

# Advertising & Direct Marketing Options for Solo and Small Offices

**D**irect marketing is the oldest marketing method known to humankind. It involves phone calls, mailings and advertisements that communicate directly with your target market to make your offer. A direct marketing campaign starts with intense research on the target market to develop a product line and delivery method. You need a long list of leads to contact before you can start.

## When Should You Use Direct Marketing?

Direct marketing works best for very specific niches. Like most marketing methods, you need a narrow target market that you understand well. The people on your list should be looking for products or services that help them solve their problems. Direct marketing can be expensive so it needs to be laser-targeted.

The direct method works best with products that are simple and straightforward. Unlike online methods, such as content marketing, you can't afford to be subtle. You have to drive home your message succinctly and firmly. The easier your products are to understand, the better. Direct marketing methods don't give you a lot of time to communicate your message.

## The Advantages and Disadvantages of Direct Marketing

The best thing about direct marketing is that you get quick results. You can find out whether or not your market is receptive almost instantly. It's a great way to collect hard data about your target market.

Another advantage is that it's a tried and true method that's been used successfully for years. There are proven techniques you can learn from direct marketing veterans which are known to get results. Unlike more recent marketing methods, direct marketing will probably always be around in one form or another.

The main drawback is that many prospects hate direct marketing. This is why the softer approach of content marketing is so appealing. People are annoyed

by phone calls and junk mail, and they've started to tune them out. There are no-call lists and increasingly strict regulations about what marketers can and can't do. Many people see direct tactics as an invasion of privacy.

Direct marketing also requires more of an investment of time and money. Printed marketing materials can get expensive and it takes a larger sales force to collect prospects by phone.

## **The Keys to Direct Marketing Success**

There are three keys to direct marketing that can make it work for you:

- Detailed knowledge about your target market and what they're looking for. The most successful direct marketing campaigns are those that carry out painstaking research and gather lots of hard data.
- A clear message that emphasizes the benefits of your product. The most important things you want your prospects to know need to be stated clearly up front with no guesswork involved.
- The ability to get people's attention. The exact same tactics that make direct marketing annoying to some people are also what bring its success. There's no room for subtlety and the best marketers are good at grabbing attention.

Many marketers believe that the direct approach is old hat. Inbound marketing techniques that can be done online on a shoestring budget are preferred. However, this doesn't mean that direct marketing is finished. Its techniques change with the times and it still gets results.