



Personalization with envelopes is the “one-two punch” to response success

Consumers Value Physical Mail, Even In This Digital Era. Multichannel marketing agency, RAPP commissioned global measurement firm Nielsen to conduct a study of the effects of different offline and online direct mailing techniques as part of the consumer purchase decision process.

Approximately 1,800 consumers participated in the study, which employed marketing mailings from a fictitious travel agency. The direct mailings tested: standard envelope, printed envelope, self-mailer, wrapper. Using these various marketing vehicles, the effectiveness of a personalized vacation offer was tested amongst two groups of recipients—interested and not interested.

The results confirm the unique advertising effects of the envelope – that an envelope reinforces marketing efforts and messaging, that personalization is an effective technique to get the envelope opened, and that consumers value physical mail, even in this digital era.

Select findings:

Printed envelopes – manufactured custom to marketers’ specifications – were opened and their contents read by 84.5% of recipients, making them the most opened advertising tested. Standard envelopes were opened and read by 75.6% of respondents, self-mailers 71.4%, and wrappers

read and opened by 71.2%.

The Nielsen study demonstrates that “a high-value direct mailing in a creatively designed and printed envelope alone is still not enough to guarantee the success of a direct marketing campaign.”

Personalization of the envelope proved key.

Recipients who received non-personalized marketing mailings were three times more likely to throw the mail in the trash, compared to recipients who received an individualized mailing. In addition, individually tailored messages played a key role in the consumer purchase decision funnel – 44% of interested recipients of an individualized direct mailing said they would investigate the travel offer further online, compared to the 36.6% of recipients of non-individualized mailings.

Recommendations have proven to be the most important factors of influence when making a purchase decision. According to the survey, in general, marketing messages mailed via a personalized printed envelope are more apt to be passed along to friends and family – in fact, twice as often as emails (14.2% v. 7.8%). The testing of the fictitious travel offer proved this true: 13.1% of the interested recipients said that they would pass on content they read in the individualized offers to friends and family —while



just 9.1% who received generic offerings said they would do the same.

Interestingly, older respondents (55-65 years) valued an email advertisement more than the younger target group (16-34 years). Nielsen states that 63.2% of 16-34 year olds see emails “disappearing in the flood of advertisements they receive,” and thus the individually addressed printed envelope is valued very highly by the younger target group. Younger target groups want the best of both worlds: a real envelope and the flexibility of individualized emails.



Testimonials are Warm Blankets on a Cold Night



Testimonials and reviews can be powerful tools on your website or landing pages. As external factors, they have the ability to relieve customer anxiety on almost any issue. From concerns on product quality to cost justification to usability, testimonials can be used to alleviate very specific areas of anxiety.

LOCATION ON PAGE

Testing different locations on your pages, at different points of anxiety along the path to purchase, could help optimize the value of your testimonials and improve conversions.

Here are a couple of ideas for testing the location of your testimonials:

Product page – Does a testimonial next to a bullet list of product benefits, providing real-life evidence of your product's benefits, earn your company more conversions than a testimonial justifying cost close to the "Add to Cart" button?

Sidebar – Even if previous testing has proven the sidebar is an effective location for testimonials on your site, it could be worth a test to see if moving the testimonials up or down the sidebar improves conversion further. You should follow the thought sequence of your customers. So, in their

mind, does seeing a customer review about the quality of service above, say, a security seal alleviate more anxiety?

LONG vs. SHORT TESTIMONIALS

Some testimonials are quick and to the point – others fill a page with every detail possible. While some audiences might only require a short testimonial to alleviate any worry, other purchasers may require more in-depth information.

A few factors could play into which might be better for your company and products: audience, product complexity and cost. If the product is on the less expensive side and is pretty straightforward, your audience may need only a simple, "They did everything I expected and more" type of testimonial. However, a CEO purchasing complex computer software might need more details to satisfy any concerns, even going as far as a full case study.

Try testing different lengths of testimonials on your website. You could potentially find customers at different points in the path to purchase need more or less detailed testimonials.

IMAGES

While a picture might be worth a 1000 words, you must ensure they are conveying the right meaning. If you have pictures

of your current customers next to their testimonials, does the picture send the right message? If you are going to use a photo, it must communicate value. "An image is only as valuable as the value it communicates."

VIDEO

While testimonials can help relieve anxiety, and images are worth a 1000 words. Video testimonials are worth 100,000 words. Use someone credible, convincing and sincere and you are well on your way. Make it short, polished but not to professional. If it looks like a commercial they might and will be turned off. Last thing, sound quality is worth every penny that you pay for audio.

GEO-TARGETING

When potential customers look at testimonials or reviews, it can help them better relate to the experience if they feel connected to the reviewer. One basic way to do this is by geo-targeting your testimonials. You can do this in a variety of ways, including asking for a ZIP code, city, state or country, and determining the location based on the visitor's IP, WiFi or GPS data.

BUILD CUSTOMER TRUST

The success of all of these tests doesn't depend on lifts. These types of tests can provide you with real insight into your audience, which can allow you to build, or deepen, your customer theory. The more you know about your customers, the better you can market and serve them.



Merrill Kagan-Weston - President/Sales Manager



In 1983, with about 10 years printing production experience, I was hired as a production manager at a printing company in Burbank, California. Judging from the looks I got when I was first hired and vendors met me, Merrill (a man's name), I believe I was one of the first female production managers in Los Angeles.

Shortly after, I became pregnant with our daughter Jackie. Brad & I decided we wanted to make a better life away from the city hustle. Brad had always wanted to open a sporting goods store in Redding, CA so, he took this Philly girl on a road trip on Memorial Day Weekend. It was 103° during the day and in the low 90's at night....in MAY!

Needless to say, we weren't putting roots down there! An acquaintance told us about this cute little Gold Rush town, Auburn. So shortly after Jackie was born we ventured up the hill again (actually we made several trips) and found our

"new home," bought a little print shop on the main street (Lincoln Way) called Auburn Letterhouse and the rest is history!

I've been in the printing business for 40 years, got a summer job while attending Philadelphia College of Art, and have never regretted the choice I made!

Now that our daughters, Jackie and Liz are grown, when not working, we are atop our horses, camping and exploring the Sierras. I have a passion for horses and for preserving the land, so we spend time maintaining the trails with our riding club, Gold Country Trails Council and are actively involved with the Western States 100 Mile Ride (the Tevis Cup). I also am a board member of Soroptimist International of the American River and the Sutter Auburn Faith Hospital Foundation. Yep, I never wonder what I'm going to do when the shop is closed at night or on the weekend!



It happened again...

The API-Marketing team gathered together to help with and participate in the American Cancer Society Relay for Life in Auburn August 17-18. Jackie Weston, Emerging Services Manager of API-Marketing joined the Relay Committee this year as the Team Recruitment Chair. "It was a completely different look at Relay being a part of the committee this year. It gave me a different vantage point and I was able to see how much the event truly helped the American Cancer Society," says Jackie.

Jackie's job was to go into the community and get different organizations and businesses to create teams and be a part of this long time event. She was very successful and got many new teams to join and several new businesses to get involved.

Not only was Jackie on the Relay committee she was also co-captain of her own team the Cancer Kickers. She and Peggy Seitzinger manager of Roper's Jewelers completed their second year with the team and came in second for fundraising, raising just over \$12,000 for the event. They also won the "silver shoe" spirit award for the entire event.

Along with Jackie, Merrill Kagan-Weston President of API-Marketing also participated in Relay for Life (after a several year break), as part of a new team for Soroptimist International of American River. She also walked and participated as a cancer survivor. "This is a fabulous event that helps a lot of people, I am glad that we as a company and individuals are able to help out such a great cause," says Jackie, "I will continue to be a part of this event for many years to come."

