This Powerful Marketing Strategy Will Help You Outshine Your Competitors and Make Your Brand More Memorable

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It isn’t easy to overshadow the Super Bowl, but in 2015, that’s exactly what happened. Katy Perry’s halftime performance went viral because one of her backup dancers (now famously known as Left Shark) danced to the beat of their own drum — literally.

Out of the dozens of dancers on stage in beachy costumes, Left Shark stole the show with dance moves that weren’t just out of sync — they were on a different planet. It turned out that Left Shark, a.k.a. Bryan Gaw, performed his goofy moves on purpose as part of his freestyle choreography.

In a lot of ways, building a successful marketing strategy is the same. You certainly have the option of going with the flow of what everyone else is doing, but what you really need are Left Shark moves — standout tactics that generate meaningful impressions.

In my 25 years of experience, the best way to do that is to get offline and get into your prospects’ homes. Here are three reasons why direct mail steals the show and how you can make it work for you.

Competition in the mailbox dropped 16%, freeing up space for you to capture more attention and market share

The United States Postal Service (USPS) recently announced its financial results for the third quarter of 2023 (April 1-June 30, 2023). They reported marketing mail volume declined 2.6 billion pieces or 16% (costing over $333 million in revenue) compared to the same quarter last year.

I experienced something similar in 2020, when marketing mail volume decreased 15% due to the pandemic. Most businesses – my competitors included – decided to pause their marketing when shutdowns hit in Spring 2020.

But not us. My business, PostcardMania, continued marketing without interruption. This allowed us to increase leads by 9.24% in the six months following May 1, 2020, averaging an extra 186 leads per week without increasing budget. From there, earnings ended up nearly 10%, and we added 30 new jobs overall that year.

With marketing mail down nationwide, you have an opportunity to capture market share from your competitors. It’s the least crowded marketing channel right now, and it’s likely to stay that way with an election year coming up and political ad spend shifting toward TV and digital. In fact, political ad experts are predicting political direct mail spend will decline dramatically to a 9.2% share of all spending in 2024, down from 22.8% in 2019.

With fewer print advertisements in Americans’ mailboxes, you’ll have less competition to make a lasting impression on prospects.

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Digital engagement rates have dropped while the recall rate of direct mail messages is 70% better

Evidence shows that digital fatigue caused by surfing the web and browsing social media is at an all-time high. Recent reports show a steady decline in engagement on Instagram, Facebook and X (formerly known as Twitter). Instagram engagement dropped from 1.22% in 2019 to .47% in 2022; Facebook engagement dropped from .09% in 2019 to .06% in 2022; and X engagement dropped from .045% in 2019 to .035% in 2022.

Attention spans are also declining. According to a study by Microsoft in 2015, since the year 2000, attention spans have dropped from 12 seconds to 8 seconds on average. Another study in 2022 found that, among consumers, Generation Z reportedly has a 1.3-second attention span – the lowest of all age groups.

So, not only are people more easily tuning out digital advertisements, but any attention they do spare is in tiny increments.

The benefit of direct mail is its very nature. People look at their mail when they have the time and energy, which means they're more open to receiving your message. It also naturally takes more time to process mail than simply scrolling by a digital ad, so prospects are more likely to remember you.

In fact, research shows that direct mail has an average engagement rate of 95% and is interacted with at least four times at home. Other studies demonstrate that a whopping 31% of all mail items were still at home a month after they were delivered.

Even more significantly, scientific studies show that people recall direct mail advertisements better than digital ones. In a test that compared the impact of similar direct mail and digital media marketing campaigns, participants' recall was 70% higher when they were exposed to direct mail versus a digital ad, which had a recall of only 44%.

Bottom line? People pay more meaningful attention to a message that arrives in the mail and are much more likely to remember it long after.

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Direct mail has become smarter, more targeted and highly affordable

While the USPS has seen a decline in marketing mail volume, my company has experienced the opposite. We've been hitting our highest numbers, even better than before the pandemic.

In 2017, we mailed 41,512,130 pieces of mail, and this increased to 151,890,493 pieces in 2022 – a jump of 265%.

Leading our growth charge in recent years is PCM Integrations, the division that oversees technology-driven partnerships and direct mail automation. Businesses can automatically mail postcards or letters to prospects at lightning speed based on various triggers like spending behaviors, abandoned shopping carts, birthdays and much more.

Businesses can access this technology at a lower price point compared to traditional direct mail, utilize endless programmatic targeting options and employ responsive lead nurturing – all at scale.

So, not only is there less competition in today's mailbox, the technology used to get your message there has grown leaps and

bounds. Today’s savviest marketers have jumped on this trend to make the most of their budgets. That’s why it’s the fastest-growing segment in direct mail today.

Give direct mail marketing a shot – especially direct mail automation – and you’ll steal the show like Left Shark at halftime.

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