

10 Smart Ways to Save Money on Direct Mail



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1. Improve mailing list hygiene.

This should be your top priority. Every returned piece of mail costs your company postage, printing and mail house fees. NCOA (National Change of Address) is now required for both First Class and Standard Rate mailings to ensure maximum delivery. Also, merge/purge your lists to remove and consolidate duplicate records.

2. Test multiple list sources and rollout to your better performing lists.

3. Whether it is First Class or Standard Rate - Presort and Barcode your mail.

This will save you an average of \$83/M depending on size of mailing and automation level.

4. Presort permit verses live stamp or metered mail.

You can obtain a permit from the USPS for an annual fee or, if you are using a lettershop for your mailings, most have a permit you can use free of charge. A permit saves you money on both postage and mail house fees.

5. Nonprofit organizations can save by using a nonprofit bulk postage permit

for their direct mail or newsletters. You can further lower postage costs by adding the nine-digit zip code as well as the bar code. The USPS has a program that can help nonprofit organizations obtain the proper zip codes to take advantage of these postage savings. Check with your local USPS office.

6. Make sure your entire address and barcode shows through a window envelope.

Account for shifting in the mail to ensure you pass the "tap test" at the Post Office.

7. Mail 6 x 9 envelopes instead of 9 x 12.

6 x 9 envelopes often perform just as well as the larger 9 x 12 envelopes and can be mailed at letter rates rather than flat rates. Other cost-saving advantages to mailing a 6 x 9 envelope is that they are cheaper to print and the mail house fees are less. Also use standard size envelopes when designing mail packages.

8. Use standard form sizes, when designing a form.

It is cheaper to lettershop an 18" x 11" 2 up continuous form than an 18" x 10 5/8". The 3/8" bowe cut adds more cost to the production. Work with your printer on stocks and sizes that fit their press. Also check on stocks available on the floor-sometimes you can get a good price on remnant materials.

9. Meet the aspect ratio.

The length of your mail piece or postcard divided by the height must be between 1.3 and 2.5 otherwise you will get hit with a surcharge.

10. Commingling/Drop Shipping, for high-volume jobs.

Commingling merges your mail with others to reduce postage costs, improve deliverability and tracking. The first step to evaluate whether it makes sense to commingle your project is to run a presort on the data and predict the likely savings. Commingling works best for clients focused on "in-home" dates verses mail "drop" dates due to the additional handling time required to process the jobs made up bypassing the USPS facilities.

About The GRI Marketing Group:

Since 1986, The GRI Marketing Group has propelled some of the world's leading brands to higher levels of business growth. Our agency works on a project basis or retainer relationship for a variety of industries including non-profit, insurance, publishing, business services, IT and consumer products.

Our staff is comprised of experts in strategic planning, analytics, creative development, copywriting, design and complete cross-channel execution including e-mail, website/banner ads/landing pages, PURLs, direct mail, PPC/SEO, web 2.0 and mobile.

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