



Mail Messenger is written, designed and produced by United Printing & Mailing. United is headquartered in Phoenix, Arizona, and has been in the direct mail business since 1965. We are eager to form partnerships with our clients, whether they are locally or nationally based. We offer not only complete mailing services, but also graphic design, data acquisition and management, variable data services, in-house printing and on-site mail verification by the USPS. Our friendly staff will help guide your project through the direct mail process. Plus, our in-house services keep your project on schedule while saving you time and money. We're more than a direct mail company, we're your direct mail partner.

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Why your customers want you to use direct mail

Making the sale, writing the press release, arriving on time for your two o'clock client meeting, getting your invoicing done or making just one more call before quitting time—these are the things that make up our day. Then, just as we've been able to leave the office, we are greeted with a whole new set of tasks: carting the kids to soccer, piano or martial arts class, getting dinner on the table, walking the dog and straightening the house. Our lives are *constantly* buzzing.

In our current age of hyper-active scheduling, there seems to be little chance for an advertising message to have enough time to sink in. Think again. Strangely enough, the time-tested method of direct mail seems to be appealing to readers more than ever. Here's why direct mail works for today's audience:

Direct mail is less-interruptive than other mediums
With many advertising mediums, you get bombarded with messages in such a way that they are tough to avoid. TV ads interrupt your favorite show every 10 minutes, radio ads are played every 2 or 3 songs and internet ads pop up or flash incessantly at the side of the web page you are viewing. This is not the case with direct mail. It gets delivered to your mailbox and from there, *you* choose when you want to read it.

Direct mail gives the reader control
USPS research studies show that most people do enjoy flipping through their mail. As mentioned in the previous point, the great thing about direct mail is that you get to choose when to peruse your mail. You don't have to look at the



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mail right as you get home, although it is there for you if you would like to. Feel free to make—and eat—dinner and even do the dishes before taking any time to look through the mail. Whether you wait until later in the day or even later in the week to read your mail—it will be there when you are ready. *You, the reader, are in control.*

Direct mail can be held onto for the future
Although direct mail is usually created to be urgent and time-sensitive, a reader can choose to prolong the message and hold onto mail that they may have a future interest in. Case in point: how many times have you held onto a catalog only to place an order from it a few months down the line? Your prospects do this all the time. The key to advertising is to be present when your prospect needs your product or service. With direct mail your message can reach a little further, as your recipient can save the mail piece for later, or even pass it on to a friend. Try doing that with a radio ad.

Direct mail holds an important place in the mind of the consumer.

The fact is direct mail is easily accepted by most prospects, which gives you the window to make your best pitch for your product or service. Although direct mail may be a more traditional form of advertising, it still holds an important place in the mind of the consumer.

ACCORDING TO A SURVEY PERFORMED BY THE USPS:

48%

of people read their mail to unwind.

Read the best of Mail Messenger on our blog.
mailmessenger.blogspot.com

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Featured Format

When planning your direct mail campaign, the right format makes all the difference.

Postcards: When are they most appropriate?

Postcards often seem so simple, so easy to implement. What most people don't realize is that, like all mediums, there is a time and a place for postcards. So when exactly should you choose to use a postcard to promote your organization?

When your message is short and direct

Postcards are meant to be scanned and digested quickly by your reader. This is only possible if you present a quick, concise message that matches with the brief format of a postcard. If you try to include too much information or your message diverts in too many directions, you will certainly lose the attention of your audience before you are able to make your point.

When your product is easy to purchase

Postcards are not an elaborate medium. They are a no-frills, low-cost medium. It stands to reason that you wouldn't try to sell an elaborate, big-ticket item with a no-frills, low-cost marketing piece. People don't make large-scale purchases off simple postcards. Large-scale purchases require time and research to warm up to the purchase. Postcards just don't offer the right kind of environment for that type of sale. Simple postcards work well in selling items that are easy to purchase or low in cost. A \$129 dental exam could be considered an item that is easy to purchase, because people need to purchase that service and will do so when they are confronted and reminded of their need with a simple postcard promotion.

When you wish to generate leads

We just mentioned that postcards aren't meant to try to sell high-cost items, however, postcards are a great way to warm up people to purchase big-ticket items. Use a postcard as an invitation to a sale, open house or educational event. Provide your audience with motivating information on your product or service and offer up your website address so they can do more research. Postcards are a great way to get your name in front of your prospects and warm them up for a sale. This tactic can be applied to low-cost and big-ticket items alike.

Nonprofit Nook

Don't toot your own horn

After reading that headline, you may be asking yourself what we are talking about? How else will anyone understand the great things your organization is accomplishing if you don't tell them? Before you take these thoughts much further, let us point out that we *do* believe that you need to explain to your donor base how their support is impacting your organization, but what would happen if this explanation didn't come from you? Third-party opinions tend to carry much more weight than your own. This is exactly why you go to a friend when you need a recommendation on which roofer or handyman



to hire. You don't trust what the roofer or handyman has to say nearly as much as your unbiased, trusted friend who has personal experience with them. What if you appealed to your donors using someone else's words? Next time you have an appeal letter or email to write, consider telling the story through a volunteer, or interview someone who was changed or affected by your organization—use a true proponent's voice to appeal to your audience.

Did You Know?

MERLIN means in-house verification of your mail

A component of our on-site USPS office is the MERLIN barcode verification system. "MERLIN" (Mailing Evaluation Readability Lookup Instrument) refers to the piece of equipment used by the USPS to automate the process of the physical verification of mail. It verifies the readability of barcodes and confirms that barcodes are prepared properly and that the correct postage is being used. United Printing & Mailing is one of only a few facilities in Arizona certified by the USPS for outside verification of mail using MERLIN. The USPS requests that all mailings of more than 10,000 pieces be verified using the MERLIN device. Additionally, spot-checks are performed on mailings less than 10,000 pieces. Having MERLIN on-site allows us to bypass the need for verification upon delivery to the US Post Office.

Direct Mail Design Tips

Design a smart letter mailer

Sales letters are one of the most common forms of direct mail. One might be tempted to think that the design and layout of a sales letter is a pretty cut-and-dry project. However, before you set your typestyle to 12-point Times New Roman and call it a day, consider these proven tactics to get more out of your sales letter.

Use bold, italics and underlines

Draw attention to the most important, motivating phrases of your letter using bold, italics or underlines. Be careful to use these tactics properly and sparingly. Overusing them can create a reverse effect, causing the page to look cluttered with nothing standing out.

Use indentations

Indenting paragraphs or lists of information help to create texture within your layout and set certain information off from the rest of your letter.

Use bullets to highlight lists

Breaking up your text with a bulleted list is a great way to grab your readers' attention. Pair this technique with an indentation to draw even more attention to the list.

Include a P.S. note

Studies show that about 80% of people actually read the P.S. note first. To make the most of this behavior, it's in your best interest to make sure the P.S. reads quickly and is set in an interesting and noticeable manner.

Handwritten notes

Adding a handwritten call-out or note in the margin of your letter creates an authentic, personal feel to your letter. For an added response, try using the handwritten technique on your P.S. note

Don't forget the envelope

It's easy to get so caught up in your letter that you forget all about the vehicle that carries it. Using a mysterious and motivating tagline is a great way to add some drama to your outer envelope. Don't forget that a well-chosen image can sometimes increase the motivation factor of your envelope as well.



The Anatomy of a Well-Designed Sales Letter

- 1 Readers' eyes scan the address area and first paragraph first then jump to the post-script
- 2 Handwritten margin notes
- 3 Colored signature
- 4 Colored highlight areas
- 5 Bulleted lists
- 6 Indented copy blocks
- 7 Post-Script note