

MONEY-MAKER'S SECRETS TO RENTING PROFITABLE MAILING LISTS

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As an entrepreneur involved in the selling and/or promotion of something by Direct Mail, you should already know that the most important aspects of your mailing have to do with the sales letter or circular you send out, and the mailing list you use. With these thoughts in mind, and assuming you've got what should be an order-pulling sales letter or circular, let's focus our attention specifically on the problem of finding mailing lists that produce profitable orders.

Common sense should tell you that without a good mailing list, the time and money you spend for market research, advertising layout and knowledge relating to the "rules of direct mail," will just be wasted effort. In other words, unless you get your offer to the buyers, you might as well save your time and money.

In order to reach your most likely buyer, you must first determine who your most-likely buyers are. This is not so hard as it might appear. Actually, it's just a matter of recognizing that automotive items will appeal to car owners, while household gadgets will sell best to the homemakers.

Regardless of how easy it is, this is the most often overlooked part of the beginning entrepreneur's planning. Suffice it to say that if you don't know who you're going to sell a product or service to, your product or service is going to be pretty hard for you to sell.

The next thing to really look into, is the competition your product or service faces. If it has a limited market - not too many people would stand in line to buy it - and you are competing with virtually the same product as supplied by other companies - then you're going to have to either come up with a strong 'hidden angle' or else face defeat before you even begin...

These are the "keys" to success in selling anything via direct mail - pin-pointing exactly who your buyers are, presenting your offer to them with an angle not being used by your competition, and concentrating all your sales efforts only on your most-likely prospects.

Assuming you "know" who your most likely buyers are; that you've got a "winning" sales letter or circular - and, a product or service these people "will stand in line to buy," then your only problem is to get the message to these people.

Do not think you'll "save some money" by renting or buying inexpensive mailing lists from the advertisers in all those ad sheets and "mail order" type publications that seem to flood your mailbox. You'll waste a lot of time, and spend money chasing the wind with these lists.

These lists offered by "mail order" dealers are compiled from ad sheets, mail order publications, and/or incoming offers received by the list-seller... These people also compile "rental mailing lists" from the no-response/no-sale lists they use... A lot of them compile their rental lists directly from the telephone/city, directories... And not a few of them work the "envelope stuffing" scheme to compile their rental lists - They offer commissions to people who pay to join their envelope stuffing program, and then sell or rent the names of the people who join their program...

The people who join the program are advised to compile lists from any number of sources, send out a commission circular, and receive a commission on each incoming order. The names of the buyers are then compiled onto another list, and sold by the promoters of this scheme to some of the larger list-brokers as bona fide mail order buyers... Anytime you rent a list of 5,000 or more names from a mail order type operator, you can almost certainly count on a list that's 1) Five or more years old... 2) Filled with names of people who have moved... 3) Going to be dominated with the names of other mail order sellers...

Before renting or buying a mailing list from someone, use the same kind of common sense you use in deciding upon a doctor, lawyer or auto mechanic. Something else to keep in mind - whenever you rent or buy mailing lists from someone who has or is advertising for dealers or mailing list brokers, you are going to end up with a list of names used by many mail order dealers, generally with the majority of them offering the same products or services.

The best thing to do is to take a note pad and pencil to your public library... Ask the librarian to let you look at the Standard Rate & Data Service Directory pertaining to mailing lists. Within this voluminous directory, you'll find the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of virtually all the reputable mailing list brokers in the country. These brokers explain within this directory the different lists they have available for rent, what kind of buyers the lists are made up of, and the date the list was last cleaned - that is, the last time all the names on the list were verified relative to the correctness of addresses.

Select a half dozen or so of the list brokers handling the kinds of lists that are made up of buyers of products or services similar to yours... Jot those names and addresses down on your note pad... then go home & call them on the phone... Tell the list broker about yourself, what you're trying to sell, how much you're asking for it, and your long-range plans. Almost all of them will want to see a sample of your mailing piece, and more often than not, a sample of your product as well. Don't be afraid to talk with these people - they're in business to help you, and if they "steer you onto" a list that doesn't make money for you, they figure you'll not buy from them again, so it's to their benefit to see that you get the "right" list for your mailing piece and offer. Most of them will even critique your mailing piece and offer, making suggestions for improvements when appropriate, and in general, act as a consultant to see that you realize a profit through their services.

Once you and the list broker have decided upon the mailing list best suited to your offer, he'll generally require you to rent a minimum of 5,000 names. The going prices will range from \$35 to \$95 per thousand names. Expensive, maybe... But if you pay \$475 for 5,000 prospective buyers, and end up with 1,500 buyers of a \$20 "how-to" manual that you've written and had printed at a cost of 50% per manual - that would mean a gross of \$30,000... minus \$750 for 1,500 manuals, plus another 69% each to send each manual out via 4th class mail which would amount to \$1,035. Add these figures together for a total of \$1,785 and subtract this total from \$30,000 and you stand a very good chance of netting \$28,000 or more...

So you see, the important thing is to get your offer to your most likely buyers. The only way to do this - the fastest, and least expensive way - is to work with a reputable mailing list broker and forget about all that "wheel-spinning" within the circle of mail-order-type people. Really, so long as you deal with "mail-order-type" people - small-time dealers and advertisers - you'll never achieve anything beyond a busy-busy, hand-to-mouth existence in this business.

The bottom-line reason for most of the entrepreneurial failures in the mail order business is simply that the beginner tries to cut corners by using less than the most productive mailing lists available. Indeed, the years are littered with people from all walks of life who have had good product and/or service ideas, but failed to "get their ideas off the ground." Generally, these people were trying to "save money" by compiling their own mailing lists, advertising in "all-seller" type mail order publications, and/or sending their offers out to "mail-order-type" people found in the ad sheets or to lists purchased from advertisers in these publications. In almost every case, the entrepreneurs efforts along these lines, and based upon a "saving money" philosophy, have always ended in heartbreak and great financial loss for the entrepreneur...

YOU CAN SUCCEED, STARTING FROM SCRATCH! But, before you attempt it - before you "jump in and reach for your own mail order fortune," be sure you arrange all the odds in your own favor... Anything less than the -rules' stated within this report will surely be a waste of time, and result in failure...

Remember: Your product has to be something you can buy or produce in finished form for pennies, and sell for dollars. There has to be an "eager" market for your product or service. You must project the most professional of all images of yourself as the "company" or supplier in all your sales letters, circulars, advertising and/or dealings with your prospective buyers. And you must "know" who your buyers are, and then concentrate your efforts to reach only those people with your offers...