

COMMUNIQUE

Smart marketing advice masquerading as common sense

A PUBLICATION OF
CLAIRVOYANT COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

Industrial-strength marketing communications

Why your direct mail* isn't working

*Snail mail, email or whatever

Volume 4, Issue 3

March 2005

Ever have a new communications program like direct mail fall on its face? You, your boss, your colleagues are left frustrated and wondering, "What went wrong?"

Like most marketing communications questions there are no simple answers. After all, communication is a high level activity. There are lots of variables involved.

If your direct mail results don't meet your expectations,

here are the key things to look at:

LIST

Sending your message to the RIGHT people is critically important. I recommend pre-qualifying small lists before they're used.

If you're purchasing a list, get names AND titles, check on the list company's sources and how often they update, and test a small number of names before investing in a big list.

My experience is that publication subscriber

lists are good quality because they're updated often.

Size matters here. Keep your list small – less than 5,000 names. If you have a larger audience, another tactic, like advertising, might be more cost effective.

BREAK-THROUGH CREATIVE

Think of the clutter in your mailbox or in-basket. A direct mail piece needs to break through that clutter. Grab attention. Beg to be opened and read.

Different creative approaches can be tested on segments of the list to find what works best.

OFFER/CALL TO ACTION

Direct mail is all about response. So offer something attractive to spur that response – a premium item, a rebate, a coupon, an informational book or pamphlet.

This is another variable that can be tested.

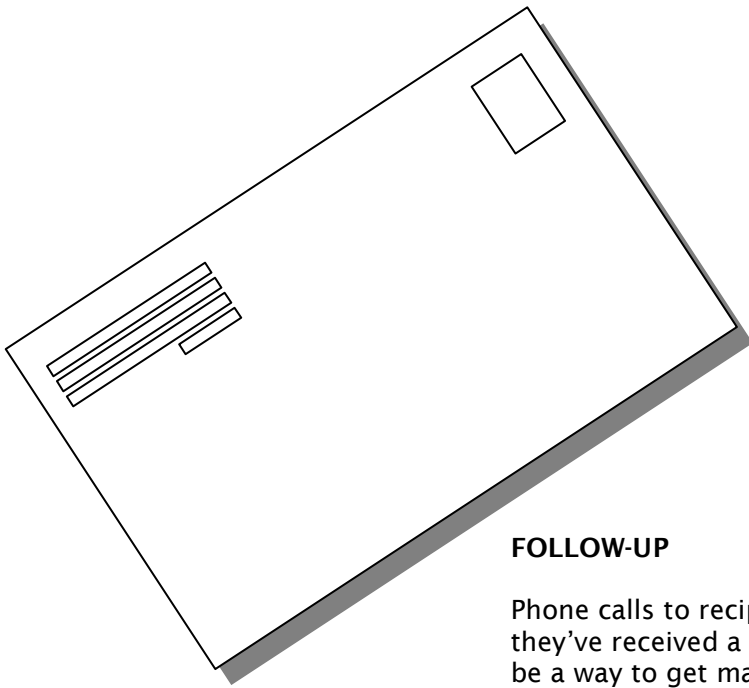


©Copyright 2005

CLAIRVOYANT
COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

Claire Cunningham
President

Phone: 763-546-0479
Fax: 763-546-8756
Cell: 612-709-6845
Email: claire@claircomm.com
Web: <http://www.claircomm.com>



REPETITION

There are two cardinal rules of human communication:

- 1) People will notice your message only when they're interested, and
- 2) People retain about 10% of the messages they're exposed to each day.

So for a communication program to succeed, it must repeat, repeat, repeat.

You can send a series of mailers or send the same piece. Either way be sure to send them one or two weeks apart...and repeat the series in three to six months.

EXPECTATIONS

Are you asking direct mail to do what it's good at? Generating inquiries from a well-defined audience is a reasonable direct mail objective.

Keep this in mind, too: up to 3% bad addresses (returns) is normal for a purchased list. Usual inquiry generation from an unqualified list may be as low as 1-3%.

FOLLOW-UP

Phone calls to recipients after they've received a mailing can be a way to get maximum results. I recommend scheduling mailings in a way that allows for phone follow-up.



MEASUREMENT

Do you really know what your direct mail program is achieving? Are you collecting and reviewing results that relate to your objectives? If you expect your direct mail program to generate inquiries, measurement that looks at inquiry quantity and quality should be built into your program.

Need help with your direct mail program? Call me, Claire Cunningham, at 763-546-0479.

This is a publication of Clairvoyant Communications, Inc.

