

5 Ideas for Better B-to-B Mail Campaigns

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New media sources might be multiplying like rabbits, but it's comforting to know the tried-and-true best practices of direct marketing tend to perform no matter the channel or medium.

Make sure your next mail campaign gets off on the right foot by heeding this evergreen wisdom from some of the B-to-B sector's top sages:

1. **Understand where you are in the selling process** when you create a direct mail campaign for business professionals, says Richard G. Rosen, president and CEO of direct marketing consultancy ROSEN. Don't start with getting the sale; instead, he advises, go for initiating doubt that the prospect isn't doing his job the way he should.
2. According to Russell Kern, president of direct marketing agency The Kern Organization, there are **seven types of headlines**: historical; problem and solution; testimonial; product claim; outrageous statement; compelling question; and upfront guarantee. Match the message type to the audience being targeted.
3. If you sell a boring product, you might have better success selling it without mentioning features, your company name or even the product. Bob Hacker, direct marketing guru and former president of direct marketing agency The Hacker Group, used to remind marketers that people only care about their problems and the solutions to them, so **try selling them on the problem your product solves**.
4. It's much easier to sell into an organization if you **complement the offer with a premium that does more than boost response**. Don't end up being known as the company that gives away flashlights, as opposed to the supplier that solves its customers' problems, says Rosen.
5. Many marketers know the top people at companies in their target audience, but they don't always identify the middle-level employees who either influence purchases or who may soon be the decision-maker. To get to this layer, Hacker advised marketers to **create an industry-specific newsletter that an executive could send to his or her junior staff**; they provide the names and you get a proprietary list of new prospects.

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