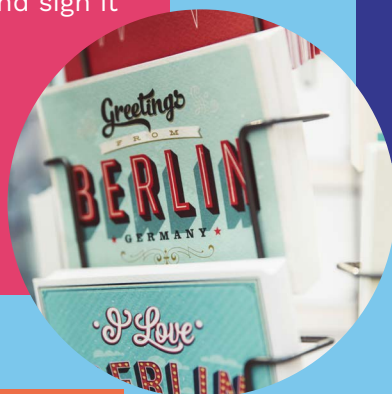
5 Fun Direct Mail Ideas to Try in 2019 (and Beyond)

The most effective examples of direct mail all have one important thing in common: they're different. Standing out from competitors, or even just from other marketing material that your recipient will be sifting through, is incredibly important for a successful direct mail campaign.

As well as relating the mail to your brand, think about ways you can add value for the recipient, whether that's giving them something they can use every day or a fun task to engage in. Here are some fun direct mail ideas that are sure to help you stand out!

1. Miniature Greetings Cards

Nearly every business sends a greetings card at Christmas – your mantel piece is probably full of cards from the shop down the road, your dentist, the vets. But I bet you've never received a mini greetings card! Folded business cards double as great mini greetings cards – and there's still enough room to handwrite a short message and sign it off from your team. Sending things in unique shapes and sizes are a great way to stand out. And the littlest things can sometimes have the biggest impact.



3. Engaging Activities

One way to get the reader on the hook is to include some kind of activity, quiz or task for them to complete as part of your direct mail. Make sure this relates back to them or is framed in a way that it benefits them, such as a personality quiz to see what product they should buy, hairstyle to have, type of house to buy, what colour they should paint their walls – whatever it is that your business can offer them.



2. Useful Gifts

Sending a gift your customer is sure to use is a great way to capture their attention and give them all the good feelings for your business. Pick something small and affordable for your budget and send it with a clever little note card.

For example, an estate agent business could send their new happy homeowners a keyring with a note saying 'For your new keys!', or a hairdresser could send a comb with the message 'Don't get in a tangle'.



4. A Handwritten Letter

There's nothing quite as exciting as receiving a handwritten letter or note in the post. Why? Because it's just not something you get every day! This technique is best used for sending to a few top customers or clients as it can be time consuming to write out messages rather than typing them, but the benefits of this are well worth it – 84% of consumers are more likely to open a piece of mail if it is personalised (Forbes).

5. Giftboxes and Hampers

Another one to top customers or to say a big thank you to your B2B clients, hampers are one of the most exciting things to receive in the post. You can add your product samples, branded merchandise, even a few treats like nice teas, coffees and chocolates. Bigger presents like this are more likely to be shared across recipients' social media channels, making them the gift that keeps on giving!

We hope this guide has inspired you to create your own successful direct mail campaign and that the strategies we've mentioned come in handy when crafting your own plans and processes. Keep us in the loop and tag us in your print marketing materials at @instantprintuk or #instantprintuk on Twitter and Instagram for a chance to be featured.