# ORGANIZE YOUR CUSTOMER MAILING LIST FOR OPTIMUM RESULTS.

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**ORGANIZE YOUR CUSTOMER MAILING LIST FOR OPTIMUM RESULTS.**

A list of customers who have previously bought from you is your most
important asset.  These are the customers who will provide you with return
business, which is more profitable than the first sale.  But, are you
getting the most from your customer list?  There are some secrets you should
know, so you can squeeze the most benefits out of your mailing list.

Most business' customer lists consist of this information:  Name, Address,
City, State, Zip.  That's it.  Unfortunately, this mailing list is almost
worthless.  You need to have more information in your files than just that.
I have 32 information fields in my customer database!  You should be able to
set these up in your computer's database, or, if you don't use a computer
(you REALLY should), all this information should fit on a large size index
card in a card file.

Here are the fields I have in my customer database:

Product Code
Publication
Issue Purchase
LastName Of Customer
FirstName of Customer
Address1;
Address2 / POBox
City;  State;  Zip;
Amount Paid
Ship Date
Phone Number

Almost any address possible can be put into my database without having to
leave out information or abbreviate.  The next three are for phone numbers.
You MUST have your customer's phone numbers, when possible, to be able to
follow up quickly and efficiently.  Making one phone call can be the
difference between a big sale or NO sale.

The InqDate field is where I record the date the customer first inquired
about my products and services, and the date I sent the information, since
it's always the same day (there's no excuse not to follow up your inquiries
on the same day you receive them).

 This information, coupled with the ReferSource field, tells me when
 my ads are hitting, and how quickly people are responding to them.

 If I see that inquiries are coming in slowly, or long after the ad is out, I know that I need more
action incentives in my next ad.  The ReferSource field is where I enter the "key" from my ad.

I use a letter code after my street address to indicate which publication and issue the inquiry comes from. I also code my mailings, for the same reason.

I enter a date into the two FollowUp fields to indicate when I want to send follow up literature to customers who don't order on the first try. I usually put a date two weeks from the InqDate in FollowUp1, and one two weeks later than that in FollowUp2.

Then, every day, I run a search on these two fields to pull up any records that have today's date as a follow up date. I can then print labels and put them on the envelopes and literature I have ready for follow ups.

I use the next three fields (SubDate, SubAmount, RenewDate) for the newsletter I publish. These would have the date I receive their subscription, the amount they paid (I sometimes run special prices), and the date I want to send subscription renewal information (usually 10 1/2 months from the SubDate). I can then print labels in the same manner as I do for the FollowUp fields.

Next come the Purchase fields. I have three sets of purchase fields, one for each purchase the customer makes. In the Purch1 field, I enter a code for the product they have purchased. The other two fields get the date and amount of the purchase.

 The second and third sets of fields get the same information for the customer's second and third purchases. The best customers to mail offers to are the ones that have purchased within the last 90 days, so I don't have to worry about many customers making more than three purchases during that time period (though I hope they will!). If someone does make a fourth purchase, I move the second and third sets of data up to the first and second lines, and enter the new purchase information in the third data set.

These fields are extremely important. I can instantly pull up a list of customers that have purchased within the past 90 days, or 60 days, or 30 days, or even 15 days. When you rent out your house mailing list, like I do, this information is vital. The rental amount you can charge increases as the amount of time since the customer's purchase decreases.

The Comments field is used to store any miscellaneous information about the customer that I think is important to know.

I use the final field, Cust#, for a specially coded customer number that I assign each customer. I use this code to identify the recipient of any commissions I may pay to customers who have brought business my way.

That's a lot of information, and you may be wondering why I would need all of that. Well, I've already told you how I use the purchase data fields for identifying the "age" of the customers. I can also use the TotAmount field

to compile a list of customers who have bought more than a certain amount from me.

 Together, these field searches can be used to produce a customized mailing list of, for example, customers who have bought more than $50 in the past 30 days.  These would be the most responsive people to mail to, and would render the highest rental rate.

I can also use certain mailing list fields to identify people who should be dropped from my list.  For example, I can search for customers with FollowUp2 dates that are four weeks past today's date, and TotAmounts of zero.  These customers could be erased from my list.

Or, I could leave them on file, and put a word or two in the Comments field reminding me not to mail anything else to them, in case they inquire again.  This saves me the cost of mailing something to someone who probably won't respond.  They might, but chances are they won't.

Finally, if I get a customer who has returned too many orders, or has defrauded me in some way, I can put that information in the Comments field. Then, if they order again, when their file comes up, I will see their history, and can use extra caution with them.

As you can see, if you use foresight when initially setting up your customer list, you will have a valuable tool that you can use to increase your order potential, increase your income through specialized list rental, and decrease your mailing costs by eliminating "deadwood" from your list.  This is one of the most important methods you can use to increase your chances of success.