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WAIT - BEFORE YOU SEND! THE DIRECT MAIL CHECKLIST

Five top tips to ensure that your direct mail campaign is a success rather than a disappointment.



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Five top tips to ensure that your direct mail campaign is a success rather than a disappointment.



Direct mail is still well ahead of other marketing communications in terms of return on investment, but as the market becomes increasingly congested, businesses need to up their game to stay ahead of the competition. Here are five things you must check before authorising a direct mail run.



#1 DATA INTEGRITY

Compared to other marketing communications channels, such as email, direct mail is relatively expensive. To help reduce the costs of running a mailing campaign, it is essential that resources are not wasted through bad data. If your contact database is out of date or not de-duplicated properly:

- **Mail is returned undelivered or simply binned.**
- **Messages are not received or seen by the correct decision-makers.**
- **Recipients receive multiple letters, causing annoyance and devaluing your message.**

Any undelivered mail represents money and resources that could have been better spent elsewhere. From the cost of stationery and stamps, to the time spent putting the mailer together, every undeliverable letter has a direct cost.



For businesses on a tight budget, or who want to guarantee the best possible ROI on marketing spend, verifying data integrity is essential. This means:

- **Removing customer records that are defunct, incorrect or otherwise useless.**
- **Attempting to correct data, fill in gaps and create a standard for all existing and future records to ensure your marketers have the information they need.**
- **Generating new leads, or purchasing relevant mailing lists to make up for records lost during the clean-up.**
- **Ensuring that purchased mailing lists match your existing data rules before they are imported to avoid introducing inaccuracies.**



*"Departments such as marketing, sales, operations and customer services report wasting **15%** of their budget on average."* - Experian QAS



#2 PERSONALISATION

Simply dispatching letters to every single contact in your customer database is no longer enough to succeed. Customers demand messages that are relevant to them and their needs – far beyond a simple mail merge to get the correct name and address printed on each letter. Successful personalisation relies on:

- **A good understanding of both your existing and potential customers.**
- **A good understanding of your customers' needs.**
- **A good understanding of your customers' preferences and history.**

Wherever possible, mailings should be as finely targeted as possible according to each customer. Before allowing a mailshot to go ahead, make sure that the letter is relevant to recipients, or you may as well throw it away yourself.

When using a new marketing list, it is essential that the information has been sourced from a reputable supplier who has already performed some degree of segmentation on the data. This acts like "pre-qualification" ensuring that although the contacts are completely new to you and your products, the message will still be relevant.



#3 ERROR CHECKING

Every letter should be carefully checked twice – once before it is sent for printing, and again before it is sent to your customers. It is absolutely essential that you identify and correct basic errors which reflect badly on your business. Check for:

- **Spelling mistakes.**
- **Out-of-date or faulty logos and artwork.**
- **Inaccurate offers, deals or discounts.**

Sending mail that contains errors devalues your brand and leaves customers with a negative impression. There are also significant financial implications to deals and discounts that contain errors – your business will have to honour such mistakes or face a customer backlash.

"You could have the best products or services, but if you don't present your pitch professionally, your direct mail campaign will be wasted. After all, if your marketing message is unprofessional, what first impression does this give about your business?" - Holborn Direct Mail



#4 OPT-OUTS

Your customer database will contain records for contacts who have deliberately opted out from receiving your marketing messages. It is absolutely essential that you check no mailings are scheduled for delivery to these people. Failure to do so:

- **Annoys the recipient, leading to complaints and negative referrals.**
- **Establishes your brand as a source of junk mail.**
- **Could result in a complaint being made against your company to the Information Commissioner's Office.**

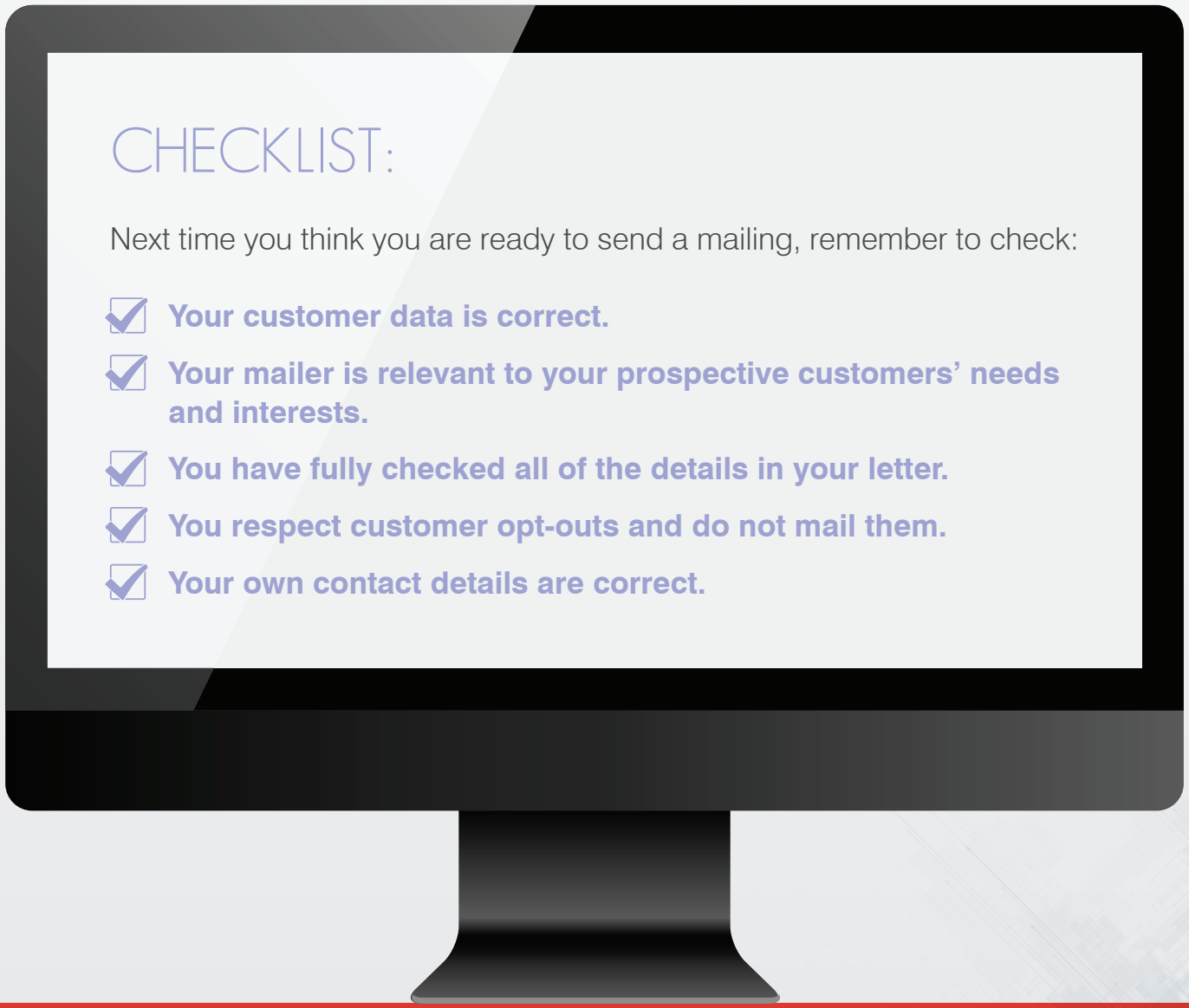
"Where your sending of marketing material to the employee of a company includes processing their personal data (that is, you know the name of the person you are contacting), then that individual has a fundamental and enforceable right under Section 11 of the Data Protection Act to ask you to stop sending them marketing material." - Information Commissioner's Office

#5 CONTACT DETAILS

Your mailing is designed with a purpose – to inform, to persuade or to sell. You must ensure that your letter clearly communicates that message to the recipient and clearly tells them what to do next.

Finally, you must check that your own contact details are correct. Ensure that your address, phone number, website URL and email are:

- **Spelled correctly.**
- **Are clear and easy to read.**
- **Are active and ready to receive customer responses.**





For more free advice on how to achieve success with your direct mailing campaigns, read:

THE MARKETING EXECUTIVE'S GUIDE - GETTING YOUR MESSAGING RIGHT

DOWNLOAD OUR FREE EGUIDE NOW!