THE LOCAL BUSINESS OWNER'S DIRECT MAIL SUCCESS GUIDE

A Step-by-Step System to Attract More Local Customers, Generate More Leads & Grow Your Business

REACH THE RIGHT LOCAL CUSTOMERS

CREATE POSTCARDS THAT GET RESPONSES

TURN RESPONSES INTO PAYING CUSTOMERS

TRACK RESULTS & MAXIMIZE YOUR RETURN ON INVESTMENT

GROW YOUR BUSINESS ONE MAILING AT A TIME

REAL STRATEGIES. REAL RESULTS. MORE LOCAL CUSTOMERS.

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1. Direct Mail Basics

WHAT DIRECT MAIL IS - AND WHEN IT MAKES SENSE

What Is Direct Mail?

Direct mail is advertising that puts your business directly into the hands of potential customers through their mailbox.

Unlike an online ad that disappears when someone scrolls past it, a postcard is a physical piece of advertising. The recipient can look at it, save it, put it on the refrigerator, or pass it along to someone else.

For a local business, direct mail has another important advantage: you can choose exactly where your advertising goes.

Instead of advertising to people scattered across a large geographic area, you can concentrate your marketing dollars on the neighborhoods most likely to contain your customers.

Two Common Ways to Send Direct Mail

Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM)

Every Door Direct Mail is a service offered by the U.S. Postal Service that allows businesses to mail advertising to selected postal routes without purchasing an individual mailing list.

Instead of choosing individual households, you choose the neighborhoods and postal routes you want to reach. Your advertising is then delivered to the eligible addresses on those routes.

EDDM can be particularly useful for businesses whose customers are located within a specific geographic area, such as restaurants, roofers, landscapers, house cleaners, plumbers, HVAC companies, dentists, pet groomers, auto repair shops, salons, home improvement companies, and other locally operated businesses.

The big advantage: You can put your business in front of thousands of nearby households without having to purchase a mailing list.

Targeted Direct Mail

Targeted direct mail works differently. Instead of mailing to most or all eligible addresses along a postal route, you use a mailing list containing specific households or individuals that meet certain criteria.

Depending on the mailing list and data available, you may be able to target characteristics such as homeowners, household income, age ranges, home values, families with children, new movers, business owners, and other demographic characteristics.

Targeted mailing can be more precise, but purchasing lists, addressing individual pieces, and postage requirements can also make the campaign more complicated and potentially

more expensive.

Which Method Should You Use?

EDDM asks: Where do my potential customers live?
Targeted direct mail asks: Who exactly do I want to reach?

For many local businesses, geography is extremely important. A neighborhood restaurant, landscaper, or roofing company usually does not need to advertise to someone 50 miles away. It needs people who live within the area the business can realistically serve.

That is one reason EDDM can be an effective starting point for local businesses.

Direct Mail Isn't About Reaching Everybody

One of the biggest mistakes in advertising is assuming that reaching more people automatically produces better results. It does not.

The objective is to put the right message in front of the right people with an offer that gives them a reason to respond.

RIGHT AREA + RIGHT AUDIENCE + RIGHT MESSAGE + RIGHT OFFER

The rest of this guide will help you work through each of those decisions before you spend money printing or mailing anything.

Quick Check

1. Is my business primarily local?

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2. Approximately how far will customers realistically travel to me - or how far am I willing to travel to them?

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3. Can I describe the type of customer I'm trying to reach in one or two sentences?

Do not worry if you cannot answer Question #3 yet. That is what we will work on next.

2. Choosing Your Target Customer

WHO IS MOST LIKELY TO BUY WHAT YOU'RE SELLING?

Who Are You Trying to Reach?

Before deciding where to mail your postcards, you need to answer a more basic question: Who is most likely to buy what you're selling?

It is tempting to answer, 'Everyone.' But very few businesses actually have everyone as a customer.

A roofing contractor is primarily interested in property owners. A lawn-care company may be looking for homeowners with larger yards. A family restaurant might be interested in households within a relatively short driving distance.

The better you understand your ideal customer, the easier it becomes to decide where your postcards should go, what they should say, and what offer is most likely to get a response.

Start With Your Existing Customers

If you have been in business for a while, you may already have the information you need.

Think about your best customers - not necessarily the customers who spend the most money, but the customers you would like to have more of.

Ask yourself: What do my best customers have in common?

Consider characteristics such as where they live, whether they own or rent their homes, approximate age, household income, home value, family status, type of property, interests or lifestyle, what problem brought them to your business, and how much they are typically willing to spend.

You do not need to know every characteristic. You are looking for the handful of characteristics that actually matter when deciding who should receive your advertising.

Build Your Ideal Customer

What product or service am I promoting?

_____

_____

What problem does it solve for my customer?

_____

_____

Age: _____

Homeowner / Renter / Either: _____

Household income (if relevant): _____

Home value (if relevant): _____

Family or household type (if relevant): _____

Other important characteristics:

Geography Matters Too

For a local business, the ideal customer is not simply someone who wants what you sell. They also need to be close enough to realistically become a customer.

Consider: How far will customers normally travel to your business? - or - How far are you willing to travel to serve them?

My realistic service area is approximately:

☐ 1-3 miles
☐ 3-5 miles
☐ 5-10 miles
☐ 10-20 miles
☐ More than 20 miles
☐ A specific city, ZIP code or community: _____

What Triggers Someone to Buy?

Demographics tell you who your customer is. But there is another question that can be even more valuable: What happened that made them need you?

Someone does not hire a roofer simply because they are a homeowner. They may hire one because their roof was damaged in a storm. Someone does not visit an auto repair shop simply because they own a car. Something happened that made them need service.

Think about what usually causes someone to start looking for your product or service.

My customer usually needs me when:

Create Your Customer Profile

Now put everything together.

My ideal customer is...

Example

> "My ideal customer is a homeowner living within about 10 miles of my business, with a household income above $100,000, who values maintaining and improving their home and is willing to pay for professional service rather than always choosing the lowest price."

It does not have to be perfect. The purpose is simply to create a clear picture of the person you are trying to reach.

One Important Question

Before you continue, ask yourself: Would I spend money to put my postcard in this person's mailbox?

If the answer is YES, you have probably identified a worthwhile target. If the answer is MAYBE, your customer definition may still be too broad. And if the answer is NO, that household probably should not be part of your campaign.

You've Now Answered WHO

Next we will answer the other half of the targeting question: WHERE DO I FIND THEM?

3. Finding the Right Neighborhoods

NOW THAT YOU KNOW WHO - LET'S FIND WHERE

Start With Your Service Area

Before looking at income, home values, or any other demographic information, determine how far away a customer can realistically be.

For some businesses, that area may be very small. A neighborhood restaurant might concentrate on households within a few miles. A roofing contractor may comfortably serve customers 20 miles away. A specialty business might draw customers from an even larger area.

Start by writing down the cities, communities, or ZIP codes that fall within your realistic service area.

My business location or primary service area:

_____

The maximum distance I normally want to serve: _____ miles

Cities or communities I want to consider:

_____

_____

ZIP codes I want to consider:

_____

_____

Not All Neighborhoods Are the Same

Two neighborhoods only a few miles apart can contain very different types of households.

One might consist primarily of apartments and renters. Another might contain single-family homes occupied primarily by homeowners. One area might have an average household income of $70,000, while another nearby area might be substantially higher.

Those differences can matter depending upon what you are selling.

The goal is not necessarily to find the 'best' neighborhood. It is to find the neighborhood that best matches YOUR customer.

Which Characteristics Matter?

Go back to the customer profile you created in Section 2. Which of these characteristics could help you identify neighborhoods containing more of your ideal customers?

☐ Household income
☐ Home value
☐ Homeownership
☐ Age
☐ Family/household composition
☐ Type of housing
☐ Length of residence
☐ Proximity to my business
☐ Other: _____

You probably will not need all of them. Choose the two or three characteristics most closely connected to the product or service you are advertising.

Don't Automatically Choose the Wealthiest Area

Higher household income can be important for certain products and services, but that does not mean the highest-income neighborhood is automatically your best mailing area.

A high-end remodeling company may have good reason to concentrate on affluent homeowners with higher-value properties. A family restaurant might benefit more from a densely populated neighborhood filled with families located just a few minutes away. An auto repair business might care much more about proximity and household vehicle ownership than home value.

Choose neighborhoods based on buying potential - not simply wealth.

Using USPS EDDM Routes

If you are considering Every Door Direct Mail, the U.S. Postal Service provides an online mapping tool that allows you to explore mailing routes.

You can enter a location or ZIP code and examine carrier routes in the surrounding area. Depending on the information available for a route, you can evaluate factors such as number of delivery addresses, residential versus business addresses, approximate demographic information, geographic boundaries, and estimated mailing quantities and postage costs.

An EDDM carrier route is not necessarily the same thing as a neighborhood or ZIP code. A single ZIP code can contain multiple carrier routes, and those routes can differ considerably.

That means you may be able to mail to the portions of a ZIP code that make the most sense for your business rather than mailing to the entire ZIP code.

Build Your Target Area

Do not choose just one area yet. Start with three to five possibilities and compare them.

	AREA 1	AREA 2	AREA 3	AREA 4	AREA 5
City/Community					
ZIP Code					

EDDM Route					
Approx. Households					
Distance From Business					
Household Income					
Home Value					
Owner Occupancy					
Other Important Factor					

Score Each Area

Give each potential mailing area a score from 1 to 5. 1 = Poor match, 2 = Below average, 3 = Reasonable match, 4 = Good match, 5 = Excellent match.

AREA 1
Matches my ideal customer: _____ / 5
Conveniently located: _____ / 5
Contains enough potential customers: _____ / 5
Fits my product/service: _____ / 5
TOTAL: _____ / 20

Repeat this process for each area you are considering. The highest-scoring area is not automatically the winner, but the exercise gives you a better reason for choosing a mailing area than simply saying, 'That looks like a good neighborhood.'

Start Small and Learn

You do not have to reach every potential customer with your first mailing. In fact, there can be an advantage to starting with a smaller, carefully selected area.

Your first campaign gives you information. Did people respond? Which neighborhoods produced inquiries? Which offer generated interest? How many inquiries became customers? What was the average sale?

Once you know what is working, you can expand your next mailing into similar areas. Think of your first campaign as both advertising AND research.

Your Target Area

City/Community:

ZIP Code(s):

EDDM Route(s), if applicable:

Approximate number of households:

Why did you choose this area?

You've Answered WHERE

Before we decide what your postcard should say, there is one more practical question to answer: HOW MUCH SHOULD YOU SPEND?

4. Building Your Campaign Budget

TURN A MAILING COST INTO A PERFORMANCE TARGET

How Much Should You Spend?

You know who you want to reach and where you want to find them. Now comes the practical question: How much should you spend reaching them?

There is not one correct direct-mail budget for every business. A $500 campaign might make sense for one company, while another could comfortably justify several thousand dollars.

The important question is not simply: How much will this mailing cost? A better question is: How many new customers would this mailing need to produce to pay for itself?

Step 1: Estimate Your Campaign Cost

A direct-mail campaign can include postcard design, printing, postage, mailing preparation, mailing lists if applicable, addressing or processing, and other campaign expenses.

Number of postcards: _____

Design: $_____

Printing: $_____

Postage: $_____

Mailing list/addressing: $_____

Other expenses: $_____

TOTAL CAMPAIGN COST: $_____

Step 2: Calculate Your Cost Per Household

Total Campaign Cost / Number of Pieces Mailed = Cost Per Household

Example: Suppose your campaign costs $1,750 and reaches 5,000 households. $1,750 / 5,000 = $0.35. Your advertising cost is approximately 35 cents per household reached.

Your campaign:
Total campaign cost: $_____
Number of pieces mailed: _____
Cost per household: $_____

Step 3: What Is a New Customer Worth?

Suppose a new customer spends $500 with your business. That does not necessarily mean the customer is worth $500 to you. You still have expenses associated with providing the product or service.

For evaluating your advertising, it is more useful to estimate the profit generated by an average new customer.

Example: Average customer sale = $500. Approximate cost to provide the product/service = $200. Approximate profit = $300. For this exercise, that customer is worth approximately $300 toward recovering your advertising expense.

Average sale: $_____
Approximate cost to fulfill the sale: $_____
Approximate profit per customer: $_____

Do not worry about making this number perfect. A reasonable estimate is much more useful than ignoring the question entirely.

Step 4: Find Your Break-Even Point

Total Campaign Cost / Profit Per New Customer = New Customers Needed to Break Even

Example: Campaign cost = $1,750. Average profit per new customer = $300. $1,750 / $300 = 5.83. Since you cannot acquire 0.83 of a customer, round up. You need approximately 6 new customers for the campaign to pay for itself.

Calculate your break-even point:
Campaign cost: $_____
Profit per new customer: $_____
Divide: $_____ / $_____ = _____
Customers needed to break even: _____

Now Put That Number in Perspective

Suppose you mail 5,000 postcards and need 6 new customers to break even. What percentage of households would need to become customers?

Customers Needed / Pieces Mailed x 100 = Required Customer Conversion Rate

Using the example: 6 / 5,000 x 100 = 0.12%. That means approximately 0.12% of the households receiving the postcard would need to become customers for the campaign to break even.

Your break-even conversion rate:
Customers needed: _____
Postcards mailed: _____
Required customer conversion rate: _____ %

Response Rate and Customer Rate Are Not the Same Thing

Not everyone who responds to your postcard will become a customer. You might receive phone calls, website visits, email inquiries, quote requests, coupon redemptions, or appointment requests. Those are responses or leads.

Example: 5,000 postcards mailed -> 50 people respond -> 15 request an estimate or appointment -> 6 become customers. The postcard produced a 1% response rate, but only a 0.12% customer conversion rate. Both numbers are useful, but they measure different things.

What About Repeat Business?

Some customers may be worth considerably more than their first purchase. A new customer might buy from you repeatedly, purchase additional services, refer friends or family, or remain a customer for several years. This is sometimes referred to as customer lifetime value.

If repeat business is important to your company, your true break-even point could be better than the simple calculation suggests. For your first campaign, however, it is often safer to base your decision primarily on profit from the initial sale. Treat future business as a bonus rather than something you have to depend on.

Should You Mail More or Less?

It can be tempting to assume that mailing twice as many postcards will automatically produce twice as many customers. It may - but it may not.

Your results depend on WHO received the postcard, WHERE they live, WHAT you are offering, and HOW effectively the postcard communicates that offer.

That is why starting with a manageable test campaign can make sense. Learn what works. Then expand.

Your Campaign at a Glance

Postcards to be mailed: _____
Total campaign cost: $_____
Cost per household: $_____
Profit per average new customer: $_____
Customers needed to break even: _____
Required customer conversion rate: _____ %

You now have something far more useful than simply a mailing budget. You have a performance target.

Next: Give Them a Reason to Respond

So far we have answered WHO, WHERE, and HOW MUCH. Now we get to one of the most important questions of all: WHY SHOULD THEY RESPOND?

5. Creating an Offer That Gets Attention

AN OFFER DOESN'T HAVE TO MEAN A DISCOUNT

Why Should Someone Respond?

Your postcard has arrived. The recipient looks at it. They understand what your business does. Now comes the question that determines whether anything happens next: Why should I respond to this NOW?

Simply telling people that your business exists is not always enough. Your postcard should give the recipient a reason to take the next step. That reason is your offer.

An Offer Doesn't Have to Be a Discount

When business owners hear the word 'offer,' they often think 10% OFF, SAVE $25, or 20% OFF THIS MONTH. Discounts certainly can work. But constantly lowering your price is not the only way to motivate a customer - and for some businesses, it is not even the best way.

An offer can be almost anything that gives someone a compelling reason to contact you, visit your business, request information, schedule an appointment, or make a purchase.

1. The Discount Offer

Examples: Save $50 on your first service call; 20% off your first order; $100 off purchases over $1,000.

Best when: Price is an important part of the customer's decision and the discount is large enough to feel meaningful.

Be careful: A discount that is too small may not motivate anyone, while a discount that is too large can unnecessarily reduce your profit. Your offer should encourage a sale - not eliminate the profit from it.

2. The Free Consultation or Estimate

Sometimes the biggest obstacle is not price. It is getting the customer to make initial contact.

Examples: Free roofing inspection; Free landscape consultation; Free remodeling estimate; Free 15-minute consultation; Free second opinion.

This type of offer lowers the risk of taking that first step. The customer does not have to make a buying decision yet. They simply have to contact you.

Best when: Your normal sales process already begins with a conversation, inspection, estimate, or consultation.

3. The Bonus Offer

Instead of reducing your price, add something.

Examples: Book a full-service cleaning and receive a free refrigerator cleaning; Purchase a qualifying service and receive a complimentary upgrade; Schedule your project this month and receive _____ at no additional charge.

The customer receives more value while you preserve your normal selling price.

What could I add that has high perceived value to the customer but relatively low cost to me?

4. The Package Offer

Combine several products or services into one clearly defined package.

Example: SPRING YARD CLEANUP PACKAGE - leaf and debris removal, shrub trimming, first lawn cut, and haul-away included.

Packages can make purchasing easier because the customer does not have to figure out exactly what to request. You are doing some of the decision-making for them.

5. The Convenience Offer

Sometimes what customers value most is not a lower price. It is making their lives easier.

Examples: Same-week appointments available; We come to you; Evening appointments available; Free pickup and delivery; Book online in less than 60 seconds; No-obligation in-home estimate.

Convenience can be a powerful offer - especially when competitors make the process difficult.

6. The Risk-Reduction Offer

Customers sometimes hesitate because they are worried about making the wrong choice. If your business can legitimately reduce that risk, say so.

Examples: Satisfaction guaranteed; No-obligation estimate; Free follow-up service; Don't pay until the work is completed; Warranty included.

A strong guarantee can sometimes be more persuasive than a discount. Never advertise a guarantee you are not completely prepared to honor.

7. The Limited-Time Offer

Giving people a deadline provides a reason to act now rather than putting your postcard aside and forgetting about it.

Examples: Offer ends May 31; Schedule by June 15; Available this month only; Reserve before Friday.

A deadline can turn 'I should probably call them sometime' into 'I should call them today.' But make the deadline real. Artificial urgency can damage trust.

8. The Limited-Quantity Offer

Instead of limiting the amount of time, you can sometimes limit availability.

Examples: Available to the first 25 customers; Only 10 appointments available; Limited spring installation dates available; Accepting 5 new clients this month.

This can work especially well when your capacity actually is limited.

9. The Information Offer

Not everyone receiving your postcard is ready to buy today. That does not mean they are worthless to you.

Give them something useful in exchange for taking a small first step.

Examples: Download our Homeowner's Roof Inspection Checklist; Get our Free Kitchen Remodeling Planning Guide; Download our First-Time Home Seller Checklist; Get our 10-Point Spring HVAC Checklist.

The customer scans a QR code or visits your website to receive the information. You now have someone who has demonstrated an interest in the exact problem your business solves.

10. The No-Discount-at-All Offer

Sometimes your product or service itself contains the offer.

Examples: Free same-day delivery; Appointments available this week; Locally made; 24-hour emergency service; Custom-built to your specifications; One-day installation; We handle everything from start to finish.

You are not lowering your price. You are emphasizing a reason to choose you.

Build Your Offer

STEP 1 - What is the primary result or benefit my customer is looking for?

STEP 2 - What might prevent them from contacting or buying from me?

☐ Price
☐ Uncertainty
☐ Inconvenience
☐ Lack of urgency

☐ Fear of making the wrong choice
☐ They do not understand what they need
☐ They are comparing competitors
☐ Other: _____

STEP 3 - Which approaches could work for my business?

☐ Discount
☐ Free consultation/estimate
☐ Bonus
☐ Package
☐ Convenience
☐ Guarantee/risk reduction
☐ Limited-time availability
☐ Limited quantity
☐ Free information
☐ Unique service benefit

Create Three Possibilities

OFFER #1:

Why would my customer care?

Cost to me: $_____

OFFER #2:

Why would my customer care?

Cost to me: $_____

OFFER #3:

Why would my customer care?

Cost to me: $_____

The SO WHAT? Test

Read your offer as though you were the person receiving the postcard. Then ask: SO WHAT?

If your answer is not obvious, the offer probably is not strong enough yet.

For example: 10% OFF! So what? If the normal purchase is $40, you are offering $4. That may not be enough to change someone's behavior.

But consider: FREE DELIVERY - THIS WEEK ONLY. If delivery normally costs $25 and customers dislike picking up the product themselves, that may have much greater perceived value.

The strongest offer is not necessarily the one that costs you the most. It is the one your customer values the most.

Make Your Offer Specific

Compare WE HAVE GREAT PRICES! with $50 OFF YOUR FIRST SERVICE - CALL BY MAY 31. The second tells the customer what they get, what they need to do, and when they need to do it.

Add a Call to Action

Your offer answers: WHY should I respond? Your call to action answers: WHAT should I do next?

Do not make the customer figure it out. Tell them.

Examples: Call today to schedule your free estimate; Scan the QR code to see available appointments; Visit our website and use code SPRING25; Bring this postcard with you and receive _____; Email us for a free consultation.

My call to action:

The Five-Second Test

☐ What are you offering?
☐ Why should I care?
☐ What should I do next?

If the answer to any of these is unclear, your message probably needs more work.

My Final Offer

My Call to Action

Now We Have Something to Advertise

You now know WHO you are trying to reach, WHERE you are going to reach them, HOW MUCH you can afford to spend, and WHY they should respond. Now we have to make sure they actually notice and understand the message.

6. Creating a Headline That Gets Noticed

YOU HAVE ABOUT FIVE SECONDS

Your First Job Is to Get Noticed

Your postcard arrives with the rest of the day's mail. The recipient probably is not sitting down thinking, 'I wonder what today's advertising has to say.' They are sorting: keep this, throw that away, bill, catalog, postcard, keep, toss.

Your first job is not to make the sale. Your first job is to get noticed. That is the job of your headline.

A strong headline gives someone a reason to stop for a few seconds and look at the rest of your postcard.

Your Business Name Is Not Your Headline

One of the most common mistakes businesses make is putting their company name at the top of an advertisement in enormous letters.

SMITH LANDSCAPING

The problem? Unless someone already knows Smith Landscaping, the name does not give them much reason to keep reading.

Compare that with: READY FOR A BETTER-LOOKING YARD THIS SUMMER?

Now we are talking about something the potential customer might actually care about.

Your company name is important. But it usually does not need to be the first - and largest - thing someone sees.

Think Like the Customer

Before writing your headline, temporarily forget about your business. Think about your customer.

They are usually interested in one of four things: something they WANT, something they NEED, a PROBLEM they want solved, or a RESULT they want to achieve.

Your headline should connect your business to one of those things.

Features vs. Benefits

Businesses naturally talk about what they do. Customers tend to care more about what they get.

FEATURE: Weekly Lawn Mowing Service

BENEFIT: A GREAT-LOOKING LAWN WITHOUT GIVING UP YOUR SATURDAY

Same service. Different perspective. The second headline tells the customer what the service does for them.

Ask: What's In It for Me?

Every time you write a headline, imagine the customer asking: What's in it for me? If your headline answers that question, you are probably moving in the right direction.

10 Headline Formulas You Can Use

1. The Get-the-Result Headline

Get [DESIRED RESULT] Without [UNPLEASANT PART]

Examples: Get a Beautiful Lawn Without Spending Your Weekend Working on It; Get a Cleaner Home Without Giving Up Your Saturday.

Your version: Get _____ without _____.

2. The Question Headline

Ask a question your ideal customer is likely to answer YES to. Examples: Is Your Roof Ready for Another Colorado Winter?; Tired of Looking at That Outdated Kitchen?; Ready for a Backyard You'll Actually Use?

Your version:

---

3. The Problem Headline

Call attention to a problem the customer already recognizes. Examples: Leaky Roof? Don't Wait Until It Gets Worse ; Uneven Heating From Room to Room?; Has Your Lawn Seen Better Days?

Your version:

---

4. The Benefit Headline

Lead directly with the result. Examples: Come Home to a House That's Already Clean ; Turn Your Backyard Into Your Favorite Room ; Keep Your Home Comfortable All Winter Long.

Your version:

---

5. The How-To Headline

People naturally pay attention to information that promises to help them accomplish something. Examples: How to Lower Your Heating Costs This Winter; How to Know When It's

Time to Replace Your Roof; How to Make Your Home More Appealing to Buyers.

Your version: How to _____

6. The Number Headline

Specific numbers can make a headline feel concrete and easy to understand. Examples: 5 Signs Your Roof May Need Attention; 3 Ways to Improve Your Home's Curb Appeal; 7 Things Every Homeowner Should Check Before Winter.

Your version: _____ Ways/Signs/Things _____

7. The Offer Headline

Sometimes your offer is strong enough to become the headline. Examples: FREE ROOF INSPECTION - SCHEDULE BY MAY 31; $50 OFF YOUR FIRST SERVICE; FREE DELIVERY THIS WEEK. There is nothing subtle about this approach. The customer immediately understands what is being offered.

Your version:

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8. The Local Headline

For a neighborhood mailing, remind people that you are nearby. Examples: Proudly Serving Parker Homeowners; Lone Tree's Local Choice for _____; Hello, Highlands Ranch! Ready for a Better-Looking Yard?

Being local can help make an unfamiliar company feel more relevant.

Your version:

---

9. The Seasonal Headline

Tie your message to something happening right now. Examples: Get Your Yard Ready for Summer; Is Your Furnace Ready for Winter?; Spring Is the Perfect Time to Refresh Your Home.

Seasonal headlines can create natural urgency without manufacturing it.

Your version:

---

10. The Curiosity Headline

Give the reader a reason to want the answer. Examples: What's Hiding Under Your Roof Shingles?; The Most Expensive Home Repair Might Be the One You're Ignoring; What Do Buyers Notice First About Your Home?

Curiosity can be powerful - but do not be clever at the expense of clarity. The rest of the postcard needs to deliver on the promise made by the headline.

Your version:

Write 10 Before You Choose 1

Your first headline does not have to be your final headline. In fact, do not expect it to be. Try writing at least 10 possibilities. Use different formulas. Some will be terrible. That is okay. You are looking for the one or two that stand out.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Score Your Best Three

	HEADLINE 1	HEADLINE 2	HEADLINE 3
Gets attention	/5	/5	/5
Easy to understand	/5	/5	/5
Relevant to my customer	/5	/5	/5
Communicates benefit/problem	/5	/5	/5
Makes me want to know more	/5	/5	/5
TOTAL	/25	/25	/25

Clear Beats Clever

A funny or clever headline can certainly work. But never make the reader solve a puzzle to understand what you are selling.

If you are choosing between a clever headline that might be understood and a straightforward headline that is immediately understood, choose clarity.

You can add personality after you have earned their attention.

Keep It Short Enough to See

Remember where this headline is going. It is not the title of an article. It is going on a postcard.

It needs enough visual prominence that someone can notice and understand it almost immediately. That generally means fewer words, larger type, strong contrast, and plenty of space around it.

Do not bury your headline in a paragraph. Make it look like the most important message on the card. Because it probably is.

The Across-the-Room Test

Print your postcard - or display it on your screen at approximately its actual size. Step several feet away. Can you immediately identify the headline?

If everything on the postcard seems equally important, nothing looks important.

The Five-Second Test - Again

Show the postcard to someone who has not seen it before. Let them look at it for approximately five seconds. Then take it away.

Ask: What was the postcard about? If they cannot tell you, do not blame them. Fix the postcard.

My Final Headline

☐ Does it speak to my ideal customer?
☐ Does it communicate a benefit, problem, or offer?
☐ Can someone understand it quickly?
☐ Is it more important to the customer than my company name?
☐ Will it be easy to see on the finished postcard?

If you can answer YES to all five, you probably have a headline worth testing.

You Have Their Attention. Now What?

Your headline got them to stop. Your offer gave them a reason to be interested. Now the rest of your postcard has to make the message easy to understand.

7. Designing a Postcard People Can Actually Read

A POSTCARD ISN'T A BROCHURE

Your Postcard Has a Job to Do

A postcard is not a brochure. It is not your website. And it does not need to tell the customer everything there is to know about your company.

Its job is much simpler: GET ATTENTION -> CREATE INTEREST -> PROMPT ACTION.

One of the easiest ways to weaken a postcard is to try to put too much information on it. More words do not necessarily make your advertising more persuasive. Sometimes they simply make it harder to read.

Start With a Visual Hierarchy

When someone looks at your postcard, everything should not demand attention at the same time. You want their eyes to move through the message in a deliberate order.

1. HEADLINE
2. IMAGE
3. OFFER / MAIN BENEFIT
4. SUPPORTING INFORMATION
5. CALL TO ACTION
6. BUSINESS NAME + CONTACT INFORMATION

The exact order can vary depending on the advertisement. The important thing is that there IS an order.

Don't Make Everything Big

If your headline is big, your phone number is big, your logo is big, your offer is big, your website is big, and six other things are big - then nothing is actually big.

Size creates emphasis because it creates contrast. Decide what the customer should notice first, second, and third. Everything else should support those three things.

Use One Strong Headline

Your headline should usually be one of the most visually prominent elements on the postcard.

Remember: your company name tells people WHO YOU ARE. Your headline tells them WHY THEY SHOULD CARE. For someone who has never heard of your company, the second question is often more important.

Choose an Image With a Purpose

Images can grab attention quickly - but only when they support the message.

Do not add a picture simply because the postcard 'needs a picture.' Ask: What does this image communicate?

A roofing company might show the problem (visible roof damage), the process (a professional inspecting a roof), or the result (an attractive completed roof). A landscaping company might show a dramatic finished yard. A restaurant might show the food. A cleaning company might show the result of a beautifully cleaned room.

Whenever possible, show something that helps the customer imagine the result they will receive.

Before-and-After Can Be Powerful

If your business produces a visible transformation, consider showing it: BEFORE -> AFTER.

This can work especially well for landscaping, remodeling, painting, flooring, roofing, cleaning, auto detailing, cosmetic services, restoration, and home improvement.

The customer does not have to imagine the benefit. They can see it.

Make Your Offer Easy to Find

Do not hide your offer halfway through a paragraph.

If you are giving someone $50 OFF, A FREE ESTIMATE, FREE DELIVERY, or A COMPLIMENTARY INSPECTION, make it obvious.

Use size, spacing, a box, or another visual treatment to separate the offer from surrounding information. The reader should be able to find the offer without searching for it.

Keep Body Copy Short

A postcard is not the place for your company's complete history.

Instead of: 'Since 1997, Smith Landscaping has been proudly providing comprehensive landscaping solutions to homeowners throughout the greater metropolitan area...' try: Beautiful landscapes. Dependable service. Locally owned.

Then give the customer somewhere to learn more: Visit SmithLandscaping.com. Your website can explain everything else. The postcard's job is to get them interested enough to go there.

Use Bullets When Possible

If you need to communicate several benefits, make them easy to scan.

Instead of a sentence listing lawn mowing, fertilization, aeration, sprinkler maintenance, and cleanup, use short bullets such as: ✓ Lawn Care; ✓ Fertilization; ✓ Aeration; ✓ Sprinkler Service; ✓ Seasonal Cleanup.

A customer can understand the bullet version almost instantly.

White Space Is Not Wasted Space

Business owners sometimes feel obligated to fill every available inch of a postcard. Do not.

Empty space gives important elements room to breathe. It can make your postcard easier to read, more professional, less intimidating, more visually organized, and faster to understand.

If your postcard looks crowded, your first instinct should not necessarily be, 'How can I make everything smaller?' Try asking: What can I remove?

Don't Use Too Many Fonts

Using more fonts does not automatically make a design more interesting. It often makes it look less organized.

For most postcards, two typefaces are plenty. For example: Typeface #1 for headlines and Typeface #2 for supporting text.

You can create additional variety using bold, regular, different sizes, uppercase, and spacing without introducing another font.

Make It Easy to Read

Your customer should not have to work to decipher your advertising.

Avoid tiny type, long paragraphs, text over busy photographs, low-contrast text, excessive use of ALL CAPITAL LETTERS, too many competing colors, and decorative fonts used for body copy.

A postcard can look attractive and still fail if people cannot comfortably read it.

Remember Who May Be Reading It

Depending on your target audience, some recipients may have difficulty reading very small type. If your ideal customers tend to be older homeowners, for example, readability becomes even more important.

Do not sacrifice legibility simply to squeeze in one more paragraph.

Give Your Call to Action a Home

Do not tack the call to action onto the bottom as an afterthought. Give it a clearly identifiable area.

Examples: READY TO GET STARTED? Call 555-555-5555 or GET YOUR FREE ESTIMATE - Scan the QR code or visit SmithLandscaping.com.

Make the next step unmistakable.

Don't Give Them 10 Different Next Steps

Call us. Text us. Email us. Visit our website. Follow us on Facebook. Follow us on Instagram. Find us on TikTok. Scan this QR code. Visit our showroom. Download our app.

That is a lot to ask someone who just wanted to get their mail.

You can certainly provide several ways to contact you, but try to establish one primary action. For example: SCHEDULE YOUR FREE ESTIMATE - Scan the QR code. Phone number and website can still appear elsewhere as secondary options.

What About QR Codes?

A QR code can be extremely useful on a postcard because it connects physical advertising directly to something online.

It might take the customer to your website, a special offer page, an appointment scheduler, a downloadable guide, a quote-request form, a restaurant menu, a video, or a special landing page created specifically for the campaign.

But do not simply put a QR code on the postcard and assume people will scan it. Tell them why they should scan it.

Instead of SCAN ME, try SCAN FOR YOUR FREE ESTIMATE, SCAN TO SEE BEFORE & AFTER PHOTOS, or SCAN TO CLAIM YOUR OFFER. Give the scan a purpose.

Use Both Sides Strategically

A postcard gives you two opportunities to communicate. You do not necessarily have to cram your entire advertisement onto one side.

SIDE ONE - GET ATTENTION: Headline, strong image, primary benefit, offer.

SIDE TWO - EXPLAIN & ACT: Supporting benefits, brief company information, testimonials or credibility, offer reminder, call to action, contact information.

The two sides should work together as one advertisement.

Don't Forget Credibility

If space allows, give the customer a reason to trust you. That might include: ✓ Locally Owned; ✓ Serving the Community Since _____; ✓ Licensed & Insured; ✓ _____ Years of Experience; ✓ Five-Star Customer Reviews; ✓ Satisfaction Guarantee; ✓ Professional Certifications.

Only include claims that are accurate and that actually matter to your customer.

The Squint Test

Look at your postcard. Now squint your eyes so you cannot read the smaller text. What still stands out?

Ideally, you should still be able to identify the headline, the image, the offer, and the call to action.

If instead your logo, decorative graphics, and five unrelated pieces of information are fighting for attention, reconsider your visual hierarchy.

Build Your Postcard

SIDE ONE
Headline: _____
Main image: _____
Offer: _____
Primary call to action: _____

SIDE TWO
Supporting benefit 1: _____
Supporting benefit 2: _____
Supporting benefit 3: _____
Credibility / trust message: _____
Offer reminder: _____
Call to action: _____
Contact information: _____

Final Design Checklist

☐ Can I identify the headline immediately?
☐ Is the main benefit obvious?
☐ Is the offer easy to find?
☐ Does the image support the message?
☐ Can I understand the postcard quickly?
☐ Is the type large enough to read comfortably?
☐ Is there enough white space?
☐ Have I removed unnecessary information?
☐ Is there one obvious primary call to action?
☐ Does the customer know exactly what to do next?
☐ Is my business name and contact information easy to find?
☐ Does the postcard look trustworthy and professional?

The Five-Second Test

Give the postcard to someone who has not seen it. Let them look at it for five seconds. Take it away.

Then ask: What was being advertised? What was the offer? What were you supposed to do next?

If they can answer all three, your postcard is communicating. If they cannot, do not explain the design to them. FIX THE DESIGN. Your customers will not have you standing beside their mailbox explaining it either.

Your Postcard Is Taking Shape

You have now developed WHO, WHERE, HOW MUCH, WHY, WHAT GETS ATTENTION, and HOW IT IS PRESENTED. There is just one major question left after mailing: HOW WILL YOU KNOW IF IT WORKED?

WANT HELP DESIGNING YOUR POSTCARD?

Festive Faces can help turn your message, offer and call to action into a professional postcard design that's ready for your campaign.

Scan the QR code or visit festivefaces.com/design.html

8. Getting Your Postcards Mailed

YOUR POSTCARD IS READY. NOW WHAT?

For many first-time advertisers, this is the part that seems intimidating. It does not have to be.

There are several ways to handle a direct-mail campaign, ranging from doing most of the work yourself to having a printer or mailing service handle nearly everything for you.

First: Choose How You'll Mail

Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM)

With EDDM, you select postal carrier routes rather than individual names and addresses. Your postcard is delivered throughout the routes you have selected. This can be particularly useful when your potential customers are concentrated geographically.

Targeted / Addressed Mail

With an addressed mailing, each piece is sent to a specific individual, household, or business using a mailing list. This allows more precise targeting but requires additional preparation, including obtaining and processing addresses.

For this guide, we will concentrate primarily on EDDM because it is often one of the simpler ways for a local business to reach households within selected neighborhoods.

The Basic EDDM Process

1. SELECT YOUR ROUTES -> 2. PREPARE YOUR POSTCARD DESIGN -> 3. PRINT YOUR POSTCARDS -> 4. PREPARE THE MAILING -> 5. PAY THE POSTAGE -> 6. SUBMIT THE MAILING TO USPS

Step 1 - Select Your Routes

You have already done much of this work in Section 3. Using the USPS EDDM online mapping tool, identify the carrier routes that best match the customers you are trying to reach.

Do not choose routes simply because they are nearby. Consider distance from your business, number of households, household income if relevant, age if relevant, housing characteristics, whether the area matches your ideal customer, and total cost to reach the route.

MY MAILING ROUTES

ZIP Code: _____ Route: _____ Number of Deliveries: _____ Estimated Cost: $_____

ZIP Code: _____ Route: _____ Number of Deliveries: _____ Estimated Cost:

$_____

ZIP Code: _____ Route: _____ Number of Deliveries: _____ Estimated Cost: $_____

TOTAL PIECES: _____ ESTIMATED POSTAGE: $_____

Step 2 - Make Sure Your Postcard Qualifies

Do not assume that something called a 'postcard' automatically qualifies for the mailing method you have selected.

USPS has specific requirements covering such things as mailpiece dimensions, thickness, weight, addressing format, postage markings, and placement of required information.

Those requirements can change. Before you print thousands of postcards, verify that your finished design meets the current USPS requirements for the type of mailing you are planning.

CHECK BEFORE YOU PRINT. Discovering a problem with a digital design is easy to fix. Discovering it after 5,000 copies have been printed can be expensive.

Step 3 - Print Your Postcards

You can use a local printer, an online printing company, or a company specializing in direct-mail printing.

When requesting a quote, do not simply ask, 'How much for 5,000 postcards?' Provide the specifications.

Example: Quantity: 5,000; Finished size: _____; Printing: Full color, two-sided; Paper/card stock: _____; Finish: _____; EDDM compatible: Yes.

Also ask: Do you provide EDDM preparation or mailing services? That question may save you a considerable amount of work.

Don't Shop on Printing Price Alone

Suppose Printer A charges slightly less for the postcards. Printer B charges a little more but will verify the mailpiece specifications, print the postcards, prepare the mailing, organize the pieces for the selected routes, complete required mailing preparation, and deliver the mailing to USPS.

Printer B may actually be the better value. When comparing quotes, find out exactly what is included.

Printing Quote Checklist

☐ Printing
☐ Cutting/finishing
☐ EDDM preparation
☐ Bundling

☐ Required mailing paperwork
☐ Delivery to USPS
☐ Postage
☐ Other fees

Compare the total campaign cost, not simply the printing price.

Step 4 - Prepare the Mailing

If you are handling an EDDM Retail mailing yourself, USPS requires the mailpieces to be organized according to the selected delivery routes and prepared according to current postal requirements.

That can include separating pieces by carrier route, creating bundles, applying the appropriate facing slips, preparing required paperwork, and using the proper EDDM addressing and postage markings.

The exact preparation requirements depend on the mailing method you are using. Fortunately, you do not necessarily have to do this yourself.

Three Ways to Handle the Work

OPTION 1 - DO IT YOURSELF

You select the routes. You arrange the printing. You prepare the mailing. You complete the required USPS steps. You submit the postcards.

Advantages: More control; potentially lower outside service costs; you learn the entire process.

Disadvantages: Requires your time; greater learning curve; you are responsible for getting the postal preparation correct.

This can make sense for a small-business owner who wants to learn the process and does not mind doing some hands-on work.

OPTION 2 - LET THE PRINTER PREPARE IT

Some printing companies offer EDDM preparation services. You provide the artwork and route information, and the printer handles some or most of the physical preparation.

Depending on the company, that may include printing, sorting, bundling, facing slips, mailing preparation, and delivery to USPS.

Advantages: Less work for you; preparation handled by people familiar with direct mail; reduced chance of preparation mistakes.

Disadvantages: Additional service cost; services vary considerably between printers.

Always ask exactly what is included.

OPTION 3 - USE A FULL-SERVICE MAILING PROVIDER

A full-service provider may be able to handle virtually the entire campaign: targeting -> route selection -> design -> printing -> mail preparation -> postage -> delivery to USPS.

For a busy business owner, the additional cost may be worthwhile simply because it eliminates the time required to learn and manage the process.

What Are You Really Buying?

When comparing DIY mailing with a full-service provider, do not look only at dollars. Consider: TIME + CONVENIENCE + EXPERTISE + COST.

Suppose doing the preparation yourself saves $150 but requires six hours of your time. Ask yourself: Is saving $150 worth six hours I could have spent running my business?

Sometimes the answer is yes. Sometimes it is no. There is no universally correct choice.

Step 5 - Pay the Postage

Postage is usually one of the largest expenses in a direct-mail campaign. Make sure it is included in your campaign budget from Section 4.

Do not rely on an old postage rate you found in a blog post, video, or previous mailing. POSTAL RATES CHANGE. Check the current USPS rate when planning each campaign.

This is also why the worksheets in this guide ask you to enter the current postage amount rather than providing a fixed price.

Step 6 - Submit Your Mailing

Where and how your mailing is submitted depends on the mailing method you are using.

For EDDM Retail, USPS identifies the appropriate postal location associated with the routes you have selected. If you are handling the mailing yourself, follow the current instructions provided with your EDDM order.

If you are using a printer or mailing service, confirm: Who is delivering the postcards to USPS? Who is responsible for the paperwork? Who is paying the postage? What date will the mailing be submitted?

Do not assume. Get those answers before placing your order.

Don't Confuse Mailed With Delivered

The date your postcards are submitted to USPS is not necessarily the date every customer will receive one. Allow time for processing and delivery.

If your postcard contains a time-sensitive offer, do not make the deadline so tight that customers have little opportunity to respond.

For example: if your postcard arrives on Tuesday and the offer expires Friday, you have created urgency - but perhaps not the useful kind. Give customers enough time to act.

Plan Backward From Important Dates

If your promotion is connected to a holiday, grand opening, seasonal service, event, sale, special promotion, or deadline, start with the date you want customers to respond. Then work backward.

Offer/Event Date: _____
Desired Delivery Period: _____
Mail Submission Date: _____
Printing Completion Date: _____
Artwork Approval Date: _____
Design Completion Date: _____

Order a Proof

Before approving a large print run, carefully inspect your proof. Do not just look at the design. Check the information.

Pre-Print Checklist

☐ Business name is correct
☐ Phone number is correct
☐ Website address is correct
☐ Email address is correct
☐ QR code works
☐ Offer is correct
☐ Expiration date is correct
☐ Prices are correct
☐ Spelling and grammar have been checked
☐ Images are clear
☐ Required postal information is present
☐ Mailpiece meets current postal specifications
☐ Both sides have been reviewed

Test the QR Code With Your Phone

This deserves its own reminder: SCAN IT.

Do not assume the QR code works because it looks right. Scan the QR code from the final proof using a phone. Make sure it takes the customer to the correct page. Then ask someone else to scan it.

A beautifully printed QR code that leads to the wrong page is still the wrong QR code.

Keep a Copy

Before your mailing goes out, keep several copies of the finished postcard.

Also save the final artwork, printing invoice, postage receipt, routes mailed, mailing date, offer used, landing-page information, QR destination, and campaign costs.

You will need this information when you evaluate your results. And if the campaign works well, you will want to know exactly what you did so you can repeat it.

Your Mailing Plan

☐ EDDM
☐ Targeted/addressed mailing
☐ Other: _____

Who will handle the mailing?

☐ I will prepare it myself
☐ My printer will prepare it
☐ A mailing service will handle it

Number of postcards: _____
Target ZIP code(s): _____
Carrier routes: _____
Printer: _____
Printing cost: $_____
Postage: $_____
Preparation/service fees: $_____
TOTAL MAILING COST: $_____
Planned mailing date: _____
Expected delivery period: _____
Offer expiration date: _____

Before the Postcards Leave Your Hands

☐ Have I selected the correct routes?
☐ Does the postcard meet current postal requirements?
☐ Have I checked the final printed proof?
☐ Does the QR code work?
☐ Is the offer correct?
☐ Is there enough time before the offer expires?
☐ Do I know exactly what the campaign costs?
☐ Do I know who is responsible for submitting the mailing?

RATHER HAVE SOMEONE HELP?

Planning, designing, printing and preparing a direct-mail campaign does not have to be a do-it-yourself project. Festive Faces can help with professional postcard design and local direct-mail options.
www.festivefaces.com/eddm.html

And One More Question

HOW WILL I KNOW IF IT WORKED? That is where we are going next.

9. Measuring Your Results

DID YOUR MAILING WORK?

Your postcards have been delivered. The phone rings. Someone visits your website. A few people request estimates. Customers begin coming in. So - did the campaign work?

It is surprisingly easy to finish a marketing campaign without being able to answer that question.

'We got some calls.' 'A few people mentioned the postcard.' 'Business seemed a little busier.' Those observations are encouraging - but they do not tell you whether your advertising actually made money.

To determine that, you need to track a few simple numbers.

Start Before You Mail

The best time to decide how you will measure a campaign is before the postcards go out.

Ask: How will I know someone responded because of THIS postcard?

1. Use a Unique Offer Code

Give the campaign its own code. For example: Mention code MAIL25 to receive your offer or Use promo code SPRING50 when booking.

When someone uses that code, you know where they came from.

2. Use a Campaign-Specific QR Code

A QR code can direct recipients to a specific page on your website. For example: YourBusiness.com/spring. If that page is used only for this mailing, visits and inquiries generated there can help you measure the campaign.

3. Use a Unique Landing Page

Instead of sending everyone to your homepage, create a simple page specifically for the offer. The page should reinforce the same message and offer that appeared on the postcard.

This also makes the customer's next step easier. They do not have to search your website for the information they just saw.

4. Simply Ask

Sometimes the easiest tracking method is also one of the best. When a new customer contacts you, ask: How did you hear about us? Record the answer. Do not rely on your memory.

Create a Simple Response Log

You do not need complicated software. A spreadsheet, notebook, or simple customer database can work. Record each response generated by the campaign.

Date	Customer	Response	Became Customer?	Sale	Estimated Profit
				$	$
				$	$
				$	$
				$	$
				$	$

Know the Numbers That Matter

Postcards mailed: _____
Total campaign cost: $_____
Responses/inquiries: _____
New customers: _____
Revenue from new customers: $_____
Estimated profit from those customers: $_____

These six numbers can tell you a great deal about what happened.

Calculate Your Response Rate

Responses / Postcards Mailed x 100 = Response Rate

Example: 5,000 postcards mailed; 50 responses. 50 / 5,000 x 100 = 1% response rate.

Your campaign: _____ responses / _____ postcards x 100 = _____ %

Remember: a response is not necessarily a sale. That is why we need another number.

Calculate Your Customer Conversion Rate

New Customers / Postcards Mailed x 100 = Customer Conversion Rate

Example: 5,000 postcards mailed; 6 new customers. 6 / 5,000 x 100 = 0.12% customer conversion rate.

Your campaign: _____ customers / _____ postcards x 100 = _____ %

How Well Did You Convert Your Leads?

Of the people who responded, how many actually became customers?

New Customers / Responses x 100 = Lead-to-Customer Conversion Rate

Example: 50 people responded; 6 became customers. 6 / 50 x 100 = 12%.

This can help identify a problem that is not necessarily related to the postcard. If your advertising generates plenty of inquiries but very few become customers, you may need to look at what happens after the response.

Calculate Your Cost Per Lead

Campaign Cost / Responses = Cost Per Lead

Example: $1,750 campaign / 50 responses = $35 per lead.

Your cost per lead: $_____ / _____ responses = $_____

Calculate Your Customer Acquisition Cost

Campaign Cost / New Customers = Customer Acquisition Cost

Example: $1,750 campaign / 6 new customers = $291.67 per new customer.

Your customer acquisition cost: $_____ / _____ customers = $_____

Now compare that number with the profit you normally earn from a new customer. That is where things get interesting.

Did the Campaign Pay for Itself?

Suppose campaign cost = $1,750 and profit generated by new customers = $2,400. Subtract the advertising cost: $2,400 - $1,750 = $650 in profit after advertising cost.

For a simple first evaluation, that is often easier to understand than complicated marketing terminology.

Calculate Your Return on Investment

(Profit Generated - Campaign Cost) / Campaign Cost x 100 = ROI

Using our example: ($2,400 - $1,750) / $1,750 x 100 = 37.1% ROI.

Your campaign: ($_____ - $_____) / $_____ x 100 = _____ %

Don't Judge the Campaign Too Quickly

Not every postcard produces an immediate response. Someone might put your postcard on the refrigerator, keep it in a drawer, visit your website two weeks later, or call when they finally need the service you are advertising.

For businesses involving larger purchases - roofing, remodeling, landscaping, and similar services - the buying decision may take considerably longer than it does for a restaurant coupon.

Continue tracking responses for a reasonable period after the mailing.

Now Ask the Most Important Question

Numbers tell you what happened. Now try to understand WHY.

AUDIENCE

☐ Did we reach the right type of customer? Yes / Maybe / No

LOCATION

☐ Did we choose the right neighborhoods? Yes / Maybe / No

OFFER

☐ Was the offer strong enough? Yes / Maybe / No

HEADLINE

☐ Did the headline get attention? Yes / Maybe / No

DESIGN

☐ Was the postcard easy to understand? Yes / Maybe / No

CALL TO ACTION

☐ Was it obvious what the customer should do next? Yes / Maybe / No

SALES FOLLOW-UP

☐ Did we respond effectively when people contacted us? Yes / Maybe / No

Don't Change Everything at Once

Suppose the campaign did not perform as well as you hoped. You change the neighborhood, headline, offer, design, price, and call to action. Then you mail again. Results improve dramatically. Great - but what fixed it? You do not know.

Whenever practical, change one major variable at a time. That makes each mailing an experiment from which you can learn.

Keep, Change or Stop?

KEEP IT - The campaign was profitable and produced the type of customers I want. MAIL IT AGAIN.

CHANGE IT - The campaign showed promise, but something could be improved. Consider changing the audience, mailing area, offer, headline, design, call to action, sales follow-up, or another meaningful variable. Then test again.

STOP IT - The economics do not make sense, the customers are not a good fit, or repeated testing has not produced acceptable results. TRY A DIFFERENT APPROACH.

Stopping an unsuccessful campaign is not failure. Continuing to spend money on advertising that you have learned does not work is.

Campaign Results Scorecard

CAMPAIGN: _____
MAILING DATE: _____
TARGET AREA: _____
OFFER: _____
HEADLINE: _____

Postcards mailed: _____
Campaign cost: $_____
Responses: _____
New customers: _____
Revenue generated: $_____
Estimated profit generated: $_____
Response rate: _____ %
Customer conversion rate: _____ %
Lead-to-customer conversion rate: _____ %
Cost per lead: $_____
Customer acquisition cost: $_____
Estimated ROI: _____ %

MY DECISION

☐ MAIL IT AGAIN
☐ CHANGE IT AND RETEST
☐ STOP AND TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT

What worked?

What didn't?

What will I change next time?

Your First Campaign Isn't Just Advertising

It is information. You have learned WHO responds, WHERE they live, WHICH offer gets attention, HOW much it costs to acquire a customer, and WHETHER those customers are profitable.

That means your second campaign does not have to be based entirely on assumptions. It can be based on what you learned from the first.

TEST. MEASURE. IMPROVE. REPEAT.

Your First Campaign Starts Here

Start with a manageable test. Choose the audience carefully. Make the offer clear. Track what happens. Then use what you learn to make the next campaign better.

WHO -> WHERE -> BUDGET -> OFFER -> HEADLINE -> DESIGN -> MAIL -> MEASURE

READY TO PUT YOUR CAMPAIGN TO WORK?

Scan to learn more about Festive Faces direct-mail and EDDM options.
www.festivefaces.com/eddm.html

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