

## Direct Mail & Mail Piece Design



In our last issue, we explained how important a clean and targeted mailing list is to your Direct Mail Campaign. Just as important, if the mail piece isn't read, the mailing list had little effect. Mail Piece Design can make or break your success. It can also affect mail processing and postage costs.

You can create your own direct mail piece or participate in a shared Direct Mail program. Shared programs would be coupon mailers, coupon envelopes, magazines ads, newspaper inserts and more. On the surface, these types of mailings look less expensive because the cost-per-piece is figured over the entire circulation. In reality, these mail pieces get thrown away unless the recipient is a coupon clipper. If your ad isn't on the front or back cover your ad isn't seen. Another way to share expenses is to partner with another business that has an industry or geographical connection to yours. For example, we recently did a mailer for a pizza shop and bagel shop that provided coupons for breakfast, lunch and dinner. They split the cost of the design, printing and postage and both experienced a marked increase in business.

When designing a mail piece, you must decide whether a post card, self-mailer, flyer, or envelope would work best. The best results come from something that doesn't need to be opened such as a post card or self-mailer.

**Post Cards:** Post Cards are individual sheets of a heavier paper stock that are no smaller than 3.5"h x 5.5"w and no larger than 12"h x 15"w. Whether or not your recipient clips coupons or opens direct mail, they automatically see your message when it is on a post card. Larger than 4x6 post cards stand out more and are less likely to get lost or misplaced.

**Self-Mailers:** Self-mailers are items such as flyers or newsletters that are folded over and mailed without being placed in an envelope. The paper weight and fold positions are most important for self-mailers. Final folds should be on the right edge and/or bottom of the mail piece as you read the address. Mail pieces should be tabbed (wafer sealed) to obtain the maximum postal discounts and arrive at its destination intact.

**Envelopes:** Envelopes are used for more official or professional appearances or if you are including more personalized information. Tag lines or graphics can be used on the envelope to urge the recipient to open it.

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No matter which mail piece you decide to use, messages should be short and to the point. Lengthy letters or messages can lose the interest of the reader before the full point is absorbed. Bulleted lists, bold headlines, coupons and color make a piece much more attractive and easier to read.

Whether you design your own mail piece or use a graphics designer, you should have the piece reviewed by your professional mailing service or contact the United States Postal Service Mail Piece Design Analyst for final recommendations. Verbiage, color, size, shape, thickness, graphics and address block positions can interfere with postal discount levels.

