

Seven Ways to Power Up Your Postcards

by Dean Rieck

In my tool kit, there's a ratty old screwdriver that I inherited from my father. And he inherited it from his father. It's beat up from years of hard use and stands out from all the other shiny new tools. Why do I hang on to it? Because despite the wear and tear, it's a good, solid tool and always gets the job done.

That's the way I feel about postcards. They're not new or flashy, but they always get the job done.

Postcards are cheap, versatile and effective. They're easy to produce. And you can get them in the mail and start getting results in just days. Of course, a lot of people say postcards are too small to be effective. But they're wrong. Postcards will work like gangbusters if you use them correctly.

Postcards have been a secret weapon of mine for a long time. Here are seven little tricks to power up postcards.

1. Aim exclusively to drive traffic. Postcards are generally not a good format for direct sales, but not often. Their true power is in getting attention quickly and driving people to take a second step immediately. For example, you can drive people to a web site, drive them to a retail store or drive them to request information. In marketing lingo, we're talking about the two-step sales process.

2. Focus on one big idea per card. Just one. Not two or three. One. If you have more than one idea, create more than one card. For example, a client wanted to cheaply generate leads from a targeted audience. However, we didn't know which of several benefits would be most compelling. So instead of cramming a laundry list into one card, we created a series of cards with one benefit each. This helped maintain focus in each card - from the headline to the call to action.

3. Get attention with a bold headline. Sure, you should have a picture on the front too. But don't make the mistake of thinking that a picture is worth a thousand words. It's not. Only words drive action. And since a postcard must convey a powerful message quickly, you must have a powerful headline to do the job. All the usual headline rules apply, including selecting your audience and conveying a benefit.

4. Make a simple, compelling offer. Again, the idea here is to get people to take the next step. So your offer should be related to that. In other words, if you're selling the world's greatest widget, don't present an offer for the widget on your postcard. Rather, your offer should simply be for more information about the widget. This can take the form of a demonstration, sample, brochure or some other free item. Don't get ahead of yourself

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of companies with four or fewer employees cannot obtain adequate financing.

- Businesses would make changes if capital were more readily available, including adding advertising, hiring more employees, purchasing new equipment and/or increasing employee benefits.

- The web presence of small business has significantly increase. Sixty percent of the surveyed businesses have web sites, compared to 31 percent 10 years ago. More than one-third of the companies use e-commerce.

- Businesses express strong support for health-care reform, but reject a government mandate for businesses to provide it for their employees.

- Asked what issues they would like to see the presidential campaigns address, the tax burden and health-care costs top the list.

The complete report can be found on the NSBA's web site www.nsba.biz.

Article taken from *The Costco Connection*, July 2007

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