

Marketing Minute ~ The Power of Postcards

Postcards may not be the most popular marketing tool in our modern high-tech business world. That's unfortunate, because postcards can be a very cost-effective way to generate website traffic and sales leads, if you do it right.

When you create your postcard, keep these in mind:

Make a big first impression. People like getting postcards from friends and relatives, not advertisers. Make your postcard look at first glance like a message from someone they may know instead of like an advertising announcement. That creates a warm friendly reception for your postcard. For example, use the same typestyle and layout you would use to send a postcard to a friend. Use a date at the top and include a real 'from' name at the bottom, even if it's not handwritten.

Get right to the point. Postcards get delivered in a format that's ready to read. Take advantage of this by making the biggest benefit you offer the first thing the reader sees. This may make them want to read the rest of your postcard. For example, state your biggest benefit as a headline at the top of your postcard, or make it the first item on a bulleted list of benefits, or highlight it in bold type if it's in the body of your postcard.

Sell the right thing. Marketing postcards are most effective when they are used to generate website traffic or sales leads. They are less effective for closing sales because they don't provide enough space for a detailed sales message. Design your message to sell the reader on seeking more information instead of trying to close sales. For example, rather than giving detailed information on your products or services, promote the major benefit(s) they provide. Then, persuade the reader to visit your website or to take some other action to get more information from a source where you can close sales.

Be clear and direct. You have only a few seconds to get the reader's attention and to persuade them to take the action you want. So keep your message brief and make sure the reader can clearly understand it with just a quick glance. Use short sentences or bullets and end your postcard by telling the reader exactly what to do to get more details, and include a reason to do it immediately.

Stimulate fast action. Just telling your reader how to get more information is not enough. You have to give them a reason to respond NOW or many will put your postcard aside to do later, then get involved with other things and forget it. For example, offer them a discounted price, a special bonus or some other benefit if they reply to your postcard by a deadline.

There are many reasons why you should not overlook this highly effective and very low-cost marketing tool:

- **Postcards work for any business.** For example, they can produce website traffic for online marketers, floor traffic for retail stores, sales leads for direct marketers, and just about any other type of sales activity a business wants.
- **Designing postcards is simple and uncomplicated.** It can be as simple as printing your best small ad on a 4x6 card and sending it to a list of potential prospects. Postcards usually work best when the message is brief and the postcard looks at first glance like a message from a friend.
- **Printing postcards is easy and inexpensive.** You can print postcards with your own computer or have them printed professionally for about 8 to 10 cents each. There are many excellent online printers that offer this service.
- **There's a special low postage rate for postcards.** You can send any quantity of postcards by First Class Mail in the US for less than 30 cents. The only requirement is that your postcards must be at least 3 1/2 x 5 inches but no larger than 4 1/4 x 6 inches. The larger sized postcards use regular first-class stamps.
- **Postcards nearly always get read.** Because postcards are simple and easy to use, they produce results fast. You can mail postcards within a few days of deciding to use them, and you'll start getting sales activity 2 or 3 days later.
- **Postcards are effective for generating website traffic.** One of the most effective postcards formats simply lists a few benefits of a product or service on the card and tells the reader where to get more information. This makes them ideal for generating traffic to a website.
- **Postcards multiply themselves.** This is a great form of viral marketing. Postcards are like small billboards, and they are easy to handle. They often get saved by recipients or passed on to others, providing additional exposure of your advertising message.

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- **Markets can be precisely targeted with postcards.** You can accurately target your best markets by sending postcards only to mailing lists of prospects likely to be interested in what you're offering, and who also have a history of acting on offers that interest them.
- **Postcard marketing results are easy to measure.** Postcards normally generate over 90% of their total response within 7 to 10 days. This enables you to quickly and accurately evaluate the results of a postcard campaign
- **Postcards put you in control of your sales activity.** You can quickly boost (or reduce) your sales activity anytime you want by simply regulating the number of postcards you mail and how often you mail them.
- **Postcards conceal your marketing from competitors.** Most advertising uses mass media where your competitors hear or see what you are doing, and copy it. Postcard marketing is personal. Only you and your prospects are aware of what you are doing.

Postcards may be one of the best kept secrets of modern marketing. They're highly effective, very low-cost, simple to use...and they work for any business. If you don't use them, you're overlooking a profitable marketing tool.

