

THE CHEAPEST WAY TO DISTRIBUTE 8 1/2 X 11" CIRCULARS

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Co-op Mailing (short for co-operative) means that two or more businesses share in the cost and distribution of a direct mail campaign. It's kind of like having you and another non-competing business split the cost of printing, assembling and mailing an advertising flyer to a shared (same) marketbase.

Co-op dealing is very beneficial (and usually safe) for everyone involved. One example of co-op dealing in mail order is to send your 8 1/2x11" camera-ready circular to a co-op printer and they'll print your ad on one side, their ad on the back side and ship them back to you for a low cost of around \$10 per 1,000. You get your printing almost free and the other dealer gets his or her flyers mailed on the back of yours free.

But what do you do with them when they are mailed back to you? If you're new to mail order it's doubtful you have a mailing list to distribute them to. Plus, postage costs alone would run you about \$290.00 first-class. At this rate it would have been cheaper to send the camera-ready to a tabloid or adsheet publisher rather than by a co-op. But don't despair.

Simply have the printer ship your copies to a co-op circular mailer instead of sending them to you. A couple good circular mailers we recommend are BMG Services, PO Box 429, Johnson KS 67855 (your cost is only 1c for 8 1/2x11 pre-printed circular) or Thorn Gifts, 1807 Stillwater #5, St Paul MN 55119 (your cost is only 5c for each 8 1/2x11 pre-printed circular.) Why the

difference in price? BMG mails by bulk rate and Thorn mails by first-class. Either method is effective and sure beats paying 29c each.

In addition, you benefit from the mailing list of the circular mailer. If this particular mailer sells a mailing list, having them do a 1,000 or 5,000 "test" mailing for you would be a way to test their names. You should get a few responses from a mailing of this size but it all depends on "what" you are offering and the "price" you are offering it for. It's very difficult to sell any item for more than \$50 on a 8 1/2x11" circular. For items costing more than \$50, you need to use the two-step approach. In other words, use the 8 1/2x11" circular to generate inquiries and follow-up with the complete sales materials that constitute the higher price the customer may decide to pay.

Another idea is that you could contact a dealer with products and services not conflicting with your own and ask them to co-op mail for you. In this deal, you would pay for the 2-sided printing (with the mailer's ad on back of yours) and he/she would mail them for you free of charge. It works!

Another way to co-op deal in mail order is by co-op advertising. High Mountain Advertiser and Popular Advertiser are both long running co-op publications. You place your ad the first time through a dealer and all future ads are 50% less. Then you have the option of mailing pre-printed copies with your name in the publisher's block as an authorized dealer. When other people order advertising, they will send their orders to you.

You keep 50% of the money and send the rest (along with the order) back to the publisher. This way, you can have your 8 1/2x11 circulars printed and mailed in a publication at a 50% savings.

Coal Publishing, 27 South 4th Avenue, Highland Park NJ 08904 also offers co-op advertising in their "Small Business Keeps America Growing" tabloid. For the low cost of \$35 per tabloid-size page, you can have your 8 1/2x11" circular along with four 2-inch ads printed and mailed to a whopping 5,000 circulation. All you are responsible for is the mailing of 200 of them. Any beginner can handle mailing 50 per week to a mailing list or to their own customers. Besides, no one can offer you a 5,000 honest circulation for this price. This is a real money-saver!

If you market the direct mail method, it's a good idea to send a good circular you plan to keep around for awhile to a mail order printer and have 1,000 printed on 1 side. Then, you can use the back of 100 or so for testing purposes of other circulars. Run down to the copy shop and run the circulars through the copier by printing on the back side. Only run 100 or less and send them to the best names you can find. If they pull orders, you may have a winner and can have 1,000 printed. Nothing is more annoying than being stuck with 1,000 circulars with something you want to mail on one side and something outdated on the back.

NOTICE: Rates and prices shown here were current at the time of writing. Call for quotes.