

USPS Offers Mailers Free Ounce

Businesses mailing automated or presort letters first-class can now mail letters weighing up to two ounces at the one-ounce postage rate, according to the United States Postal Service (USPS). This "2nd Ounce Free" initiative was in response to feedback from the mailing industry. Note that the new pricing does not apply to single-piece letters mailed by customers – it applies to commercial mailers:

- No registration is required
- No annual minimum thresholds apply
- No payment rebates are needed

Although businesses using automated presort letters are typically mailing bills or transactional statements, the new pricing allows them to include up to an additional ounce for operational or marketing purposes at no additional cost.

Bills and statements delivered via First-Class Mail are opened more than 95% of the time and, on average, the receiver spends two to three minutes with each piece. This makes transactional mail a highly effective medium for target marketing, the USPS said.

Marketing to "On the Go" Consumers

Keeping up with today's busy consumers is a 24/7 job. Whether your business is looking to increase awareness of your brand, drive traffic to your website, increase opt-ins or find new leads, success lies in creating a compelling, consistent message and approaching your audience from multiple channels. Think of your own attention span when developing your marketing plan. How many mediums do you access in one minute, one hour, one day ... and what type of message grabs your attention?

Below are five elements of an integrated marketing plan that can maximize engagement, influence messaging and promote action:

- **Print:** According to *Deliver Magazine*, 79% of U.S. households read or scan advertising mail sent to their homes. When it comes to the business-to-business audience, direct mail is cited as one of the top 4 highest ROI-generating marketing methods (Outsells "Marketing and Ad Spending Study 2010: Total US

and B2B Advertising"), and studies show that sending a follow-up mailing generates even higher response than the first.

- **Email:** An email on its own may not drive results, but when combined with the right strategy, introductory and follow-up emails with creative copy that send the reader to a landing page to perform an action are valuable.
- **Interactive:** Marketing has evolved from a transaction-based system into an ongoing conversation. Interactive marketing tactics engage prospects, and allow you to modify and target your message.
- **Human Touch:** On its own, telemarketing can be a tricky business. But used in a multi-pronged approach, the human touch works well for follow up, appointment setting and event reminders.
- **Social Media:** Social media acts as an accelerator to all print, email, interactive and human touch elements, driving home messaging and reaching out to prospects.

Consider Mobile Channel Opportunities

Companies that sell goods and services online and are planning to launch an integrated marketing campaign may want to consider the opportunities that ads tailored to the mobile channel can offer, in addition to print and other media. Businesses are wise to reassess their existing plans for online marketing and consider ways to draw in more mobile Internet users.

According to Microsoft, even though only 17% of websites are currently optimized to be viewed over a mobile device, approximately one-fifth of the total

time people browse the Internet is spent while on the go. Integrating mobile content with other marketing efforts, such as email and lead nurturing, can be key to improving campaign success if done in a thoughtful way.

For instance, while quick response (QR) codes may be a trendy way to get consumers to interact with a brand, using them as the main component of a campaign could cut down on how many people are reached. While the Smartphone owner population is growing, it does not yet represent the majority of consumers.

Consumer Specialty Lists for New Demographics

DirectMail.com™, a provider of integrated direct marketing solutions, recently announced that its mailing list service created several new specialty lists using its patented GeoSelector™ technology. These niche lists, outlined below, are drawn from a database of over 215 million consumers residing in over 110 million living units. Specialty lists allow businesses to target efforts more effectively and save on mailing costs.

- **“Senior-Age Mail Order Buyers” List** – Ideal for retailers, and marketers can opt to purchase special data on these AARP seniors,

such as estimated household income, investor status and if they have grandchildren.

- **“Made-in-America Buyer” List** – For marketers looking to promote their American-made goods. Additional data that can be purchased includes household income, education and history of donating to charities.
- **“Military at Home” List** – Serves as a great tool for military memorabilia providers, membership organizations and educational institutions.

Coke’s Formula for Success

Brafton recently reported that Coca-Cola is No. 1 for social media marketing. Wendy Clark, Coke’s Senior Vice President of Integrated Marketing, said the secret to the brand’s success is storytelling, and she suggests consumer-relevant content marketing can help businesses become household names. Clark believes marketers must engage their audiences in a personal way and be prepared to leverage their brand story across the Web to find audiences online. Also, successful brand stories have no dead ends – they always give consumers opportunities to engage further on their media of choice.

Below is Coke’s three-part formula for content marketing success, according to Clark:

- 1) Stories** – Content on the Web needs to be actionable content that will make people remember a business. Allow customers to co-author the content, both via user-generated content and by turning customer experiences into stories for site or video content. The real story around how customers use products or

services is just as (if not more) important as the story businesses tell.

- 2) Spread** – Brand stories need to be distributed across websites, social networks, video platforms, ad campaigns, etc. Marketers must adapt their content investment into the channels that offer the most engagement – which will guarantee spread. Move beyond interactions with customers and look to create brand experiences among customers and their friends. Marketers must produce content that is worth sharing if they want it passed on to fans’ friends and, ultimately, to foster sales.
- 3) Value** – Listen to the needs of customers and focus on what they want. Valuable content must be relevant and on the channels where consumers are. Coke focuses on balancing timely topics with a consistent message. Businesses have to integrate every online marketing platform, fueling each with content and pointing users to related campaigns where they can continue their brand experience.