



# The Essential Guide to Direct Mail

Everything you've always wanted to ask



**Smartmail Marketing**  
The Science of Activation

CANADA  
POST



POSTES  
CANADA



# Introduction

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Direct mail can help you compete and it can help you grow, no matter what your budget, size or industry. It works for all generations and, when integrated into the marketing mix, it leads to better results.

But, like any marketing channel, to get the most from it you need to know how to use it. We created this easy-to-read guide to show you the way.

We've covered the direct mail process from start to finish, and have included valuable tips throughout. We break down the steps you need to focus on to better connect with customers, prospects, donors, subscribers and advocates. Whether you read this guide cover to cover or skip to the chapters that are relevant to you, we'll provide ways that can help you attract attention, drive acquisition and build loyalty.

- Learn to benefit from data intelligence to reach the right audiences.
- Discover how to align direct mail with your brand and business objectives.
- Unlock the best hacks for addressing your unique challenges.
- Follow the right sequence for physical and digital communications.
- Choose paper weights, envelopes, formats, colours and offers.
- Find out how to amplify your social and digital campaigns.

**Let's get started.**

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# 1 The value of direct mail

## Direct mail performs

With more marketing channels, changing customer journeys and direct-to-consumer models, marketing is certainly more complex than before. Still, the core principals apply: reaching the right people at the right time with the right message, to create:

- 1 Awareness** – share of voice: How recognizable are you? What does your brand stand for?
- 2 Acquisition** – share of market: How do you find new audiences who behave just like your most loyal advocates?
- 3 Loyalty** – share of heart: How do you build brand love to create customer lifetime value (CLV)?

Direct mail is unlike any other marketing channel. It can help you achieve your business objectives by physically putting your brand into your customers' hands, and into their homes where critical purchasing decisions are made.

Value of  
direct mailHere's an overview of what our research shows.<sup>1</sup>

## Direct mail welcomes marketers to better results



**57%** FEEL MORE  
**VALUED**  
WHEN BRANDS CONTACT THEM THROUGH MAIL

### Show appreciation

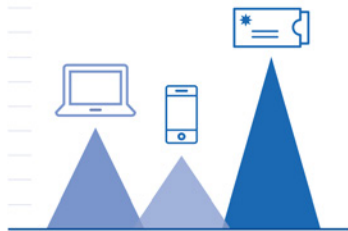
Let your customers know you truly appreciate their business.



**47%** VISITED A STORE  
IN REACTION TO DIRECT MAIL

### Create a local sensation

Make the most of geotargeting to connect with customers close to you.

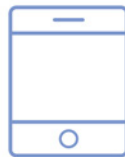


### Sharing isn't just for online

- 26% have shared an email ad
- 22% have shared a social media promotion
- 32% have shared a direct mail ad



**43%**  
ORDERED A  
PRODUCT  
ONLINE



**64%**  
VISITED A  
WEBSITE



**54%**  
ENGAGED  
IN SOCIAL  
MEDIA

Turn awareness into action Direct mail leads to conversion.

Value of  
direct mail

## Direct mail works for all generations

This channel also crosses generational lines. For boomers, physical is king. Equally comfortable with physical and digital, gen-xers respond to both channels, especially when integrated. And millennials? They seem to crave the tactile quality of physical media and get excited when they receive relevant mail at home. [Discover more generational insights.](#)

## Canada Post Smartmail Marketing™ welcomes you to better results

While direct mail can be done in isolation and reap valuable results, research shows that when paired with a digital campaign, its value is amplified.<sup>2</sup> Smartmail Marketing™ is:

- Driven by respectful use of data for intelligent, relevant, measureable results
- Tactile – to engage and persuade
- Connected – to amplify digital, drive traffic and change behaviours

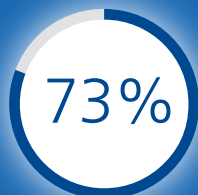
This approach can lift the results of awareness, acquisition and loyalty campaigns, realizing the full potential of your marketing mix and creating stronger connections across all media channels.

### Physicality creates an emotional impact

#### OUR BRAINS ARE HARDWIRED TO PAY ATTENTION TO DIRECT MAIL<sup>3</sup>

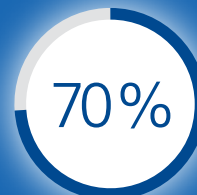
Direct mail is noticed, collected and read by Canadian consumers.

##### IT GETS COLLECTED.



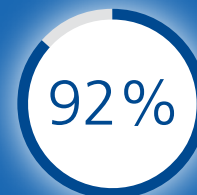
Almost 73% Canadians **collect** mail at least 3 times a week.<sup>4</sup>

##### IT GETS NOTICED.



70% of consumers always or sometimes **notice** advertising in direct mail.<sup>5</sup>

##### IT GETS READ.



In a recent study, 92% of Canadians said they **read** direct mail.<sup>6</sup>

The content throughout this guide reflects our Smartmail Marketing philosophy for stronger campaigns.

## Getting help!

You don't have to do it alone! To find out more about Smartmail Marketing and how to integrate direct mail into your marketing mix, you can [contact a Canada Post expert](#).

You can also engage the services of a [Canada Post partner](#), who specializes in direct mail to guide you and help you get the results you're after. Support is available for a range of budgets.

2. Canada Post. [Connecting for Action](#). 2016.

3. Canada Post and True Impact Marketing. [Understanding the Impact of Physical Communications through Neuroscience](#), February 2015.

4. Canada Post. Kantar, [SMM Stats Update](#), Canada Post 18-216, 2018.

5. BrandSpark, [2019 BrandSpark Canadian Shopper Study](#).

6. Canada Post. Kantar, [SMM Stats Update](#), Canada Post 18-216, 2018.



## 2 Working with Canada Post Smartmail Marketing partners

Canada Post is connected with more than 250 independent Smartmail Marketing partners across the country who can work with you to fully support your campaign goals.

Ranging from mail service providers to advertising and data marketing providers, our partners can help you with every aspect of your campaign objectives. This can include campaign planning, data and targeting, creative, printing and delivery to Canada Post.

### Why use a partner?

With a Canada Post Smartmail Marketing partner you can access expertise and in-depth marketing knowledge that can help you maximize your marketing objectives based on your budget. Using a consultative approach, they can help you:

- Target the right prospects and optimize an existing list
- Develop creative that drives consumer attention, emotional engagement and brand recall
- Better integrate your marketing mix so you can create consistent messages across all channels
- Ensure your mailing meets all print and processing requirements

Our Canada Post partners can help make your direct mail campaigns more relevant, efficient and effective – ensuring your direct mail strategy has the impact it deserves.

### Finding a Canada Post partner

To find a complete list, you can visit [canadapost.ca/directory](https://canadapost.ca/directory).

Canada Post Smartmail  
Marketing partners

**GREEN ACRES**  
LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

# SNOW BLOWING

20th YEAR

**PUT OUR EXPERIENCE TO WORK FOR YOU.**  
**NEW FOR THIS YEAR! 3 programs to choose from:**

BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
Tractor snowblowing with Teflon coated reverse blowers. No shovel service.	Tractor snowblowing with Teflon coated reverse blowers. + Shovel service around tight spaces, vehicles, in front of the garage	Our Gold program has the same benefits as our Silver program. + + Shovel service of one walkway and any steps straight to the front door.

**ENJOY THE FOLLOWING BENEFITS WITH ANY OF OUR PROGRAMS:**

- Revisits for clearing City plow debris
- Flexible payment options
- Group and Senior rates
- Continuous service during major snow storms
- One of the most trusted names in Orleans for residential snow blowing
- Competitive rates
- Proven and reliable service since 1994

**Don't get left out in the cold, book early!**  
Receive a \$20 discount when you pre-pay for the snow season in full by Oct. 31st

**613-835-3581**  
[www.greenacresottawa.com](http://www.greenacresottawa.com)  
\*Please visit our website for more details.

BBB  
Honour Roll Member since 2000

VISA  
MasterCard

(We will price match all other snowblowing service providers who are BBB members in good standing!)

## Direct mail in action

**Canadian landscapers, Green Acres worked with a Canada Post Expert Partner on a campaign that resulted in 600 per cent ROI and 240 new customers.**

### The business challenge:

When Green Acres decided it wanted to secure more business for the upcoming winter season, the company turned to the Canada Post Expert Partner program (now Smartmail Marketing Expert Partner program). Through the program, Green Acres connected with Harling Direct – which specializes in third-party fulfillment logistics, including management of direct mail campaigns.

Green Acres' marketing campaign strategy included more than 64,000 Unaddressed Admail™ (now Canada Post Neighbourhood Mail™) pieces delivered in and around their operating area. Three mail drops occurred over three weeks.

### The results:

The campaign generated a total of 500 responses, resulting in 240 new customers – an impressive 50 per cent increase in Green Acres' client base.

The campaign's return on investment (ROI) also vastly exceeded expectations. *"My objective was to break even or realize a modest return of 10 to 20 per cent, but the final campaign ROI was 600 per cent."*

For Green Acres, the value of combining direct mail with the Canada Post Partner program goes well beyond the numbers. *"Working with an expert partner gave me back something really important: my time, so I could focus more on my clients and business."*

# 3 Outline your strategy, plan and workflow

## Experience the benefits of planning and preparing for success

Whether you use a Canada Post partner, an agency or do your campaign in-house, before diving in it's important to nail down what it is you hope to achieve and how you plan to achieve it. Planning will simplify and speed up your decision-making process getting you closer to the results you need. Use this checklist:

### 1 Define your strategy

*What is your main objective?*

- Create brand awareness?
- Acquire more first-time customers?
- Increase repeat customers and strengthen loyalty?

*Who do you want to reach?*

- Define your target: age, geography, shopping behaviour, life stages. (Read more information on data and targeting in **Chapter 4**.)

*What do you want your audience to do?*

- Attend an event or sign up for an e-newsletter? Make a purchase or donation at your website? Visit your physical store or pop-up? Take action on social media? Talk to a rep?

*What is your offer/message?*

- How will you get your target to act? Direct mail does better when it includes a simple message and a relevant offer to excite your customers.

*Will your campaign be integrated?*

- Will you be doing direct mail on its own, or will it be integrated into a harmonized mix for better results? (**Chapter 6** has more details on effective media integration.)

### 2 Assess your resources

*What is your budget?*

- Knowing this will help narrow your choices, from paper quality to mailer formats to the size and scope of your campaign.

*What data do you have?*

- Evaluate your data so you have a good understanding of your targeting capabilities, which will factor into your results. (See more information on data and targeting in **Chapter 4**.)

*Will you work with a Canada Post partner and how?*

- A Canada Post partner can provide access to industry expertise to help develop and execute successful campaigns. Their expertise allows them to enhance the direct mail process, and lay the foundations for smooth execution. (Refer to **Chapter 2** to find out what a Canada Post partner can do for you.)



Strategize  
& Plan





Strategize  
& Plan


### 3 Determine how you'll reach your target

*What type of direct mail service is right for you?*

Each type of direct mail service has a different purpose and specifications. So you'll need to choose what fits:

 **Neighbourhood Mail (NM)** gets you into the mailboxes of Canadians within a specific neighbourhood, region or the entire country. It's ideal for creating mass awareness, acquiring new customers and retaining existing ones. For example, to highlight current promotions, quick service restaurants (QSRs) often use NM, as do new businesses, to create awareness when entering the marketplace.

 **Postal Code Targeting (PCT)** is a surgical targeting tool. It helps to identify and reach postal codes that match the profile of your ideal prospects, so you can expand into new markets, target look-alike audiences, reach specific communities and optimize your targeting by suppressing existing audiences to focus on acquisition. For example, retailers use PCT to target specific postal codes for strategic acquisition targeting, and not-for-profits have used it to cover areas where they do not have a canvassing presence.

 **Canada Post Personalized Mail (PM)** is a one-to-one communication, allowing for a tailored message directly to your customer or prospect. It has their address on the mailing and most often includes their name as well. Your data comes from your customer contacts or you can buy/rent a list. Personalized Mail™ can help you acquire new customers, deepen connections with existing ones and build customer loyalty. For example, not-for-profits often rent lists to obtain new donors, and financial institutions use PM to communicate regularly with customers as well as send them special promotions.

#### Transactional mail and Personalized mail: What's the difference?

Both are addressed communications. Lettermail is non-promotional. Personalized Mail is a paid service businesses use to send promotional communications.

### 4 Define your goals and measure!

It's important to define the results you hope for so you can design a campaign to achieve your objectives. Once your campaign is completed, be sure to measure its success. Identify what's working and what requires improvement. Being open, honest and familiar with all of this will mean you'll know what to change next time. (See **Chapter 8** for further details on measurement.)

### 5 Organize your workflow

All direct mail campaigns follow a similar workflow. Be aware of the steps so you hit your launch deadlines.



Create a work-back schedule to ensure your mailing arrives in customers' mailboxes when it will have the most effect. Here's what you need to consider:

- Briefing
- Creative review (two rounds)
- Translation (if applicable)
- Approval
- Printer upload
- Review of proofs
- Data transfer
- Review of samples (print production, data, live samples)

Canada Post partners can help you every step of the way; please refer to

# 4 How to utilize data for effective targeting

Whether your goal is awareness, acquisition, retention, cross-selling or all of the above, successful direct mail marketing starts with data. You need precise information to connect your brand with the people who want to know about it. You also want to do it in a way that makes the most of your budget.

## Start with the profile of your ideal customer

As you gain more sales, you will get more information – more data – about your customers. Use this data to continually refine the profile of your ideal customer.

Why is it necessary to do this? Because to find new customers you have to be able to define who you are looking for. These look-alike customers can be your most lucrative. Take a look at your data and ask yourself:

- What are the demographics of my best customers (age, income, education level)?
- Are my customers clustered in specific geographical areas?
- How might pain points influence their buying habits (ex., time-starved working families)?
- Are there any life stage and/or lifestyle traits that my customers have in common (ex., empty nesters)?
- Where do they spend their time online?




You probably have a lot of these details on hand. It's a case of actively thinking about it, documenting it and analyzing the data to check and correct as necessary. So where do you look for it? Your in-house data contains valuable information about existing customers and their habits. Data from other sources can provide you with additional information to help you target a broader range of attributes. Use Canada Post or Partner resources to help suppress duplicates and tailor your message to make it resonate strongly. When you're confident that you know your audience, your communications become more targeted.

When you collect and use consumer data for commercial purposes (including targeting other potential consumers), ordinarily you will need to obtain informed consent. Other requirements may also apply. As with any marketing campaign, be sure to comply with applicable laws and seek legal advice if you need clarification.








Data &  
Targeting







Take Lily as an example:



**Lily**

26-year-old female millennial

Media used     

Brand affinities      

**Ideal customer profile:** Lily is a millennial, who lives in an urban area, and who loves getting gifts and discounts from her favourite brands.

- **Finances:** Lily makes about \$55k/year. After paying rent, she spends her money on entertainment, eating out and her work wardrobe.
- **Life stage:** Within the next two years, Lily wants to be an HR manager. In about six years' time, she'd also like to start a family. She hasn't travelled much, and would love to explore the world.
- **Worries and fears:** Debt keeps Lily awake at night. That and living in such an expensive city, where she believes she'll never be able to buy a house.

The more you know about Lily enables you to find more individuals like her. As you collect more data, you might find other customer segments and begin to differentiate how to talk to them based on your marketing objectives.

## Start with a target audience in mind

If you are just starting out and maybe don't have an existing database (or yours is in its very early stages), you may wish to turn to external data sources for your targeting. This is a very common practice with businesses large and small. In this case, to develop an audience list, you can use what you've learned researching your target audience. Applying those insights, you can work with a third party to generate your list, which can be accomplished through list rentals, using data intelligence from [Canada Post](#) and/or working with a [Canada Post partner](#).

## Target for acquisition and awareness

### Use ideal customer profiles to target look-alikes

Now that you know the characteristics of your ideal customer, you're ready to put your data to use to acquire or retain customers, to generate awareness or to build loyalty. We're going to start with data and targeting for awareness and acquisition.

Smarter targeting uses data intelligence that blends demographics, geography, life stage, lifestyle and behaviour to precisely target the right audiences.

#### How can we target Lily?



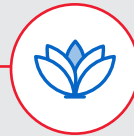
##### Geography

- Downtown Toronto



##### Demographics

- Female
- University graduate
- Earns \$55-65k/year
- Rents



##### Interest & Behaviour

- Shopping patterns – enjoys shopping for products aligned with her interests as long as she can justify the purchase
- Pursuit of novelty



##### Lifestyle & Lifestage

- Looking to save money (deals and sales)
- Paying off student loans
- Likes to travel when possible



Data &  
Targeting

Canada Post offers a full suite of Smartmail Marketing solutions to help you achieve your objectives.



## Neighbourhood Mail (NM)

Neighbourhood Mail connects you to every home and apartment in specific neighbourhoods or regions across Canada. Reach is wide and allows you to cover large areas. An example of NM is your local restaurant sending menus or promotions to the surrounding community.

We're here to help. To execute a Neighbourhood Mail campaign you can:

**1.** Use our online tool Precision Targeter™.

Precision Targeter lets you plan and cost out your mailings using interactive maps and demographic data. You can send flyers, postcards or samples to every mailbox in a selected neighbourhood. Targeting only the postal routes with the most potential means you don't waste valuable marketing dollars.

Here's how it works

- Choose from 14 demographic categories like household age and income, houses, apartments or businesses.
- Select a delivery neighbourhood from interactive maps.
- Adjust the target area or demographics to meet your business and budget goals. (To prepare for delivery, see **Chapter 6.**)

Watch the tutorial video

[Getting familiar with Precision Targeter](#)

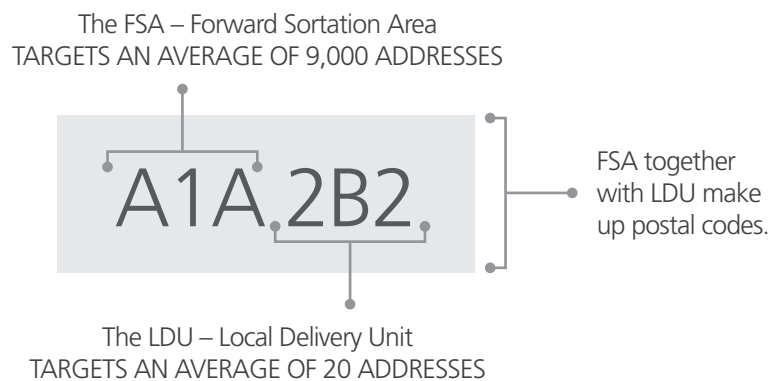
**2.** Work with our Data Solutions Centre. [Learn more here](#) or call 1-877-281-4137.

**3.** Work with a [Canada Post partner](#).

## Postal Code Targeting

Postal Code Targeting is a surgical targeting tool that uses the postal code to reach a desired audience. The location of a potential customer plays a key role in determining who is most likely to buy from you. We call it the birds-of-a-feather effect. Chances are, people who live in the same neighbourhood share similar demographics, life stage, aspirations, preferences and behaviours.

The postal code is an important tool you can use to reveal clusters of high-value prospects.



We're here to help. To execute a PCT campaign you will need:

1. Work with the Canada Post Data Solutions Centre. [Learn more here](#) or call 1-877-281-4137.
2. Work with a Canada Post partner. [Find one here](#).

## Targeting for retention & loyalty

### Engage with your best customers

It is said that 80 per cent of your future profits will come from 20 per cent of your existing customers.<sup>7</sup> To strengthen your relationship with them, don't miss a big opportunity to deliver impactful, relevant customer experiences into the hands of your customers in the comfort of their own homes. Turn the thinking on its head and ask yourself, "Who hasn't bought from me lately?" Make the most of your in-house data by targeting existing customers in different ways based on their relationship with you. Many in the retail industry send thank you notes with an incentive for a future purchase. Not-for-profits are looking at their current lists to re-engage with lapsed donors. Financial institutions are also known to use Personalized Mail to up sell and cross sell products that are relevant to current customers.

### Personalized Mail (PM)

Winning loyal customers comes down to being relevant to the individuals you're targeting – whenever and however they choose to interact with you. Personalized Mail works well for both building loyalty and acquiring new customers.

We're here to help. To execute a PM campaign you can:

1. Work with the Canada Post Data Solutions Centre. [Learn more here](#) or call 1-877-281-4137.
2. Work with a [Canada Post partner](#).
3. Refer to **Chapter 7** to learn the requirements.

## Validating your data

When you're compiling your data, it's important to verify that all addresses are complete and in a standard format. Just like an email subscription list, clean data has no duplicates, which not only waste money and make it impossible to accurately calculate results, but can also be annoying to anyone who receives your communication twice. Take the time to go through your customer files, delete duplicates and check that addresses are complete (for example, including suite numbers is important for accurate addressing).

We can help you! You have options with the Canada Post Data Solutions Centre. [Learn more here](#) or call 1-877-281-4137.

## How to get your hands on the right data

There are a number of ways to access data and to ensure it's used intelligently and respectfully. We can help develop your list, help identify postal codes to target and we can combine your data with proprietary operational data and intelligence from strategic partners to create complete data packages. This includes exclusive insights into e-commerce behaviour. We also have data intelligence that relates specifically to businesses. [Contact an expert](#).

7. Lavinsky, Dave. *Pareto Principle: How to use it to dramatically grow your business*, Forbes, 2014. Consulted online in October 2019 at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/davelavinsky/2014/01/20/pareto-principle-how-to-use-it-to-dramatically-grow-your-business/#6f1990913901>.

The suggestions in this section assume that you are in compliance with all applicable laws relating to the collection and use of customer information. You are responsible to ensure that you are in compliance.



**DID YOU NOTICE**

**YOUR NEIGHBOUR'S SKIN LOOKS FANTASTIC**  
You too can enjoy a European Style Facial at Hand & Stone and see the difference for yourself.

get one too!

**Introductory Facial Service**  
— JUST —  
**\$59<sup>95</sup>**  
Reg. \$92.95

**HAND & STONE**  
MESSAGE AND FACIAL SPA

MICRODERM   LED THERAPY   DETOX   REJUVENATING   SENSITIVE

## Direct mail in action



Data &  
Targeting

### Hand & Stone Massage and Facial Spa | Health and Wellness

#### The business challenge:

With 27 locations in Canada and growing, Hand & Stone Massage and Facial Spa is bringing what were once considered luxury services to the Canadian mass market. To fuel its growth in Ontario, it needed a new strategy.

#### The direct mail solution:

"Once a mailer drops, the phones start ringing," says Hand & Stone's marketing and advertising manager Anita Wells. "When you get something in the mail, it stands out – it breaks through the clutter."

Focusing on engaging new prospects, Hand & Stone decided to test Canada Post's Postal Code Targeting service for its Orleans, Ontario, location. With no growth in the previous two years, the objective was to increase facial sales at that store from 27 per cent to 30 per cent of total sales.

First, Hand & Stone provided Canada Post with the postal codes of its current clients to create a definition of their top prospects. PRIZM5 consumer segmentation data then helped

classify these prospects according to shared demographics, lifestyle and behavioural traits. Four clusters were ultimately identified for the Orleans location.

Predictive Eye Tracking (PET) was applied to confirm that the design was simple and focused.

With the targeting data and optimized creative in hand, Hand & Stone launched the campaign. Over the course of nine weeks in August and September 2018, the company sent out three mailers of 5,000 pieces each. The same prospects received the consecutive direct mail pieces.

#### The results:

Hand & Stone Orleans saw a marked increase in facial business compared to the previous year and exceeded their objectives, with sales of facials increasing to 34 per cent of total service sales.

"As soon as the mailers dropped, the prospects started coming in the door. Postal Code Targeting definitely made a difference." Anita Wells Marketing and Advertising Manager, Hand & Stone Massage and Facial Spa.

# 5 How to create a standout direct mail piece

## Follow these best practices to elevate your presence in market

A perfectly timed, well written-piece, that has a clear and relevant message, with a compelling call to action is priceless. Match your mail piece to your marketing objectives by carefully choosing the best format, look, feel and messaging.

**Here's how we suggest you direct your time and energy when planning your DM:**

Follow the 40/40/20 rule

- 1 40% audience:** *The right data to find the right people.* Before all else, consider who you're mailing to and what information you'll need to reach them. A well-defined target profile and/or mailing list is key to success – whether it is your own customer list or a rented list.

### Consumer Audience Intelligence

- Demographics
- Geographics
- Life stage and lifestyle
- Interests and behaviours



Create



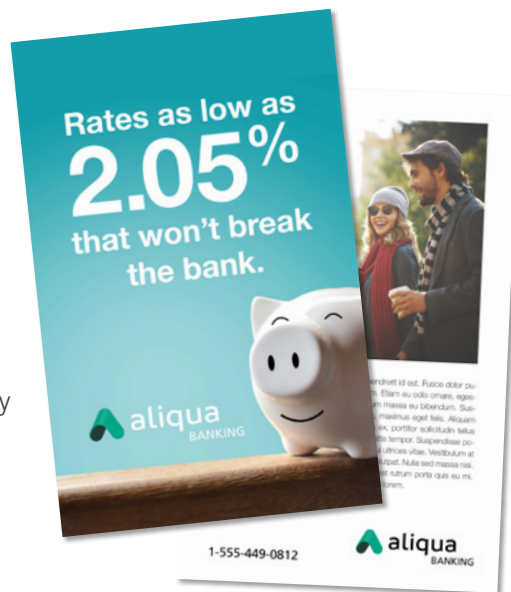


- 2 40% offering:** *What's in it for me?* What are you offering and why is it relevant? This is where you consider what action you want someone to take, why they should take action and how you'll reward them for doing it. There are many ways to present an offer – a promotion or discount, special event, free expert advice, information to solve a problem, etc. If you don't offer something of value, you'll be disappointed by the response no matter how good your data and creative. Pre-test your offers, track them and adjust according to results.

### Offers

- Free information
- Discounts, specials, rebates
- Donation matching
- Exclusive invitation
- Client onboarding incentive
- Free gift
- Samples
- Free trial
- Loyalty points
- Promotional contests

(don't forget to include any eligibility requirements, time limitations and other terms and conditions with your offer.)



Create

- 3 20% creative execution:** *Time to brand your look and feel.* This includes creative, message and format. It's also about how you integrate DM with other media – and in what order. Consider working with a [Canada Post partner](#) to ensure your process fits budgets and timelines. Consider paper quality, weight and finish. Add a varnish or coating to enhance the experience. Include inserts like buck slips and cards to make your brand difficult to ignore.

#### Enhancements

- Formats
- Inks
- Coatings
- Finishes
- Technology (AR and QR)
- Inserts
- Dimensional
- Interactive
- Sensory



While you'll need to take your brand into account, there are several rules of thumb for direct mail design that are proven to increase the value of your mailer. Some suggestions are:

- **Avoid clutter:** Too much on the page scatters attention. It makes it difficult to absorb the value proposition and to locate the call to action (CTA). Design for easy skimming.
- **Use simple visuals:** Use high-contrast, simple imagery, which the brain can easily process. Bright colours and big, bold font can make the communication stand out.
- **Show faces:** Images of people interacting with your product or service can help reinforce your key messages and have a positive effect on the reader.
- **Use action-oriented words:** Avoid the passive voice and verbs that lack power. Use your copy to focus on selling your offer, rather than your product or service.
- **Include a strong CTA:** Your CTA should encourage a lead or prospect to take advantage of your offer by performing a specific task. Make it easy for the eye to locate – and easy for your customer to perform so you don't cause frustration. Be clear, leaving no doubt in your customer's mind what it is that you want them to do.
- **Embed tracking mechanisms:** Including these in your piece will make it easier for you to measure success. You can use a promo code, a marketing URL or a unique toll-free number. (Refer to **Chapter 7** to learn more.)
- **P.S.:** Adding a P.S. is important. People often skip to the end of a mailing to see what's in it for them. Reinforce your message and your advantage there.



Create

## Choose your format

From cards to catalogues, there is a variety of direct mail formats available to use. Each comes with its own set of benefits and pricing considerations, so make your choice according to your objective and budget. Here are your main options:

### Cards



These are the simplest forms of direct mail, the most cost-effective and the fastest to create.

The key is to keep your message and call to action clear, such as to attend a VIP event, take advantage of a sale online or in-store, sign up for a class, check out a store opening, etc.

Consider using an oversized piece to grab attention.

### Self-mailers

Another cost-effective format is one that doesn't include an envelope. Instead, the customer's address appears directly on the direct mail piece.

A self-mailer can come in different formats, including postcards, flyers and brochures with multiple folded panes, often with an adhesive that holds it together. Without an envelope you see the message right away.



### Outer envelope and letter

The envelope and letter is a classic and effective format of direct mail, and you're not limited to a letter. You can include a brochure, a reply card, even samples.



The #10 envelope can have a clear pane, so the name and address can be seen, which makes it ideal for personalization – and can create a sense of mystery and anticipation. You can also add copy, imagery or some kind of visual interest to entice people to open it.



Create



## Catalogues

[Catalogues](#), [look books](#), [mini-catalogues](#) and gift guides allow you to include more information than other direct mail options. Use them to tell your brand story.

This is a visual format, so design with that in mind. Often, the goal is to inspire readers and have them visit online or in-store. Cover shots can be the big sellers. Catalogues can be a premium mailing, so consider sending them to highly targeted prospects or current customers.

## Special formats

Oversized pieces and die-cut shapes typically stand out in the mailbox, adding creativity and grabbing attention.



## Select the paper

Your choice of paper, envelope and card stock will reinforce the tone of your campaign and reflect your brand overall, able to convey qualities such as simplicity, trendy, luxury, sustainability or budget-friendly. Consider:

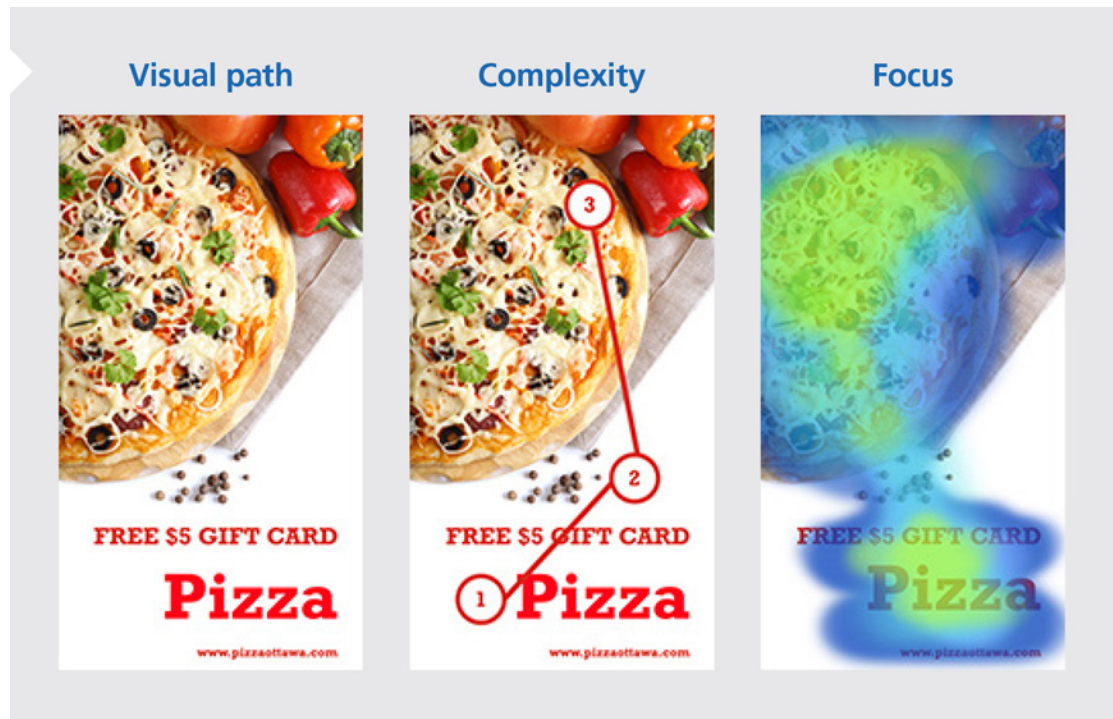
- **Thickness:** Consider getting some samples, so you see and interact with your direct mail the way your prospects and customers would. Note: There are requirements on paper **thickness**.
- **Colour:** Colour plays a big role in creating emotional engagement. Cool colours like blue and green can be relaxing and reassuring, while bright colours, like red and yellow, can attract attention and stimulate action. A good contrast will make your message easy to read.
- **Finishes and effects:** There are numerous creative options you can explore, including foils and metallic inks, embossing and debossing to add texture, die-cuts and laser-cuts for different shapes and cut-outs to stand out in the mailbox.



Create

### What is predictive eye tracking?

Before your marketing message can begin to influence sales, before it can incite action, your message must be seen. But how do you know for sure if your key messages stand out? The data revealed by eye tracking analysis may be the answer. Predictive eye tracking analysis software can determine whether key areas of an image are getting noticed, and you can use this data to reveal the effectiveness of a direct mail piece so you can predict and improve campaign response rates.



For an example of how predictive eye tracking works read how [Burger King's](#) fresh approach to direct mail increases gross profit on coupons by 40 per cent.

Looking for more information or how to apply PET? [Contact an expert.](#)



Create

## Know the size and weight requirements

Depending on the service and format you're using, there are specifications you must follow to avoid surprises and unforeseen frustration. Refer to the specific Customer Guides for the details and consider working with a Canada Post partner for their expertise. A few key requirements are listed below:

**Neighbourhood Mail** gets you into the mailboxes of Canadians within a specific neighbourhood, region or the entire country. This type of mailing works well for awareness, acquisition and retention, depending on your business and your marketing objectives.

- Minimum paper thickness 0.18 mm (0.007 in).
- Standard Neighbourhood Mail dimensions: 30.50 cm x 15.24 cm (12 in x 6 in).
- Oversized maximum dimensions: 30.50 cm x 28 cm (12 in x 11 in).
- Ensure your Neighbourhood Mail pieces do not contain an address.

**Postal Code Targeting** helps you identify and reach specific postal codes. PCT allows you to mail to those who match the profile of your ideal prospects, so you can expand into new markets, target look-alike audiences, reach specific communities and/or optimize your targeting by suppressing existing audiences for a pure acquisition campaign. **(Requires working with a Canada Post partner.)**

- Your mail pieces must have a unique 2D barcode generated from a data file.
- PCT envelope, card and self-mailer card dimensions: minimum 140 mm x 90 mm; maximum 245 mm x 156 mm (minimum 5.6 in x 3.6 in; maximum 9.6 in. x 6.1 in)

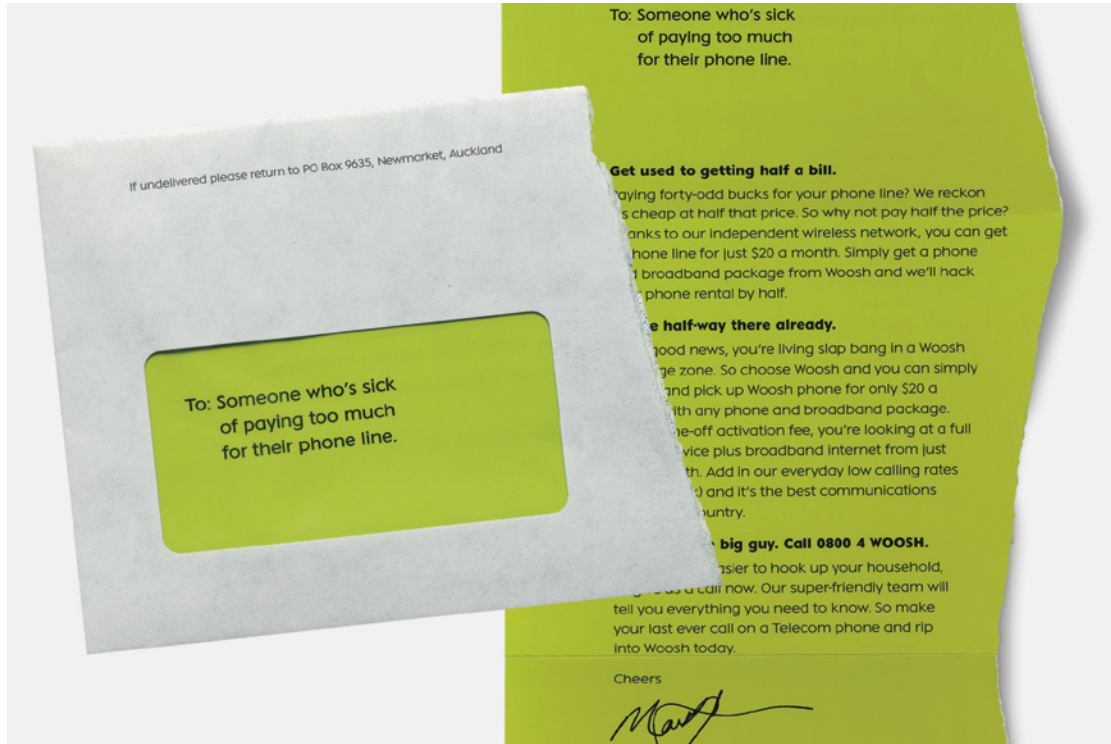
**Personalized Mail** is a one-to-one mailing. It can help you acquire new customers, deepen connections with existing ones and build customer loyalty. Eighty-seven per cent of Canadians open addressed mail.<sup>8</sup>

- Minimum thickness: 0.18 mm (0.007 in)
- Standard Personalized Mail dimensions: minimum 140 mm x 90 mm; maximum 245 mm x 156 mm (minimum 5.6 in x 3.6 in; maximum 9.6 in x 6.1 in)
- Oversize Personalized Mail dimensions: minimum 140 mm x 90 mm; maximum 380 mm x 270 mm (minimum 5.6 in x 3.6 in; maximum 14.9 in x 10.6 in)

Still searching for inspiration? Be sure to [check out \*INCITE\* magazine](#) – full of examples of direct mail campaigns that have worked for brands in Canada and around the world.

**For a full set of specifications, please consult our [Customer Guides](#). Specifications subject to change.**





## Direct mail in action

**NZ telecom start-up, Woosh, played with font, colour, envelopes and letters to create a compelling mailing that produced outstanding results**

**Woosh | Telecommunications:  
Some Companies Halve What it Takes**

### The business challenge:

The high prices set by Telecom, New Zealand's national telecommunications service, were constant front-page news. Independent wireless network Woosh saw the opportunity to target disgruntled householders in its key network zones, letting them know they could be paying half as much for their phone with a package from Woosh.

### The direct mail solution:

They printed a letter in a violent green for drama and urgency. Then they tore each letter in half by

hand before dropping them in 50,000 mailboxes around Auckland. Piggybacking on the negative sentiment around telecom prices, this piece hit a nerve by communicating boldly how much people would save with Woosh.

### The results:

The results during the first campaign period reached new highs for Woosh, with a record number of accounts opened each day. And, when the campaign was rolled out again, there was an increase of up to 62 per cent of new Woosh customers in network zones where the mailer dropped – compared an average increase of 9.3 per cent nationwide. This is direct mail behaving like ambient media, and shows how important it is to combine sentiment and data to get your message to those who want and need to hear it.



## 6 How to integrate direct mail with digital media for better results

Marketing is more fluid than it used to be, and the customer journey is no longer linear. Consumers are making brand connections at multiple touchpoints. Gone are the days of picking a side because, it turns out, digital and physical work better together.

### For instance:

- Compared with single-media digital campaigns, integrated direct mail and digital campaigns get 39% more attention.<sup>9</sup>
- Integrated direct mail and digital campaigns trigger 5% more emotional intensity (arousal) than single-media digital campaigns.<sup>10</sup>
- Integrated direct mail and digital campaigns elicit 10% high brand recall than single-media digital campaigns.<sup>11</sup>

Direct mail can help you broaden your target audience and refresh the way you communicate. Adding it to your mix can also give your audiences a more personalized, tangible experience with your brand.



Integrate



## Providing an integrated experience

There are different ways to use direct mail with your digital marketing, and your decisions will be based on the needs of your business. Here are some options:

- **With online advertising (banners, paid ads):** You can add direct mail to encourage specific online behaviours, such as returning to abandoned carts, or to reinforce your digital promotions. Multiple touchpoints can help you close sales.
- **With paid social media:** Direct mail can help bring your message to target audiences who haven't embraced social media, or who block/choose to ignore advertising on these sites. It can complement your social media page and ads by providing a tangible reminder of your brand.
- **With email:** You can use direct mail to build your list of email subscribers by creating a call to action to sign up for your newsletter. Make the most of the channel to send reminders and fulfill email offers like coupons, information packages, catalogues, etc.
- **With Search Engine Marketing (SEM):** You can even use direct mail to drive prospects online for research, where SEM kicks in to shift prospects from "desire" to "close."

So how do you make the most of this physical-digital opportunity to execute an integrated campaign? Start by eliminating your silos, and pay attention to sequencing, because research shows that sequencing matters.<sup>12</sup>

## Tips for executing an integrated campaign

### Avoid working in online/offline silos

Create alignment in your online-offline communication and consistency in your messaging to achieve the strongest impact. Your campaign will benefit from consistent creative across all of your channels so that you are building on the message with each touchpoint.



Integrate



12. Canada Post. [Connecting for Action](#), 2016.

## Use the best combination and sequence

The emotional engagement specific to direct mail varies depending on the media involved and their sequence. Research suggests that the impact of direct mail may be stronger when it follows digital advertising. Consider these powerful combinations.<sup>13</sup>

### Email followed by direct mail

- Brand recall peaks when direct mail follows email.
- Because integrated direct mail and email campaigns sustain attention for longer than other integrated media campaigns, it is a great media combination for long-form content and complex messages. You can also use this combination for automated retargeting or cart abandonment and benefit from direct mail's "stickiness."<sup>14</sup>

### Digital display followed by direct mail

- Arousal peaks peak when direct mail follows display.
- When paired with display, direct mail brings needed attention to brands and advertising messages that would have otherwise received selective focus, or not have been noticed at all.

# 186%

more time spent with integrated direct mail and display campaigns than display-only campaigns.



### 40 seconds versus 14 seconds

Time spent was calculated based on two exposures.

### Pre-roll followed by direct mail

- Motivation peaks when direct mail follows pre-roll.
- When paired with pre-roll, the more active, attentive and thoughtful engagement that comes with reading direct mail builds on the time-limited engagement with video, which can be quite passive.

Your Canada Post partner may be able to help you integrate your campaign, along with your Canada Post Smartmail specialist. As well, we are often posting valuable insights on our [Business Matters blog hub](#). Make sure to keep up-to-date, because customer expectations are continually rising and behaviours constantly changing.

## HOW DOES DIRECT MAIL GO THE DISTANCE WITH MILLENNIALS?<sup>15</sup>

# 42%

keep promotional mail pieces for future reference

# 50%

are excited to see what's in their physical mailbox

# 81%

use a physical method to follow promotions



## DIRECT MAIL HELPS DRIVE TO PURCHASE

Of recently made millennial purchases,

# 31%

were driven by print or direct mail promotions<sup>15</sup>



Integrated campaigns elicit

# 39%

more attention than single-media digital campaigns<sup>15</sup>

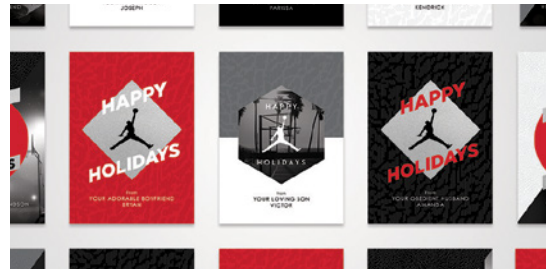


Integrate

13. Canada Post. [Connecting for Action](#), 2016

14. Canada Post. [Breaking Through the Noise](#), 2015.

15. Canada Post/Phase 5. [Advertising Communication Preferences and Generational Differences](#), 2017.



## Direct mail in action

**This sports retail brand used both digital and DM to deliver a consistent message. The DM piece went viral and almost all of those who took part in the campaign shared it on social media:**

### Footlocker | Sports Retail: Swish List

#### The business challenge:

For their first-ever digital collaboration, Foot Locker and Jordan Brand wanted to create hype and drive sales of Jordan products during the holiday season. Their young audience starts to think about the gifts they want a couple of months ahead of the holidays. The campaign took advantage of this by launching mid-November.

#### The direct mail solution:

“The Holiday Card That Delivers” gave American teens the opportunity to create wish lists before Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Banner ads, social media posts and influencer

messages drove traffic to a website where the teens could create a wish list, with the clothing and footwear they wanted, disguised as a holiday card. The holiday greetings were then mailed to parents, grandparents and anyone in need of gift ideas that the teen had identified.

#### The results:

Over 1,700 customized cards were printed and mailed during the first week, and the campaign led to a 12 per cent lift in Jordan Brand sales at Foot Locker, contributing significantly to Foot Locker’s 39 per cent growth over the holiday period. Almost everyone who created a card shared it on social media, helping generate 22 million earned impressions.

This mass personalization campaign gave teens control, used holiday cards as custom catalogues and used precision targeting to ensure the best opportunity for conversion with family members most likely to spend money.



Integrate

# 7 How to prepare for delivery

## Follow these guidelines for preparing and depositing your mailing

With millions of pieces going through the mail stream every day, it's important to prepare your shipments to avoid issues or delays. You can prep it yourself following the Canada Post guidelines (see links below) or work with a Canada Post partner who can take care of this for you, including printing. (For more on the expertise of Canada Post partners, refer to **Chapter 2**.)

### Prep for smooth mailing

At Canada Post, we handle mail in two ways. We run standard mailings through machines, while other types of mail needs special handling. We've included links to our customer guides throughout this section, which you can use to find more information on both machineable mail and special handling items.

To get your mailing moving quickly and efficiently, there are a few things to do before it can go to a Canada Post facility. Here are the basic requirements and guidelines for each of our Smartmail Marketing services. Additional requirements may apply. To learn more please refer to our [customer guides](#).

#### 1 Neighbourhood Mail

Used to target neighbourhoods rather than specific individuals, this type of mailing works well for awareness and acquisition. Find the neighbourhoods you want to target using Precision Targeter, a Canada Post partner or [Canada Post Data Solutions Centre](#). When using Precision Targeter select the audience characteristics you want to match (demographic, geographic, life stage/lifestyle, etc.). Then use our [EST](#) shipping tool to create your Order (*Statement of Mailing*). Don't have an account? [Create one here](#). Bring two printed copies of your Order with you when you make your drop-off. A sample is required for our records and verification.

Here's what you'll need to complete your statement of mailing:

- The size and weight of your pieces
- The number of items you're mailing
- The distribution routes you want to reach (the first three digits of postal codes)
- One complete route is required: can be houses, apartments, farms, businesses or a combination of a given route
- The household types you want to reach (houses, apartments, farms, businesses)

To learn more about creating an order, go to [canadapost.ca/SMMguide](https://canadapost.ca/SMMguide).



Prepare  
for Delivery

## Preparing and depositing your Neighbourhood Mail mailing

Before you bring your mail to Canada Post, you'll need to securely place it in Canada Post containers or your own boxes, making sure all pieces are facing upright. Label each container with the urban or rural facility address where you have chosen as your drop off your mailing. Make sure to write your Order number on the label. This will help keep track of your mailing.

### To recap, you'll need to:

1. Securely place your mailing in Canada Post containers or in your own boxes
2. Make sure all mail pieces are facing upright in the box/container
3. Label each box/container with the urban or rural facility where containers will be delivered
4. Make sure to write your Order number on each label

### Are your items:

- Within the height requirement for bundles (under 500 g: (15.24 cm); between 500 g and 1,000 g: (20 cm)) and in labelled Canada Post containers or cardboard boxes and/or on pallets?

For more detailed preparation information go to [canadapost.ca/SMMguide](https://canadapost.ca/SMMguide).

### A few tips:

- Size, weight and transportation all factor into delivery timelines. A local, standard-weight, standard-size mailing, might take longer to deliver than an oversize mailing with national distribution. Be sure to consider these elements in your work-back schedule.
- Find the right deposit location for your mailing at [canadapost.ca/depositlocations](https://canadapost.ca/depositlocations). It's where you'll also find other helpful information such as cut-off times for depositing your mailing. For more details, go to [canadapost.ca/SMMguide](https://canadapost.ca/SMMguide).

### At a glance:

## How to send Neighbourhood Mail



Canada Post partners can help you through each step; please refer to **Chapter 2**.



Prepare  
for Delivery

## 2 Postal Code Targeting

Postal Code Targeting focuses on specific geographic areas and/or demographics. This type of mailing works well for businesses focusing on awareness and acquisition, and needing more surgical targeting.

**You must work with a Canada Post partner** for this type of mailing as a 2D barcode will need to be produced. To determine what postal codes you want to target you will need to:

1. Request a count of the target market for your mailing, along with the criteria for your mailing (More in **Chapter 4**.) This will determine approximately how many mail items to print.
2. Request your data by emailing [data.solutionscentre@canadapost.ca](mailto:data.solutionscentre@canadapost.ca), by calling 1-877-281-4137. Make sure to do this well before your print date.

Once you have your list, you can use our shipping tool [EST](#) to create your Order. This is needed for drop-off. If you don't have an account, you'll need to [create one for free](#).

Print two copies of your Order to bring along when you deposit your shipment.

What you will need to know to complete your statement of mailing:

- The size and weight of your mailing
- The number of items you're mailing
  - Minimum volume requirement: 100 Machineable Mail items

### Preparing and depositing your Postal Code Targeting mail

Before you bring your mailing to Canada Post you'll need to:

1. Securely place it in Canada Post containers or in your own boxes
2. Make sure all mail pieces are facing the same direction with indicia facing the front (label side) of the container
3. Label each box/container with the urban or rural facility where containers will be delivered
4. Make sure to write your Order number on each label

[More on how to prepare your mailing.](#)

#### A few tips:

- Mailings must be deposited within 90 days from when the data file was provided
- Find the right deposit location for your mailing based on postal code and quantity at [canadapost.ca/depositlocations](http://canadapost.ca/depositlocations). You'll also find other helpful information such as the deposit location cut-off times.



Prepare  
for Delivery

**At a glance:****How to send Postal Code Targeting mailing**

Canada Post partners can help you through each step; please refer to **Chapter 2**.

**3 Personalized Mail**

For these one-to-one personalized mailings, you will be using a list, either your own customer/prospect list or a rented one (We can help with that. See **Chapter 4**.) This type of mailing works well for businesses focusing on targeting that involves surgical acquisition as well as retention and loyalty.

Once you have your list, you can use our shipping tool [EST](#) to create your Order needed for drop-off. If you don't have an account, you'll need to [create one for free](#).

Print two copies of your Order to bring along when you deposit your mailing. A sample is required for our records and verification.

What you will need to know to complete your Order:

- The size and weight of your mailing
- The number of items you are mailing
  - Minimum volume requirement: 100 for machineable Mail and 1,000 for Special Handling mail

**Preparing & depositing your Personalized Mail**

Before you bring your mailing to Canada Post you'll need to:

1. Securely place it in Canada Post containers or in your own boxes
2. Make sure all mail pieces are facing the same direction with indicia facing the front (label side) of the container
3. Label each box/container with the urban or rural facility where containers will be delivered
4. Make sure to write your Order number on each label

This checklist can help you ensure your mail is prepared correctly.

[More on how to prepare your mailing.](#)



Prepare  
for Delivery

**A few tips:**

- A standard machineable mailing will normally take between 3 and 5 days to reach the intended destination. Oversize pieces and those needing special handling will take between 3 and 8 days. Weight and final destination play a factor.
- Find the right deposit location for your mailing based on postal code and quantity at [canadapost.ca/depositlocations](http://canadapost.ca/depositlocations). You'll also find other helpful information, such as the deposit location cut-off times.

**At a glance:****How to send Personalized Mail**

To ensure your materials comply with the mail preparation and specification requirements, contact a Commercial Service Network representative at 1-866-757-5480. They'll help review your mail items before dropping them off.

Canada Post partners can help you through each step; please refer to **Chapter 2**.



Prepare  
for Delivery



# 8 How to test, learn and optimize your campaigns for competitive advantage

## A measuring mindset leads to better results

### The importance of testing

Today's direct mail campaigns are driven by data. With customer journeys changing, and touchpoints getting harder to predict, it's really important to keep checking what works best. Even champions have challengers. Marketers who successfully integrate direct mail into their mix pay close attention to small-batch testing, and quickly scale their best results to a wider audience. Just like digital, direct mail responds well to testing allowing you to manage your campaigns and control expectations and results.

### Where do you start?

Testing begins when you establish an alternative mailing. This tests variables that may help generate even higher response rates and/or lower acquisition/retention costs.

Set yourself up for success by applying these best practices:

- Have your data provider split your data 80/20 to enable champion vs. challenger tests. Eighty per cent = your proven results group (based on prior successes) and 20 per cent = your test group. Keeping test runs small allows you to make the most of your budget as you explore what works best.
- Your sample size should be large enough for statistical significance. We recommend ~250 responses to achieve campaign insights.
- Set up a control group, which will not receive any communications or offers. By measuring the difference between your control and test cells you will be able to gauge the success of your campaign.
- Gather response data from every customer touchpoint to get a full picture of who is responding to your message:
  - Coupons and promo codes
  - Unique landing page/webpage
  - 1-800 number
  - Address capture (online and offline)
  - Content download

Use this information to get a better understanding of customer journeys. It will help you reach them in the right place with the right message.

Canada Post partners are here to help. Read more on how they can help in **Chapter 2**.



## What should you test?

Change only one element at a time (format, creative or offer) so you can clearly identify what works best:

### Format

- Self-mailer vs. outer envelope (OE/Letter)
- Oversize or die cut vs. Standard
- Dimensional vs. Standard
- Buckslip vs. no buckslip
- Postcard vs. OE/Letter

### Creative

- Short copy vs. long copy
- Augmented reality
- Media integration and sequencing
- Messaging
- Response mechanism
- Call to action

### Offer

- Price terms
- Time limit
- Free
- Value add
- % discount vs. \$ off

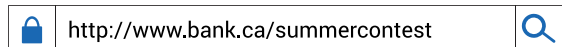


## Tracking and attribution

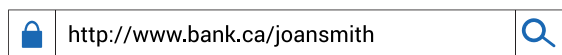
Make sure that any point of contact included in your direct mail piece is unique and trackable. There are many ways you can follow and credit the success of your direct mail campaign:<sup>16</sup>

**Coupon and promo codes:** These can drive traffic in-store and online. Use exclusive codes for each direct mail campaign for full attribution.

**MURL:** A smart and easy way to track response is to drive to a Marketing URL and landing page with promotional-specific content. This ensures that traffic is directly attributed to your mailing; ex., [vegancookies.ca/freesample](http://www.bank.ca/summercontest).<sup>17-20</sup>



**PURL:** A personalized URL is a unique landing page created especially for each recipient of your direct mail campaign.



**Social media:** Include sharing icons in direct marketing channels and encourage customers to share the offers with others in their network. #greatoffer

**Email and phone number:** Provide dedicated toll-free numbers, email addresses or other points of contact. Using a call tracking phone number on your direct mail offers helps accurately track performance. Setting up a call tracking number is quick and easy. You can pick a local or toll-free number and forward it to your main phone line.



Test, Measure  
& Optimize

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17. Google. *5 factors of display viewability*, Think with Google, 2014. Consulted online in October 2019 at <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/marketing-resources/data-measurement/5-factors-of-viewability/>.

18. Zeifman, Igal. *2014 Bot Traffic Report: Just the Droids You were Looking for*, Imperva, 2014. Consulted online in October 2019 at <https://www.imperva.com/blog/bot-traffic-report-2014/>.

19. Marshall, Jack. *IAB Chair: time to take ad fraud seriously*, Digiday, 2014. Consulted online in October 2019 at <https://digiday.com/media/advertising-fraud-iab/>.

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**Augmented reality:** Apply this technology to print. Recipients are encouraged to scan certain areas of a printed ad, catalogue or mailer to access additional content like videos, 3D images or digital games.

**QR codes:** Quick and affordable, these codes can be scanned with a mobile device to drive to video or a landing page. These quick-response codes are particularly effective.



It's easy to get bogged down in metrics. A way to avoid this is by staying focused on measuring what really matters: the quality and quantity of responses.

Close the gap between objectives and response by focusing on relevance. Your objectives need to be translated into the context of people to ensure they make sense in real life.

Success doesn't begin and end with dollars. Define success in human terms - the value you will create - to achieve the response you want and then translate this into a direct mail campaign. Focus measurement on this customer-centric definition based on a clear understanding of the role direct mail needs to play in the customer journey.

Measure what matters and ensure that measurement isn't just about outcomes but a tool to test, learn, and adapt.

Canada Post partners can help every step of the process. Learn more about how they can help in **Chapter 2**.

## Direct mail in action

Here's a summary of Wayfair Canada's success with programmatic mail. Wayfair worked with Canada Post to test physical and digital triggers to attract and nurture qualified prospects to increase conversion. Based on data from over 3,000 shoppers, Canada Post created an e-commerce index that identified postal codes with the most active online shoppers. Using this qualified data set, Wayfair Canada and Canada Post collaborated on testing two marketing mix hypotheses to 1) increase acquisition and 2) boost remarketing efforts. The test proved that adding a physical direct mail component activated the marketing mix. If you'd like to read the full story, head to [canadapost.ca/incite](https://canadapost.ca/incite), download THE YEAR AHEAD issue of *INCITE* magazine (2019 | 01 with furniture on the cover) and go to page 11.



Test, Measure  
& Optimize