

11

eleven smart tricks

to improve your DM data

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data drives your business



Data is the foundation upon which every successful Direct Mail program is built and thrives. It starts the sales cycle; it drives strategies; and it is the end result of all marketing efforts. Profits stem from sourcing data, managing data, manipulating data, and designing strategies around data.

So how can you get more from your own data?

#1 get rid of duplicates (and watch those sneaky ones)

It's a fact that duplicates within your database will happen.

Slight variations on addresses, names, fielding of data etc... can quickly result in duplicate customers within your database, and duplicates **cost you money**.

Recommendation:

Regularly have your database cleaned using outside providers with sophisticated software to save you unnecessary mailing costs. At an average processing cost of \$4 per thousand, it doesn't take a lot of eliminated duplicates to pay off.

#2 wash regularly

Keeping your data as clean as possible saves you unnecessary mail costs and reduces the risk of your mailings missing their intended target. For instance, if you're not updating your data regularly against a National Change of Address file, you could be over mailing by 15%...and this just represents one aspect of a clean database.

Recommendation:

Most providers of merge purge can also perform Do Not Mail suppressions, update addresses, merge against deceased files and reformat data for consistency in fields. All of these will result in much cleaner and refined mailings.

#3 freshness counts

How quickly are you getting records into your database and lined up for that next sale? Recency remains a key success ingredient in generating ongoing sales.

Recommendation:

Orders need to be captured in as timely a manner as possible and follow up communications executed in the most efficient manner to keep your customers interest. Consider your own turnaround times and whether more efficient processes could result in quicker follow ups.

#4 haven't we met?

When targeting new customers, are you merging and identifying duplicates against your existing customer file? Identifying customers that already exist in your own database can create a completely different targeting strategy and message.

Recommendation:

Match your customer file against rented data and refine your strategies for those customers that are active within other mailers files. This knowledge leads itself to new exciting targeting strategies.

#5 don't miss a thing

Collect as much information as possible. Knowing how your customer pays, how quickly they respond, what their demographics are, etc... and storing all this in your database further enhances your data for your own use, and for renting to the market.

Recommendation:

Try to store as much as you can. This can not only help you create more targeted mailings, but also increases the value to your rental file with further select options.

#6

#0

establish data benchmarks *(then prove them wrong)*

It's a fact that data grows old, and some customers will simply stop responding. Knowing where the lifetime value of your customers ends is a valuable metric in planning your mailings and determining how much you can spend on acquisitions.

Recommendation:

Calculation of customer Lifetime Value helps establish how 'deeply' you can profitably mail, but don't be satisfied at a full stop. Hidden potential lies within your database and new approaches should continuously be tested to older data for lapsed customer reactivations.

#7 mingle for more

Unless you are in a heavily regulated industry, you will more than likely be putting data on the market for rental. This gives you additional revenue PLUS can give you access to more data. When creating your rental file, be creative to provide value to those renting your data.

Recommendation:

When creating a 'hotline' file, try peppering the data with customers of different value. This helps boost the overall performance of the file and will bring mailers back for more rentals which can be a good source of revenue.



customers are not equal *(so don't treat them that way)*

This is an extension of point 5 (Don't miss a thing). Recognize your top performers and strategize differently to maximize your return. You can generally offer them more, better, or higher priced items.

Recommendation:

Flag the number and value of customer purchases, then strategize separately for your top performers.

#9 handle with care

Although you want to maximize return, it's important to treat your customers carefully to extend their Long Term Value. This is particularly true with branded campaigns. Hit them too much and they'll burn out. Hit them too infrequently and they'll lose interest.

Recommendation:

Test delays between messages to determine the optimal performance of your customers. Every industry has a different lifecycle, and understanding yours increases the value of your customer.

#10 append

This doesn't work for all industries, but there can be considerable value to adding information to your customer file even if it has no relevance to you. In particular in today's integrated world additional value can be placed on records with emails, or mobile numbers, or key demographic variables.

Recommendation:

When considering putting your data on the market for rental, think outside your own industry or market and consider what other industries could place a value on within your data and assess what 'missing' criteria you may need to add. Talk to your broker about other verticals.

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#11 talk to the experts

JR Direct has been helping our clients run successful Direct Mail campaigns globally for over 20 years. We are experts in sourcing data, strategy, creative, and DM planning.

- ▶ *List Sales*
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