

# CREATE THE SPARK

DIGITAL PRINTING INSIDER | JULY 2018 | FOR COMMERCIAL PRINTERS

## CONVERGENCE OF PRINT AND PIXELS TO MAXIMIZE ROI: POSTAL DISCOUNTS FOR INNOVATIVE MAIL

Printers, mailers, and direct marketers all know about the strong ROI that can be achieved from personalized and targeted direct mail sent through the U.S. postal stream. When innovative technologies are included (e.g., AR, QR, NFC, Snap tags, watermarks, digital-to-direct mail, tactile and sensory direct mail, video-in-print, and even the simple addition of color to traditional transactional bills and statements), response rates and recipient interactivity can soar even higher. That's why smart marketers often rely on direct mail as a key spark to help them ignite their omni-channel campaigns.

Join Mark Michelson (webinar host and editor in chief at *Printing Impressions*) and Victoria K. Stephen (director of

mailing services for new products and innovation at U.S. Postal Service [USPS]) in the Canon Solutions America-sponsored webinar entitled "Convergence of Print and Pixels to Maximize ROI: Postal Discounts for Innovative Mail," presented by *Printing Impressions* and *Target Marketing* magazines. Although there are no U.S. postal discounts to leverage at this moment, this webinar is packed with industry trends and exhilarating and interactive direct mail examples that you won't want to miss.

In this exciting presentation, Victoria K. Stephen explains why direct mail remains such an effective marketing vehicle as part of an omni-channel campaign. She also explores some of the past postage discounts for interactive mail



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drops and why they were created. She then delves into the types of digital applications being deployed in combination with innovative marketing mail pieces and showcases some great examples that have been featured in the USPS's *Irresistible Mail* resource.

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**“Millennials see value in the mail and they respond to well-designed and interactive content, but they expect the content to be relevant!”**

**—Victoria K. Stephen**

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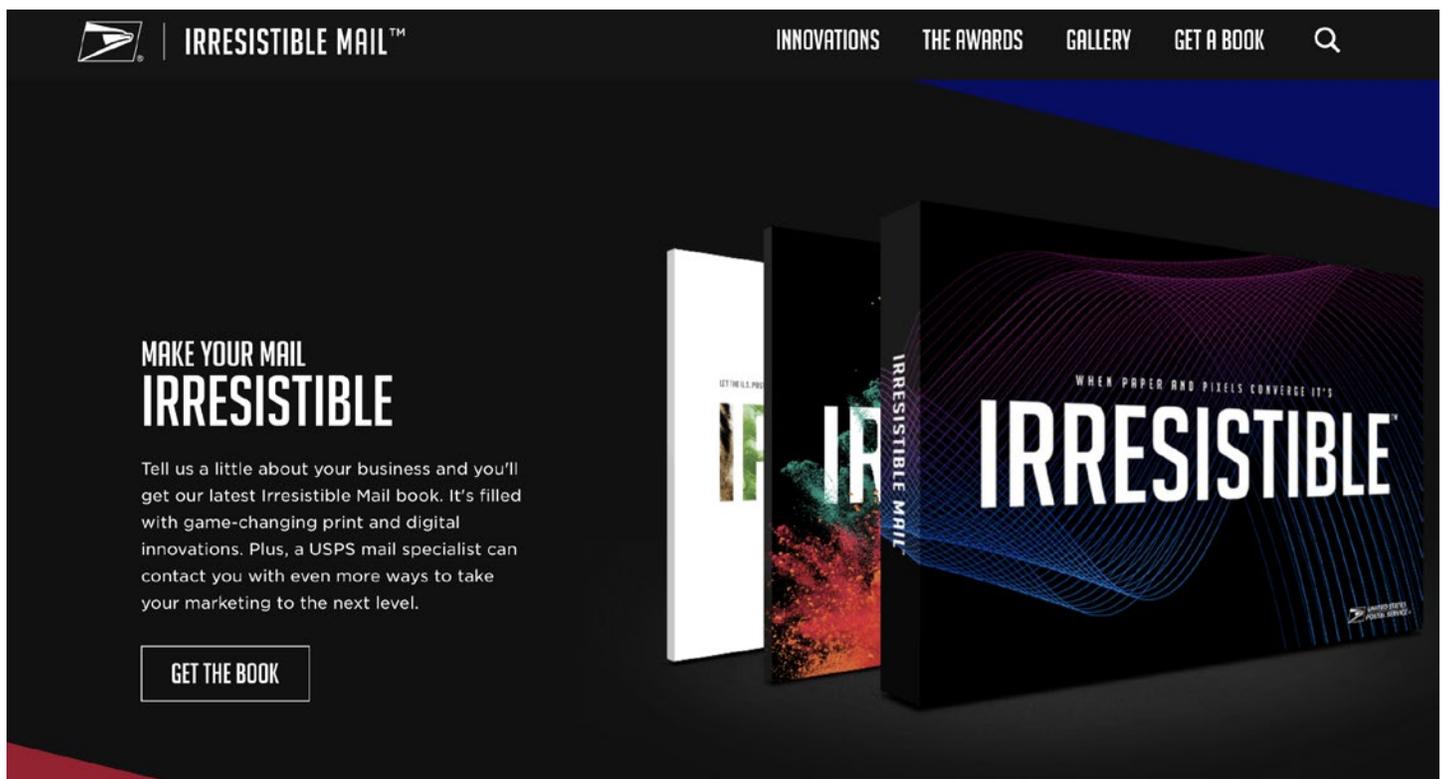
Stephen shares some important trends in direct mail, including the channel preferences and behaviors of millennials—currently the largest demographic group in the United States. “Millennials see value in the mail and they respond to well-designed and interactive content, but they expect the content to be relevant!” she says. Reflecting on the 2016 Mail Moment Study, Stephen says that “47 percent of consumers like to discover what is in their mailboxes, and

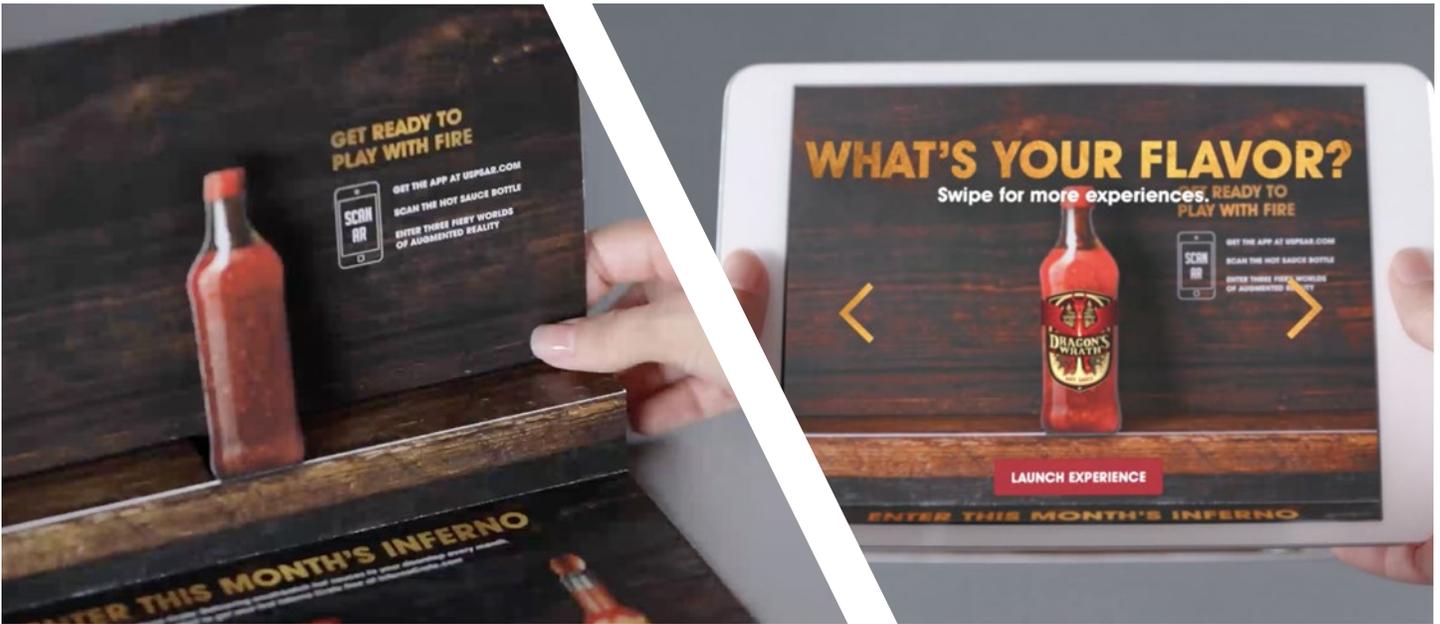
they consider the time they devote to looking at and reading mail to be well spent. Millennials actually enjoy looking at mail even more than other age demographics. Although they receive less mail, they’re taking more time with the mail they do receive and [are] interacting with it.”<sup>1</sup>

Next, Stephen covers trends in mobile including usage, ad spend, and how mobile impacts marketing. Stephen shares multiple ways that mobile technology can be used in conjunction with direct mail to capture recipient attention and drive customer engagement. “We needed more than just the promotions to really inspire people and share how to converge these technologies into mail,” Stephen says. “So we rolled out our first issue of *Irresistible Mail* in 2015. We saw an amazing 46 percent increase in the amount of volume that came in through our mailing promotions and applied these technologies into direct mail. During 2016, the *Irresistible Mail* book showed continued growth and volumes increase by another 32 percent.

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<sup>1</sup>“Mail Moments—2016 Review,” USPS Customer & Market Insights, March 2016.





“We’ve been focusing on these technologies and trends, and there have been some really interesting results,” she says. According to the DMA, there has been a dramatic increase in digital spend, but the direct mail response rate has gone up 40 percent in the past two years. Furthermore, direct mail outperforms all other media types combined by over 200 percent. “The power of mail is continuing to increase,” Stephen asserts. “We understand the importance of all channels, but we at the USPS are advising marketers to use mail *with*—not *instead of*—other media. When you start with a physical piece of mail and layer it on additional responses as part of a multichannel campaign, you can really create a powerhouse combination.”

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Stephen devotes a significant portion of the webinar hour sharing some specific technologies that have been showcased in past *Irresistible Mail* books. Her examples highlight Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality, “Print and Pixels” pairings, NFC tags, personalized interactive videos, QR codes/mobile barcodes, dynamic color print, variable

**DIRECT MAIL**  
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 types combined by over  
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data printing, shared mail, and tactile/sensory/interactive mail. This webinar provides some stellar examples of how print and pixels are converging to increase response rates and customer engagement with direct mail.

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