



Why on Earth Are You Still Doing Direct Mail?

By Susan Saldibar

The other day my husband tossed a post card in my lap. For the first 5 seconds my eyes went crazy trying to sort out what the card was about. Then I realized it was for a local senior living community, whose name was all but lost among a myriad of font styles (all with drop shadows) going in all directions. There were a few graphics, stretched beyond their aspect ratio, and virtually every centimeter of space was filled with something.

What a hot mess!

When I came across an article by [Sage Age Strategies](#) (a Senior Housing Forum partner) on direct mail, I thought about that piece again. It's too bad that the community marketing director hadn't read the Sage Age article before kicking off their campaign.

Direct mail still matters. And it can do some things better than any other medium.

The article made some great points about direct mail. For one thing, it reminded me of why we still do direct mail. Here's what direct mail does that even the best digital campaigns can't do:

- **Personalizes.** Case in point; Sage Age recently launched a campaign for a memory care community to target households with members who had Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia. The mailers had highly targeted information about memory care. Information delivered right to the doorstep. You can't get that kind of impact on-line.

- **Reaches the “email opt out” crowd.** While email recipients may filter out your emails or opt out of your monthly newsletters, they must, at least, shuffle through your direct mail piece before tossing it. So your message gets seen.
- **Presents time sensitive offers and events.** When you are promoting a limited offer or special event, nothing beats a targeted direct mail piece. Chances are it will be tacked up on the refrigerator or propped up on a desk as a reminder. Not so with online offers and event reminders.

How about an old, outdated postcard to go with your fresh, new digital campaign?

So, as consumers, we can on board with a good direct mail piece. We will, however, have no patience with sloppy, poorly designed pieces. As much attention needs to be paid to your direct mail as to your digital programs. Sage Age suggests the following:

- **Coordinate your direct mail piece with your digital campaigns.** Make sure your direct mail piece is on point with your digital efforts. Images and taglines need to match to keep your messaging consistent and clear. Often a community will continue to use an outdated piece, simply because they have leftovers from an earlier campaign. There’s no excuse for that. Direct mail printing is more economical than ever before. Keep the direct mail pieces fresh and relevant.
- **Provide digital interaction points in your mail piece.** Whether it’s a link to a special landing page for more details or a download url, give the reader something more than just a phone number and a www. Give them a specific place to go for more information.

Diana Moore, VP of Production Services at Sage Age adds the final thought. “Direct mail might not be the most modern marketing tactic, but if you execute a direct mail campaign thoughtfully, it can play a meaningful, even vital role in an integrated marketing strategy,” she says. “Direct mail is a great way to make a tangible and personal connection with your audience, and it’s a great way to get creative, too.”

Why are we still doing direct mail? Because, when it’s implemented properly, it works.

You can read the full article from Sage Age on effective direct marketing [here](#).



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