

How Green is your Direct Mail?

Never has the need to be “Green” been more important than today. Whether it’s the attention placed on rising oil prices, new energy and environmental technology advancements, or simply the “Green” attitudes consumers have adopted, being green in business is essential. Throughout the world, green businesses are challenging the conventional methods in which work is getting done. Therefore, without much surprise, the direct mail industry is being scrutinized very closely. Why? Because direct mail has often been labeled “junk mail,” and unfortunately, the intentional creation of “junk mail” doesn’t fit into the green movement.

But relax—green direct mail is easier than you think and within your reach. In fact, by adopting the following best practices, greening your direct mail process will not only benefit the environment, but will also improve your company’s direct mail budget and success.

Green Direct Mail Best Practices:



- 1 Targeted Profiles
- 2 Accurate Addresses
- 3 Efficient Design
- 4 Healthy Paper
- 5 Green Printers



1 Targeted Profiles

One of the easiest ways to ensure direct mail is not construed as junk mail is to hone the mailing list to an interested audience. For example, if Harley-Davidson is announcing the newest addition to their 2009 motorcycle lineup via a direct mailer, the communication would probably end up in the trash if sent to an assisted living community. Conversely, if the recipient is a member of a H.O.G. chapter (Harley Owners Group) the mailer would most likely get hung up on the refrigerator, and remind the H.O.G. member come Saturday morning the first errand to run. With a sharpened mailing list, fewer pieces need to be sent, and fewer pieces end up in the garbage. A targeted list reduces the environmental impact while improving the ROI on each direct mail campaign.

2 Accurate Addresses

What is the accuracy of your mailing list? Is your direct mail piece being received by the intended recipient, or is it ending up in your company’s return mail bins, or worse still, being delivered but to the wrong household? Unfortunately, the United States Postal Service is inundated with billions of pieces of undeliverable as addressed (UAA) mail. If every company would implement address accuracy procedures, and maintain a clean mailing list, UAA mail would be dramatically reduced, plus direct mail campaigns would be met with a higher degree of success.

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How Green is your Direct Mail? (continued)

Green Direct Mail Best Practices:

(continued from first page)

3 Efficient Design

The physical design of a communication is often overlooked as a means for greening a direct mail process. There are so many ways to reduce paper waste while also heightening the impact of the message. For example, printing duplex rather than simplex will immediately cut paper costs in half. TransPromo communications are another highly effective method to cut down on wasted paper while speaking to a targeted audience. TransPromo communications leverage the monthly customer billing statement by blending in marketing campaigns, or messages that speak directly to an interested recipient.

4 Healthy Paper



Direct mail does not exist without the use of paper. Most direct mail is printed and mailed using paper. Unfortunately, most marketers don't even consider the paper within the direct mail process. Yet, the

paper represents the best way to green the direct mail process. The simplest way to start the greening process is to choose recycled paper. Additionally, the weight of the paper can be reduced, and the inks and coatings can be considered to produce a more environmentally friendly direct mail piece. Healthy paper selection makes sense for both the environment and the bottom line.

5 Green Printers

Typically the printing process is considered a "must" in the direct mail process. While the print step in the direct mail process is critical, there are many printer choices. At Ricoh, we live by a philosophy we call, "Our Earth, Our Tomorrow." It's a statement of the idea that because we all share the planet, we are all obligated to protect and preserve it. We also believe that good corporate citizenship is good business, which is why we build our solutions in support of the "Green Revolution." In fact, just one of our environmentally friendly programs is our Toner Cartridge Recycling initiative. When the toner runs out, many of these parts are in good condition and can be re-used. Recycling these cartridges keeps them out of landfills and conserves the materials and energy it would take to make new ones.

Greening the Direct Mail Process

Most companies are well aware of the need to be green. In fact, many companies have already implemented green processes in their direct mail system. However, since we can never be too green, take some time and see if your process needs an update. Please be sure to contact your Ricoh Production Print Specialist and get in the green zone today.

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