

As consumers move their media preferences toward customized, one-to-one vehicles such as iPods, satellite radio and TiVo®, marketers are challenged in managing multi-channel messaging opportunities. That's why mailstream marketing – the direct mailing of marketing materials that lead to other channels – continues to be the fastest way to optimize customer communications.

Traditional mail has maintained a great deal of usefulness, relevance and profit potential in the marketing mix. According to the Cable & Telecommunications Association, 70 percent of American consumers prefer to receive advertisements and promotions by mail. Letters, including transactional mail, constitute a \$36 billion dollar industry in the U.S. alone, and the entire global mailing industry – including shipping packages – tops some \$900 billion.

### Mailstream marketing?

According to John Schloff, vice president of marketing for Pitney Bowes Document Messaging Technologies, mailstream marketing is arguably the fastest way to optimize both B2B and B2C customer communications management. Printed mail, whether postcards, letters, catalogues or brochures, can all be used as catalysts to drive web site traffic.

### Communication management

Proper customer communication management is necessary for effective one-to-one marketing with mixed media that merges digital and physical channels. Direct mail today already comprises data-rich systems and processes that provide mailers with options for making their customer, production and channel intelligence more comprehensive and more precise than ever before.

### Personalizing everything

Brands that use the traditional mail channel have a particular taste for highly personalized, relevant marketing to current clients. Financial statements, mortgage bills, credit card statements, insurance premiums, even drivers' license renewal forms, all arrive directly through the consumer's front door to deliver timely and useful information.

Here's five hot tips to optimize mailstream marketing efforts:

#### 1. Leverage customer intelligence

Use your data intelligently to create more personalized messages that enable cross-selling and up-selling opportunities, and to ultimately foster customer loyalty.

#### 2. Deliver only relevant communications

Your message is traveling with an important personal document (e.g. a bank statement, or an insurance policy's explanation of benefits). Be respectful of the medium by keeping the marketing message aligned with the purpose of the document.

### 3. Apply the highest data quality practices

The shortest route to the waste basket is a wrong address or a misspelled name.

### 4. Mandate the highest mailing accuracy and integrity

Especially with personalized transactional mail and inserts. Misdirected mail can put customers off the brand completely. The wrong marketing message – or worse, the wrong personal document to the wrong person – is a far greater problem than just creating a bad impression.

### 5. Practice event marketing

Be opportunistic about events in your target customer's life such as birthdays, graduations, home moves, weddings and births. Sending helpful promotions around life events can create close connections with customers.