

# POWERFUL COMMUNICATION



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## DIRECT MAIL: WHAT CONSUMERS WANT

Despite the surging popularity of digital marketing, direct mail continues to hold a significant position in today's industry. In fact, over 140 billion pieces of mail (first-class and marketing) were sent through the USPS mail system in 2016. It's not just marketers who are keeping direct mail alive, though—consumers agree that direct mail remains an effective form of communication.

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In the Canon Solutions America-sponsored webinar entitled "Direct Mail: What Consumers Want," presented by *Printing Impressions* and *In-Plant Graphics* magazines, Barb Pellow, group director of Keypoint Intelligence — InfoTrends, shares just how much consumers actually enjoy mail. According to InfoTrends' research, 78 percent of consumers consider direct mail to be effective. "Direct mail is an integral part of the overall marketing mix," Pellow explains. "It's vital for acquiring new customers, retaining existing ones, and reactivating dormant accounts... but it needs to be personalized, and it needs to be relevant!"

After sharing additional data on the topic, Pellow passes the stage to Neil O'Keefe, SVP, CRM & Member



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Engagement at the Data & Marketing Association (DMA). O’Keefe echoes Pellow’s sentiments about direct mail by sharing compelling data from the DMA, including marketing spend, trends in mail, and the impact that mail has on consumers. “Marketers are becoming more targeted and choosier [with] the audiences that they deliver mail pieces to,” he explains. “It’s all about relevance, personalization, and the ability to measure. Armed with these capabilities, we can enact greater analytics on the results and make a better determination about who will receive what type of communication.”

For example, catalogs are circulating by the billions in the U.S. today. According to the DMA, 9.8 billion catalogs were in circulation last year and 101 million customers made purchases based on those catalogs. “What’s changing in the marketplace is the determination of who those catalogs are being sent to,” O’Keefe continues. “There are arguably more marketers who are testing into the direct mail and catalog space, but they are being much more selective in the circulation based on their knowledge about customer preferences.” During the webinar, he continues to share additional insight on the shifts in direct mail volume and consumer marketing preferences.

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***"Direct mail has come a long way in 20 years!"***  
***—Adara Bowen***

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Following the insight from DMA, Adara Bowen, the director of marketing at the American Marketing Association, shares key considerations that marketers should review when sending communications today. “We’re no longer in your grandma’s catalog ordering days... direct mail has come a long way in 20 years!” Bowen notes. She follows by sharing examples of how direct mail has transformed over the years. Today’s marketers have taken direct mail into a world of showcases and conversation starters that are designed to “inspire and delight.”

Throughout the remainder of the webinar, Bowen shares examples of how savvy marketers are using direct mail



as a much bigger piece of their communication strategy. She also paints a picture of what a successful direct mail campaign entails and provides tips on how to better your direct mail communications to drive engagement, response rates, and ultimately, sales.

The case for leveraging direct mail is clearly compelling. Direct mail is a tried and tested media form, and it remains a staple marketing technique for companies of all shapes and sizes. Today’s consumers and businesses are operating with all channels on, so service providers must be channel-agnostic and build business models that can generate revenue from printed as well as digital content. As the market evolves, direct mail looks more fluid, promising, and exciting than ever. The statistics speak for themselves—people read direct mail and respond to it. In short, direct mail remains successful because it works! As this in-depth webinar proves, direct mail remains critical to the marketing mix.

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