

# PROFITABLE PRINT RELATIONSHIPS

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## The Successful Print Sales Circle

### Print Product Inspiration Podcast 1: Direct Mail

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Hello, and welcome to the first episode of Print Product Inspiration, and today we're going to talk about direct mail, but maybe not in the way that you've thought about it before. So even if you think that direct mail is not for you, do give this podcast a listen and you may have some very different thoughts at the end of it.

I want to start by telling you about a recent piece of mail that I received. I just connected with someone on LinkedIn. We'd had a brief exchange of messages on there and we'd agreed to have a call in the next few days. Before we had that call, I came into the office one morning and I had some post, and there was a piece that immediately caught my eye. It was a large orange envelope. It had a handwritten address and when I opened the envelope, there was a handwritten card from the person I connected with on LinkedIn, as well as a brochure about their company, and it set the scene for a very productive call. They really stood out in my eyes, because nobody else whom I've connected with on LinkedIn has gone to that amount of effort to try and build a relationship with me.

So that's just one example of the power of direct mail. And let's remember, anyone can do this. You don't need to be a mailing house to produce a small amount of mailing pieces like this for a client. Any printing company can do this.

So I hope that immediately sets the scene that this isn't just a podcast for people who believe in big volume direct mail. And even at the end of this, if you do decide that this is not for you, please carry on listening, because there are some valuable sales lessons to learn as well.

Going back to direct mail, let's remember that right now it stands out very well from the noise that we constantly get from so much e-communication that lands in our inboxes. Using direct mail creates a different relationship with customers and prospects. And that applies to you, but also your clients when they're trying to connect with their customers and prospects.

The recipient of the direct mail sees things in a very different way when they get mail as opposed to email and it can create a very powerful sales pipeline and allow the achievement of much greater sales targets. But this works because direct mail is changing. No longer do we have the huge, long run, cheap unit price mailings. Yes, they still exist for supermarkets and some other big brands, but

really, this is spray and pray when that's applied. It's all about sending out as many pieces as possible and hoping that you get the right result from them.

What I think is far more powerful are small volume targeted mailings to people whom you know are your ideal prospects and customers. These are low volume mailings, but each individual piece has a high value. It's far better to spend more on a few prospects than a little on a lot of prospects. You'll get a far better engagement rate. You'll get a far better conversion rate. And for the printing company, it's ideal high margin profits. So it's a great place to start. And particularly at the moment in the world as we have it today, people want less and less direct face-to-face communication. So direct mail is a very good way to get through to people.

I'm going to tell you about a campaign that actually took place in 2012 in Canada, but it is just as relevant for today and it shows the power of both inventive thinking and print. So in this example, there was a Porsche dealership in Canada and they took one of their cars out to neighbourhoods where there were wealthy people whom they thought would be interested in buying a Porsche. What they did was, they took a photographer with them and they parked the Porsche outside individual houses, took a photograph of the Porsche outside that house and then created a personalized mailing campaign where each recipient saw a picture of the Porsche outside their very own house.

It's not actually that difficult to carry something like this out. Any printing company with a bit of inventiveness and with the access to a good photographer could do this for a car dealership. And the results were truly impressive. 32% of people who received this mailing piece actually responded to book a test drive. I think you'd agree that's a really impressive engagement and conversion rate for any marketing campaign.

So, not all of us are going to be able to be so lucky as to be able to do a campaign for a local car dealership, but whoever you're doing it for, whether it's for restaurants, for local shops, for brands, whoever it's for, here are five tips that I have to make sure that the direct mail has a maximum impact.

First of all, create a great looking envelope. So remember the one I've just told you about that was from the LinkedIn connection? That was A4 and orange. It stood out from everything else. Just as importantly, you might be able to print a powerful message on that envelope. That's more printing work for you, more profit for you. So there's really good opportunities here and it will increase engagement.

Next. If you can, create a direct mailing campaign with handwritten addresses. If you're using envelopes, people are much more likely to open something that is handwritten and has a postage stamp on it as well. Now, clearly that's going to be difficult if you are mailing tens of thousands of pieces, but if you're doing small volume and sending out maybe 20 or 30 a week, that's something that you can carry out for your clients and it will increase the opening rates.

Next. Make the mailing piece stand out through its size. So there's two ways you can do this. You can make it an oversized piece and that can be very powerful, but of course, then the postman or the postwoman might have to bend it when they put it through a letterbox. An alternative way is to make your direct mail piece slightly bulky. So, for a long time in the U.K, charities were sending

direct mail pieces with pens and people were opening them. That's probably past its peak now. But imagine if you received a direct mail piece with a sweet or a chocolate in it, or a small branded gift, all of those things are going to ensure that the package is opened and increase the memory retention of the recipients with whatever it is that you are trying to market through that direct mail piece.

Number four. Make sure you personalize the direct mail. Make pictures, as a say, relevant to the street that you're delivering in. Create different pictures for different towns or different types of people. If you've already got a customer who's got a record of purchasing something, you can create different copy and different pictures around their purchasing history and what you think they should move to next.

And finally, make your direct mail campaign a drip feed. Rather than sending out all the pieces in one week to all recipients, do it week-by-week. It makes it far easier for someone to follow up on the direct mail piece and it makes your fulfilment easier as well. So that's a handy tip to put into practice for your direct mail campaigns.

Remember, direct mail isn't just for big brands. It's for small local businesses. And I think that's where, as printing companies, we have a real opportunity, because smaller businesses may not be used to using direct mail, but actually we can create a high profit margin, but relatively low cost campaign for them and show them the true value of it. You can even carry out a door drop for them rather than using postal services. So, there's all sorts of things you can do to make it a complete service for them.

Ideally, you're going to measure the success of your campaigns as quickly as possible, because then you can really show other businesses that direct mail has been successful for similar businesses to them and that's why they should really invest in this as a solution.

So, how do we sell direct mail effectively? What we need to remember is, the sale isn't direct mail. The sale is the results that direct mail creates for your customer, whether that's more customers, more footfall, more brand awareness, but if you can make that measurable as well, that's very, very powerful. So going back to the case studies, if you can show that with one local restaurant or one local takeaway, you drove a certain number of customers, new customers to their doorstep, then you're in a very good position. And of course, you can measure this and your customer can measure this by putting response codes on the direct mail piece.

Remember also that most businesses don't really know how to approach direct mail. Therefore, your task is to make it as easy as possible for them. They don't want the hassle of trying to deal with copywriters and designers and printers and delivery people. Project manage for them. Potentially you can offer them the right freelance copywriter and the right designer, and you can create the whole campaign on their behalf. And of course, that then becomes a much more powerful sell. You're no longer selling a piece of commodity direct mail. You're selling a business solution. And with that comes a new view on what profit margins might be.

Also, your competitors are much less likely to sell like this. Many printing companies view trying to project manage something like this as beyond them or not something they want to do or not something they should do, and I think those printing companies are wrong. I think they're missing a

great chance. But for you, that's great news, because you have a chance to create a high value, high profit job and you won't have lots of competitors competing for it.

And one final tip for selling direct mail, use it yourselves. For a start, people will see that you believe in it because it's a channel that you're using. But also, as the print industry, we can create some really effective, direct mail pieces. I remember there was one printing company local to me, and they just invested in a large format, digital press and they created a really powerful oversized folder that they sent me through the post, and I kept that probably for about a year, because I felt it was such a great piece of print, and this was many years ago now. It was about 10 years ago and I still remember that direct mail piece. I still remember the company. So, that's the power of direct mail to promote your services as well. Even if you don't want to sell direct mail, use it to sell the services that you do.

Next week, you're going to receive your second video on selling through referrals. So please look out for that and put that into practice as well. But in the meantime, I hope that I've given you some food for thought and some inspiration for your print sales. I look forward to catching up with you soon.