



## Direct Mail's Deadly Sins

How much junk mail do you receive each day? Do you read it? Toss it?

Now put yourself in the shoes of your direct mail recipients. Avoid direct mail deadly mistakes or your materials will end up in the trash too.

Before you even begin to put your direct mail campaign together, you've got to know who your target market is. Are they women? Parents? Young? Old? Understand what motivates them. What are their likes and dislikes?

Write as if you're talking to them. And even use terms these types of people would use.

But all the fancy graphics and the most beautifully created sentences in the world won't do you a bit of good if you don't carefully select the people on your mailing list. If you're selling adult diapers, you want to target senior citizens...not 23-year-olds.

Tighten your mailing list as much as possible to be sure it's tailored to your needs. It's tough to make people believe they need your product and even harder to convince them they need it now. But if you've researched your list, you have a higher chance of hitting potential customers instead of the trash can.

You've made your list and checked it twice, so-to-speak. It's the perfect list. Now it's time to write. Define your objectives before you start writing. Stay focused and hit the points of your objective. If you get off track, your reader is going to stop reading.

Spend a lot of time on your headline. Just remember how you feel when reading mail that comes to you. After you read that headline, do you keep reading? The headline can make or break your direct mail campaign.

Does price really matter? Not unless you know what you're getting for that price. Hook your reader with all of the product benefits. By the time they get to the end, they should be saying, "I can't live without that!"

And then you let them in on the price. Even if the price is extremely low, you have to tell potential customers about the product first.

Disclosing this price shouldn't put people into shock. Is your product priced according to the market? If you're selling a new teddy bear, it should be priced within reason. Not many people will pay \$90 for a tiny teddy bear, right? Truth is, a lot of direct mail goes unanswered because the products are

unreasonably priced.

Success! Your potential customer read all the way through your mailing. Now what?

Did you tell the reader what you want them to do? You can't sell if you don't tell.

Your readers need a call to action. Tell them to send in the card, call you, etc. Then tell them again.

Once your direct mail is ready to go, test several smaller mailings before sending out a huge chunk. Test each of these mailings by changing a few items when you send them out.

Have two or more sales letters you test against each other. By testing, you will find out which of those mailings are bringing in more responses and - hopefully - more orders.

Stick with the clear winners. Remember the saying, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

Direct mail is a waste of money for a lot of people. But it doesn't have to be for you. Understanding direct mail deadly mistakes -- and avoiding them -- will lead you to sales success!