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Multi-Channel Campaigns: Blending Print with Technology

Introduction

Even in today's digital world, the less cluttered direct mail channel can help differentiate one company from another. With the vast and ever-growing volume of digital marketing messages, direct mail can stand out and get noticed. In addition, print's perceived trustworthiness help create a more accessible and credible brand image. What's more, Keypoint Intelligence's research indicates that consumers of all ages are open to reading direct mail documents.

Marketers must continue to innovate and find new ways to connect with consumers, but traditional direct mail shouldn't be overlooked. That said, direct mail that lacks relevance and engagement will often land in the recycle bin before being read. The value that direct mail can deliver is completely reliant on how brand owners choose to use it. To create innovative direct mail campaigns, it's important to recognize the things that will attract consumers' attention.

Personalized, Colorful Direct Mail Delivers Big Rewards!

In the aforementioned Annual State of Marketing Communications survey from Keypoint Intelligence, consumer respondents were asked to rank the effectiveness of various channels in getting them to engage with marketing communications. It became clear that direct mail is a great way to engage consumers; only e-mail was considered more effective for consumer engagement. In addition, because direct mail volumes are much lower than e-mail volumes, direct mail can cut through the digital clutter.

Although direct mail certainly gets noticed, there is more to the equation. According to Keypoint Intelligence's research, personalized and relevant content was the most likely factor that prompted consumers to read or review a direct

mail piece. Among survey participants who reported receiving personalized communications, the most common types included relevant information on recently visited websites or coupons related to newly purchased items. Using data from purchases or website visits is just one example of how digital can be blended with direct mail.

Direct Mail Can Be Interactive

Even those brands that are using direct mail successfully can't ignore the increased focus on multi-channel communications. There is a great debate about which channel is most effective or provides the best return on investment. In any case, a huge opportunity exists with printed direct mail that is integrated with online media channels. Today's consumers are quite sophisticated and generally comfortable with personalized URLs, augmented reality, and QR codes. When used in conjunction with these tools, direct mail can become an integral part of an interactive and engaging experience.

As reported by Reviews.org, the average American will spend nearly a month and a half (44 days) on their phones in 2022! As a result, direct mail marketing messages that are brought to life using a mobile device are a natural fit.

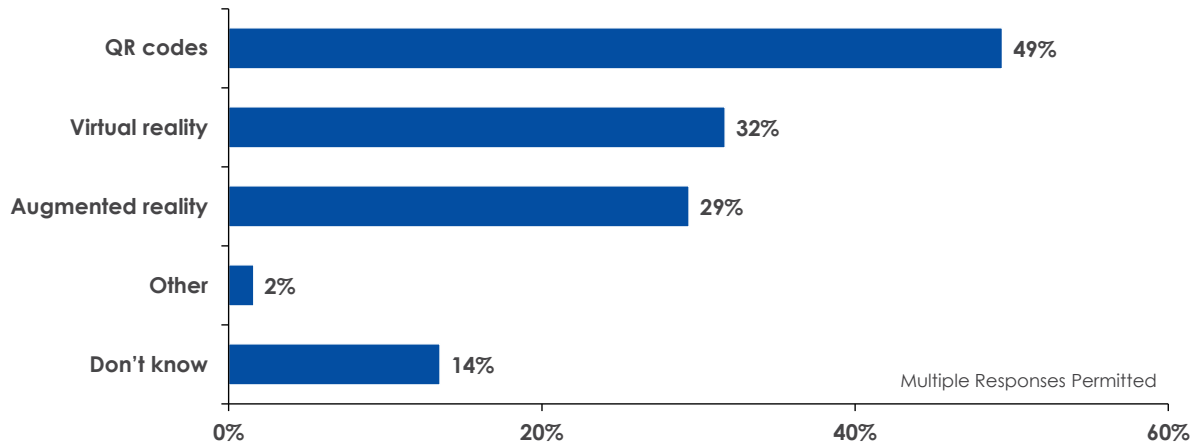
Even as the use of channels like mobile apps and social media continues to increase, more traditional channels like printed direct mail will remain a favorite with consumers. This underscores the persistent need for a blended channel communication strategy that reaches consumers regardless of device or physical location.

Practical Techniques to Blend Technology and Print

As shown in the Figure below, QR codes are the most common method of interaction when using smartphones or mobile devices. These highly recognized printed graphics offer many opportunities for brands to connect with audiences across various platforms.

Figure 1: Methods of Interaction

Which of the following kinds of interactivity have you engaged in using your smartphone or mobile device?



N = 857 Consumers in the US and Canada who use a smartphone/mobile device to interact with marketing communications
Source: Annual State of Marketing Communications Consumer Survey, Keypoint Intelligence 2020

By embedding digital technology with a direct mail piece, brands can engage customers and prospects with some of today's most popular marketing techniques. Examples include:

- Videos that help to increase brand awareness and provide valuable education for prospects and customers
- 3D Images that literally pop off the page to enhance sensory perception and let customers experience a product virtually
- Eye-catching animations like videos use movement to make a message more attractive
- Augmented reality enables brands to create dynamic marketing experiences
- Near-Field Communication (NFC) tags can turn a printed piece of paper into a motion-based marketing message without the need to download an app

When delivered in an easy-to-understand format, incorporating digital technology with a direct mail piece can make it easier for recipients to:

- Follow a brand on social media
- Access a portal to order online
- Visit a website and opt-in for marketing messages

- Receive valuable discounts via text messaging

The underlying value of direct mail extends beyond creating brand awareness. When used intelligently, technology can transform a physical mail piece into a digital experience where interactive elements can continue to engage the target audience.

Conclusion

Brands and businesses of all sizes must remain nimble and responsive to their customers' needs. Techniques that were effective just two years ago might fall flat with today's consumers. There are many creative ways to use technology to connect many different marketing channels. Over and above the number of channels or the "wow factor," the interaction process must be as simple as possible. Brands that make it easy and fun to engage with direct mail can boost their response rates and ultimately improve their business results.

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For some, working in the print industry doesn't sound very interesting. But, for Karen, it is a devotion she's been chasing for years. Her work centers on sales effectiveness. As an Associate Consultant with Keypoint Intelligence she coaches organizations of all sizes in the industry to get the most from their sales and marketing efforts. During her career Karen held a position on the Regional Board of Directors for Printing Industries of America and received accreditation by the American Management Association. She is formally trained in several sales disciplines, and proficient in Lean Six Sigma.