

**Need help in
marketing your
business properly?**

Find out how
in your free guide
to Direct Marketing



THOMSONLocal™



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Introduction to Direct Marketing



Direct marketing enables communication with targeted groups of consumers. It can help you achieve objectives such as:

- Generate new business leads and sales
- Increase sales from existing customers
- Re-establish relationships with dormant customers
- Increase customer loyalty

This short guide outlines the main forms of direct marketing with some useful tips to ensure best practice in choosing data and executing successful campaigns.

Direct Mail

The most common form of direct marketing is direct mail – sending letters to targeted prospects through the post. Direct mail is used by all types of businesses, to acquire and retain customers and encourage sales.

If you understand your customers and target your mailing effectively, direct mail can be a highly personal, highly successful form of marketing.

Telemarketing

Another popular form of direct marketing is telemarketing – contacting targeted prospects directly by telephone. Telemarketing has numerous business benefits. It's a great way of building prospect lists and winning sales. Plus it can be used successfully whether you are a large scale organisation or a small business with limited resources.

Indeed, when telemarketing is employed correctly, it can deliver sales conversion rates much higher than the response rates typically achieved by direct mail. What's more, telemarketing is particularly useful in business-to-business (B2B) marketing as people are more accepting of marketing calls interrupting them at work.

Email Marketing

Email marketing is one of the newest forms of direct marketing and it's still growing in popularity. According to figures from the Direct Marketing Association (DMA), email marketing has now over taken direct mail in terms of volume.

No matter what size your business is, your company can benefit from email marketing. It's generally cheaper and quicker than direct mail and it's fully trackable, giving you complete visibility of your results.

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Top Tips for Direct Mail Campaigns



1. Use a plain envelope

Studies have shown that plain envelopes generate the best response rates. Don't be tempted to tease your offer on the envelope. Save your power packed copy for the letter.

2. Always include a letter

It may sound obvious, but more studies have shown that response rates dramatically improve when a direct mail pack contains a letter. Packs without letters are impersonal and lack a focal point.

3. Write to a contact, not a company

Find out who you need to write to and personalise the letter. Think about what would happen if you didn't. Your letter will be read by the wrong person, or worse still, not read at all.

4. Keep 'we-ing' to a minimum

To maintain a reader's interest you need to talk about their favourite subject – themselves, and their business. Wherever possible avoid the following: 'I, we, our product' and use 'you, your', and their company name.

5. What will it do for me?

Talk about benefits rather than features i.e. not what the product will do, but what it will do for them. Use key phrases like:

- 'Product A does X, which means that...'
- 'You will find product B makes your life easier because'

6. Says who?

Back up your claims by including quotes from other satisfied customers. Encourage your sales team to ask for commendation letters to make sure you've always got a fresh supply of endorsements.

7. Tell them what to do now!

At the end of your fabulously compelling letter, make it clear what you want the reader to do next. Do you want them to register online, return a form or call your sales line? Tell them what you want them to do, and tell them again!

8. Track your responses

Use a promotional (prom) code or reference number unique to each different direct mail piece and make sure your sales team ask for it every time. By tracking these numbers on a spreadsheet you'll be able to see which letters worked best and calculate your return on investment.

9. Follow up with a phone call

A letter gives you a fantastic introduction, and some customers will respond without further coercion. Others, however, will need a little more attention. Work out when your direct mail piece is due to hit the doormat and start following up straight away. Your response rates will be drastically improved by this extra effort.

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Top Tips for Telemarketing Campaigns



The following are a few tips on using the telephone to gain quality appointments. The key to success is to generate enough interest from a potential customer to be able to get that appointment to sell your product or service.

1. There are four key factors of verbal communication and you should consider them all - voice quality, choice of words, attitude and organisation.

2. There are several stages you can go through in appointment making to ensure you create the best selling opportunity:

Introduce yourself and your company

Always use your full name and company name, and use your customer's full name until you have been invited to be on first name terms.

Contact the M.A.N (the person with Money, Authority and Need)

Make sure you speak to the most appropriate decision maker for your product.

Instil urgency

You need to create urgency to try and encourage your potential customers to buy from you. An offer closing date or incentive may be useful.

Arouse interest

At this early stage it will help if you can make a statement which will disturb complacency and arouse interest. People buy either from fear of loss or the opportunity of gain. If you can appeal to both either of these motives then an appointment should follow.

Signpost

In business, it is essential to let your customer know what format any meeting will take. This is called signposting, and is also a helpful tool to apply to a telephone call (e.g. What I would like to do is find out what type of services your company requires, tell you about our company, explain what we could do for you and how we have helped other companies like yours. Then I will give you a suitable quote and we can start 'supplying' if you are happy with what we have discussed).

Mini need-find

You may want to ask a few direct 'open ended' questions – those which begin with Who? What? Why? Where? When? or How? By asking these type of questions you will get your potential customer talking openly about his or her business needs. If you establish needs up front, this will help you plan your sales call better to maximise on the possible result.

Qualify and consolidate

Check that you have secured a quality appointment, by asking the customer to diarise your visit. You can ask for directions and nearby parking which helps to build a rapport. Remind the customer just how important and valuable time is for both of you. Leave a contact number in case the arrangements need to change in the meantime and ask if there is anything in particular he or she would like you to bring.

3. Make sure you personalise your information to ensure that you don't sound scripted; the customer's phone rings hundreds of times a day – why should he or she listen to you? Sell your company with relevant features and benefits and listen to your customer's needs - approximately 45% of our waking time is spent listening, so by practising active listening, you will be able to increase your selling potential.

4. 87% of your message on the telephone is conveyed through your tone and only 13% through words, so SMILE as you DIAL! Your potential customer can sense if you are relaxed and positive.

5. Don't get disheartened if someone appears rude. There may be many reasons for their reaction or simply for saying NO. Remember, it is not personal. Prospecting is a numbers game, so don't let the bad experiences deter you.

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Top Tips for Email Campaigns



1. Plan your email campaign

It's important to plan your email campaign well in advance of your send date. You need to give yourself time to make sure your email campaign is as good as it can be.

2. Segment, personalise and be relevant

Use the information you have identified about your customers to send them targeted, relevant messages. Segment your customer list and if possible develop specific offers for each target audience. The better your targeting the more likely your campaign will be a success - 80% of success is down to the targeted list; 20% the creative.

3. Write a great subject line

In order to maximise your email open rate you need to write a good subject line for your email - it's the first thing your customer will see when they are deciding which emails to read and which to junk. Keep your subject line simple, to the point and tell the reader what to expect inside. Don't use words like "free" which might trigger spam filters. Personalising the subject line to the recipient and including your company name works well to encourage high open rates.

4. Design a strong campaign creative

It is very important when designing your email campaign creative that you design a strong wire-frame template.

Some suggestions for you to consider include:

- Give readers the choice of both HTML and text versions of your email.
- Logo in the upper left corner is always a strong placement.
- Make good use of the top 2 to 4 inches of your email design which is prime reading space.
- Keep your message short - keep scrolling to a minimum.
- Don't use lots of different fonts and colours.
- Make your call to action prominent and clear so that your audience knows what to do.
- Make both images and text clickable.
- Don't use one big giant image as this may be mistaken for spam - always include some text.
- Make sure copy is easily scannable - web readers won't read every word.
- Don't try to make your emails too fancy with Flash as it can be removed by anti-virus programs trying to protect email programs getting infected.
- Include an unsubscribe link in the footer of every email campaign you design.

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Top Tips for Email Campaigns



5. Direct customers through to a relevant landing page

You're doing well if you've managed to persuade your customers to open and read your email – don't lose their interest when they click through by sending them to your home page or a basic product listing page.

Ideally you should be sending customers through to a purpose built landing page designed to convert clicks into leads and sales.

6. Test before you send

Don't forget to test your email campaign before you send it out to potential customers. First impressions count and you don't want anything to go wrong which might put them off doing business with you. You should send at least 5 test emails to yourself, and to all your test email accounts, before you send your email campaign out to your customer list.

7. Measure campaign success

It is very important to make sure that you are monitoring key email marketing metrics such as:

- **The number of emails delivered (*delivery rate*).**
- **The number of emails opened (*open rate*).**
- **The number of click-throughs generated (*click-through rate*).**
- **Ideally, each time you send an email, you want to increase the number of people who open and act on it. Analysing your campaign results will help you do this.**

Remember, Microsoft Outlook won't help you track email results, manage unsubscribes, or process and remove bounce backs from your list so you shouldn't send your emails out using this programme. For a simple solution, our Email Marketing service can send out and track all your email campaigns for you.

8. Keep testing and learning

You aren't going to get everything right first time, so it's important to use your campaign results to modify and re-test your campaign – perhaps your subject line could be stronger or your landing page could be improved. Remember to only change one part of your campaign at a time so you can clearly see the effect that change has had on your results the next time you send your email.

9. Update your email data list to keep it accurate

However targeted your message and attractive your creative, your email can only be successful if you have an up to date, accurate opt-in data list to send your campaign to. A high bounceback rate indicates your data list is out of date and a high unsubscribe rate means you aren't sending relevant emails to customers who want to hear from you.

10. Integrate your email with other communications

Numerous studies have shown that combining email with other communication channels, such as direct mail, increases response rates. A **multi-channel approach** can also help increase customer spend by almost 25%, according to research carried out by Royal Mail.

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Buying good Business Data For Direct Marketing



Whatever method of direct marketing you use, you must bear in mind that the success of your campaign depends on good planning, targeting and accurate, up to date data. Because of the large amount of direct marketing sent, you have to work hard to make sure your investment doesn't end up in the bin.

Selecting the right business data is crucial for the success of your marketing campaign. There are several things you should consider which will help you choose the right database.

1. What are your existing customers like?

Analysing your existing customer base will give you the best indication of the type of companies you should target with future marketing campaigns. As these companies have already bought from you, you should also have success selling to similar organisations. Look at your existing customer database and ask questions such as:

- **Where are they located?**
- **How big are they?**
- **What industry are they in?**
- **What is their turnover?**
- **Who in the organisation has bought from you?**

2. What data fields do you need?

The type of direct marketing campaign you want to use will impact the information you need. For example, email marketing requires that the email address is available for every data record you want to contact whilst telemarketing will require the telephone number. It's also important that your marketing goes to the person in the organisation who can make a purchase decision.

3. What selection criteria should you use?

When selecting data, use the following selection criteria to help you cherry pick just the companies you want to contact:

- **Geographical location.**
- **Type of business.**
- **Industry type.**
- **Premise type.**
- **Number of employees.**
- **Number of years established.**
- **Company name.**
- **Financial information (e.g. turnover, financial year end, profit before tax, net worth, exports).**

4. How is the data collected and accuracy maintained?

Whatever data you choose to buy, make sure you know how it has been compiled and that it is updated regularly to maintain accuracy. If the data you use for direct marketing isn't accurate, you will waste your marketing budget.

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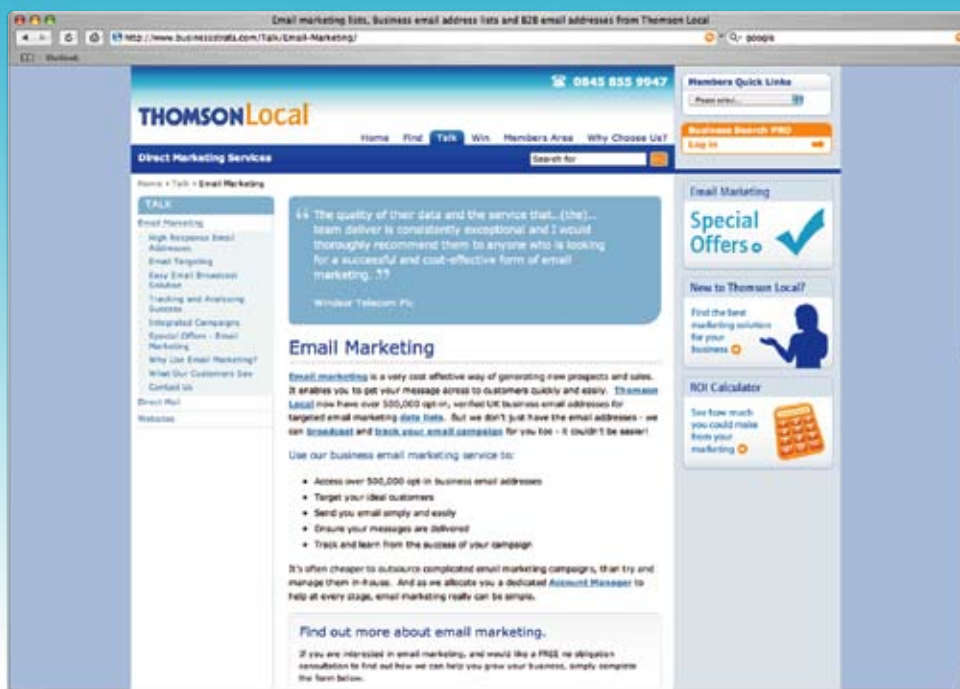
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Contact us for help with Direct Marketing

If you would like to talk to a **Direct Marketing Services** consultant from Thomson Local about how direct marketing could generate leads and sales for your business, please contact us.

We have **over two million** verified **business listings** and **over 500,000** opt-in business **email addresses**. Plus we can help you send direct mail and email marketing campaigns with ease.



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