

11 Secrets to Getting More Responses from Your Direct Mail and E-mail Messages

A BCG Report Focusing on Comprehensive TPA Information



In the past 20 years, financial advisors have sent 500 million+ pieces of direct mail or email messages with an eye on building their practice. This includes everything from simple letters and postcards to spring-loaded brochures with dancing flowerpots.

With thousands of dollars riding on the success or failure of your campaign, a branch of knowledge has grown around what works and what doesn't for financial advisors.

Here are some secrets from the best in the business. And they cost a lot less than dancing flowerpots.

Secret #1 Highlight a low-risk offer.

A low risk offer or some type of FREE item will be your key to a successful campaign.

A good low-risk offer is a powerful way of getting someone to travel down the Educational Buying Spectrum. In addition, a successful campaign will use a headline that promotes the low-risk offer.

Also, make sure the offer has an expiration date. Time and again, it's been proven that more people respond to an offer when there's a limit on the amount of time they have to do so.

Secret #2 Emphasize benefits, not features.

Features are a characteristic of your product/service. Benefits are how it improves your prospect's life.

The comment of "We've been in business since 1431 B.C." means nothing to your target audience. Instead write, "13 Ways to Help You Avoid Living With Your Kids When You Retire...Our 75 Years of Experience Will Get Your Retirement Back on Track in 24-Hours or Less - Guaranteed."

If you have an important, valuable benefit, you may want to put this in the headline instead of an offer.

Secret #3 P.S. on the letter.

The P.S., that little afterthought at the end of a letter, is often read even before the body. This makes the P.S. a powerful area to reiterate the offer or main benefit.

Secret #4 Make it personal.

A great way to personalize your mailings is to send birthday cards and seasonal reminders to your clients as a way to drive repeat business. This strategy turns the message into a customer service tool.

Secret #5 Contact clients frequently.

If you're contacting your client base four times a year, test a series of six mailings. It may keep you in front of customers more often, and has a better chance of breaking down resistance and getting referrals.

Secret #6 Put in a business reply card.

Even in this day when people may respond by telephone and the Internet, business reply cards improve response rates. Their very presence communicates that a response is requested.

Secret #7 Start a club.

Let's just say you work for a large brokerage house. Don't refer to the people on your mailing list as just clients. They are "members" of the XYZ brokerage network.

Provide membership cards, special exchanges and networking opportunities with your other clients. Your clients will automatically become stakeholders in your success.

Secret #8 Send out "Lumpy Mail" by adding a FREE gift to the envelope.

It doesn't have to be a big gift. Consider a pen or a magnet that has your name imprinted on it. Adding these items to a mailing makes the envelope a little heavier and the recipient a little more curious.

Secret #9 Change the size.

So you've always sent the same 4" x 6" postcard or a #10 envelope and it's always gotten respectable results. Test a 6" x 9," envelope or a 6" x 11" postcard and it will catch people off guard.

What it costs you in dollars and cents; you may get back in attention and response.

Secret #10 Tell people what you want them to do.

Don't say, "Give Me A Call Should You Want More Information." Instead say, "Contact Us for a Free Retirement Starter Kit," or "FREE 60-Minute Retirement Plan Consultation."

Educate your client and prospect base on the product or services you sell.

Secret #11 Tie in with a timely product.

Is the hot summer the talk of your town? Invite business owners passing by to stop by your office for iced tea or send a bag of ice tea mix in your direct mail campaign.

Better yet, in the cold frigid temperature, send a low-cost hand warming kit or a package of instant hot chocolate (tie this into your story line).

You're not just another financial advisor selling something; you're now a creative solution provider.

Summary: With all the mail and email everyone receives on a daily basis, it can be difficult to stand out from the crowd. Take advantage of one or all of these secrets to help your business become a more effective marketing machine. Increasing the opening rate by just one percent can greatly increase your sales!