



# 4 Tried and True Reasons to Double Down on Direct Mail

By Susan Saldibar

I was told something really interesting a few weeks ago by Valerie Whitman, VP of Senior Living for [LeadingResponse](#) (a Senior Housing Forum partner). She told me that the buzz she's hearing from some of her clients is that they are taking a fresh look at direct mail and, in some cases, re-allocating portions of their marketing budgets back into mail campaigns. I asked Valerie what she thinks is behind the move.

Direct Mail, "DM", has really evolved over the last few years which, Valerie tells me, has caused some marketers to re-insert it into the marketing mix. And they're getting results. Big data and the ability to hyper-target has made D/M a much more attractive marketing vehicle.

Between the input she has from clients and her own resources at LeadingResponse, Valerie has put together some insight into why you, too, might want to reconsider direct mail if you've been decreasing it or leaving it out of your marketing deck all together.

1. **Strong response rate.** Valerie reports seeing an average 2.3% response rate on their direct mail programs publicizing a local dinner educational event. In the world of direct mail, anything between 1-3% is considered successful.
2. **Ability to hyper target.** This one is pretty cool. According to Valerie, it is now possible to hyper target your D/M campaigns. Of course, you have to have a database like that of LeadingResponse, who has refined the process of "digging deep" to target very specific consumer demographics and behaviors. They are even able to track things like ailment data and familial connections.

3. **Re-targeting missed website traffic.** Now it's possible to retarget via D/M, using IP matching, which extracts key data from IP addresses. "Maybe they didn't find what they were looking for on your site or got distracted and left the site before finishing their research or filling out the contact form," Valerie says. "Using IP matching with a direct mail campaign gives you a second chance to get in front of them." With LeadingResponse's patented program, they can not only match back to the exact household but also run demographic filters. That ensures that the individual is truly qualified before you spend time and money on a D/M piece.

Incidentally, for those who may be skeptical as to the legality of obtaining all this data, Valerie is careful to note that it has become a highly acceptable marketing practice. "And, we're not recommending sending a D/M mailer stating 'Hey we saw you were on our website.' It's much more subliminal, such as retargeting with digital such as a banner ad," Valerie says.

4. **Shelf life potential.** Yes, we all like to complain about those circulars and ads. But you can't click away from a piece of mail. I'll look at it if it strikes a chord with something I need or a problem I have. I'll put it to one side, only to notice it every time I pass the table.

Valerie is quick to mention that no one is suggesting dumping your digital marketing programs. There is huge value in being able to reach folks online as they search for information about senior living communities. And, she points out that digital has come a long way in its ability to do things like targeting Facebook "look alike" audiences. So clearly a balance between the two makes a lot of sense.

It also bears noting that the D/M programs being run by LeadingResponse, are very specific, involving an invitation to an educational event held onsite at the community and/or at a popular local restaurant. Since they are able to target individuals who are highly likely to participate, they are garnering an average of 100 or more attendees over the course of two dates, with an average ROI of 15:1 and an average 8-10% inquiry to move-in, according to Valerie's research.

Finally, Valerie has a caveat for marketers. "What's important to note about D/M is that you can't just send out a postcard to either a purchased list or existing lead base and expect it to perform. You need to incorporate many variables that are proven and speak to the consumer behaviors. This will gain you the desired campaign ROI."

So, that said, it begs the question: does it make sense to go 100% digital when you can do highly targeted D/M programs that give such a strong return on investment? Could it make sense to repurpose some of those less performing marketing dollars into direct mail for a mix of programs?

What do you think? Have you stopped direct mail marketing altogether? Might be a good time to take a second look.



This article has been brought to you by [Leading Response](#) in partnership with [Senior Housing Forum](#).