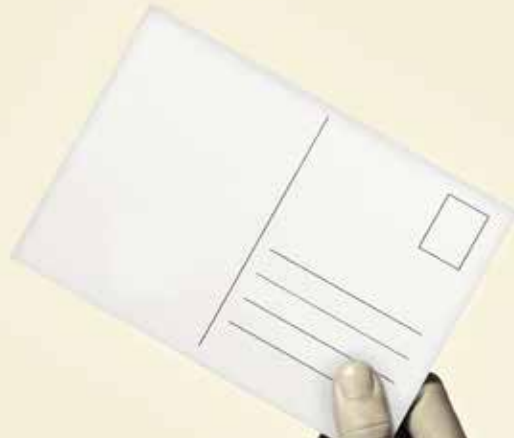# ENVELOPE

VS.

POSTCARD

How, when and why to use them.

Direct mail marketing is a perennial proven winner for generating leads, closing one-step sales, raising funds and building brand equity. Learn how envelope and postcard formats help today's cross-channel marketers maximize their investment in direct mail.

Enhance your mail.

This white paper focuses on two of the most popular direct mail formats – the envelope package and the postcard. It presents information to help you understand how, when and why to use these formats along with tips for creating them.

Paper technology and printing advancements continue to make postcard and envelope formats intriguing to consumers and effective for marketers. Whichever direct mail format you use, it's important to continuously test. Even the best format eventually suffers from mail fatigue. Testing keeps you prepared with a mail-proven replacement.

Why do marketers use direct mail in the age of digital advertising?

For cross-channel marketers, direct mail is a cost-effective addition to the media mix. It's a proven tool for filling the sales funnel, reaching more audiences and reinforcing brand strengths. A 2016 consumer study conducted on behalf of the United States Postal Service reveals:

86% of consumers report they pick up their mail at the first opportunity.

63% look forward to receiving mail.

79% sort their mail at the first opportunity – on the same day.

8.4 The average person spends minutes a day sorting and reading mail or about an hour a week.

82% of Millennials (ages 25 to 34) The USPS also found find direct mail more trustworthy than online advertisements.

If you're thinking of adding direct mail to your mix of email, social media, paid search and online display advertising, consider testing direct mail's two most popular mailing formats—the postcard and the envelope package.

Envelope Mailings

1.
Make a
one-step sale.

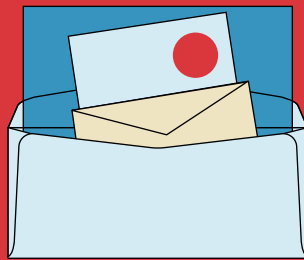**2.**
Generate
qualified leads.

3.
Tell a story
in more detail.

4.
Make an offer
that appears private
and personal.

Envelope Applications

Envelope mailings are also called *solo mailings* or *classic direct mail packages*. An envelope package can carry as many components as needed to deliver your message and achieve your marketing objectives—as long as it meets postal guidelines. A classic solo mailing typically includes an outer envelope (carrier envelope), letter, brochure, optional lift note, and reply vehicle with the flexibility to include other inserts.

It's called a solo package because it focuses on a single (solo) product/service/cause or a group of similar products such as a skin care line. The solo or classic package is popular with fundraisers because it includes a letter as part of its personal appeal.

As with postcards, there are many reasons to send envelope-inserted mailings to customers, donors, prospects and other targeted audiences.

5.
Leverage response with
multiple components
that provide
supporting details.

6.
Provide a reply device
and postage-paid
reply envelope.

7.
Extend a private
invitation.

8.
Include a letter for
person-to-person
engagement.

9.
Share news or
information that's not
appropriate for a less
confidential postcard.

10.
Create perceived value
by including a product
sample, swatch,
photo or freemium.

11.
Support a digital
marketing campaign.

12.
Reflect the importance
of confidentiality
when selling a product,
such as insurance
or a credit card.
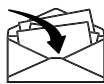
Envelope Mailings

INFLUENCE of the Envelope

+ Information delivered in a sealed envelope is perceived as being more valuable and important.

+ Envelope mailings create anticipation by delivering your message without revealing the contents.

+ Outer envelopes are involvement devices that must be opened to see what's inside.

+ Envelope mailings contain multiple components of different shapes and sizes that provide information from multiple perspectives.

+ Envelope mailings create reader engagement with involvement devices such as zip strips, peel-offs and unique windows.

+ Used appropriately, envelope mailings can outperform postcards even factoring in the cost differential.

On the Flip Side...

– Envelope mailings are more expensive to create, produce and mail.

– Envelope mailings take longer to get into the mail stream.

– Postage is typically higher than that of a postcard.

– Because most people don't read every word, envelope mailings must be written and designed to be scanned. This is an art and a science.

– The response cycle for solo mailings is longer. People hold onto inserted mailings and respond later. If you're accustomed to the immediacy of a click, this trailing response may be misunderstood.

– With today's emphasis on digital advertising, experienced direct mail solo writers and designers are difficult to find.
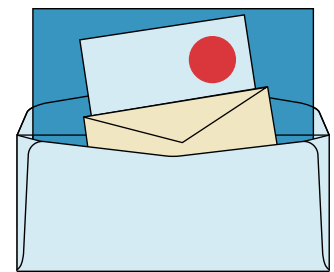
Envelope Mailings

Size

Outer envelopes (OE) don't have to be a standard size. While it may cost more in postage and production, mailing an envelope other than a #10 or 6x9 makes it stand out. *According to the 2016 DMA Response Rates Report, oversized formats produce the best response rate when mailed to house lists.*

Shape

The USPS prefers standard rectangular envelopes for efficient machine processing, but a square or odd-shape can reinforce your marketing goals and provide the best ROI. Trailing Edge envelopes are an example of how shape grabs attention.

Color

If your control is a white OE, test other colors or brown kraft to bump response.

Texture

Textured OEs have a tactile advantage because they look and feel distinctive. If you can't afford textured paper stock, use a varnish or printed faux finish.

Teaser

OE teaser copy is an enticement. Use it to dangle a major benefit, establish a deadline, or ask a question with the answer inside. Like ad headlines and email subject lines, teasers are a creative element to test.

Variable Data Printing

Individualize your outers with more than name and address. Use variable data printing (VDP) to customize copy and images relevant to the recipient.

Back flap

Use the back flap for your return address or add a zip-strip involvement device with a call-to-action.

Non-addressing side

You can't control which side of your OE is seen first. Test including an offer, teaser, or faux rubber stamped message such as DO NOT DISCARD or DO NOT BEND on the back.

Window vs. closed face

Window envelopes can reduce addressing costs, but they also can provide a peek of an envelope's contents. Ask your supplier about different window shapes and sizes.

Hot spots

Every OE (and each direct mail component inside it) has hot spots where the scanner's eye goes first. Some are innate such as the corner card, addressing and postage. Others, created by writers and designers, include teaser copy, involvement devices and graphics. These work together to manage eye flow and keep your mail piece out of the trash.

Corner card/return address

The corner card is a powerful piece of real estate in the upper left corner of an OE. It's one of the hot spots where a screener's eye goes while deciding whether or not to keep your mailpiece. It reveals who sent the mailing and is an important strategic element.

Involvement devices

Zip strips, peel-off stickers, die-cuts, unusual windows, and repositionable notes are just a few of the devices that encourage people to peel, pull and peek inside an OE.

Postage

Postage is another hot spot that doesn't have to be boring. Test live stamps or create a custom indicia.

OTHER MAILING COMPONENTS

Every component (letter, brochure, lift letter, response device, reply envelope, inserts) inside an OE has to pull its weight, figuratively and literally since the weight of additional pieces adds postage. Experienced direct mail writers and designers understand the strategic importance of each component and create them accordingly.

Postcard Mailings

1.
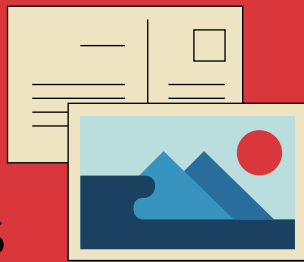*Introduce a new product or service.*

2.
Invite to an event.

3.
Announce a sale.

4.
Preview an envelope mailing, catalog, email or website offer.

There are dozens of marketing reasons to mail postcards to customers, donors, prospects and other targeted audiences.

Postcard Applications

Postcards mailings traditionally are printed on two sides of a piece of card stock. *A direct mail postcard can be any size that meets USPS mailing standards for machinable processing.*

NOTE: Some sizes require more postage than others. Thanks to creative minds, printing advancements and new paper technology, all postcards need not be alike. More on this later.

For more details on postal rates: https://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/welcome.htm

5.
Follow up an envelope mailing, catalog, email or website offer.

6.
Generate store or website traffic.

7.
Announce a store opening.

8.
Say thank you.

9.
Send a deadline reminder.

10.
Reinforce your brand.

**11.**
Support social media.

12.
Request referrals.

Postcard Mailings

POWER of the Postcard

+ Postcards are highly scannable.

+ They have instant impact like mini billboards in the mail.

+ Postcards are a fast read. Most can be read in their entirety in less than 2 or 3 minutes.

+ They are faster, easier and more affordable to produce than other mail formats; they can be mailed quickly and within most budgets.

+ Postage for postcards may cost less than other formats if the postcards meet USPS standards.

+ They are easily retained and passed along.

On the Flip Side...

− Postcards appear less personal than mailings inserted into envelopes.

− They are immediately seen as advertising. There's no easy way to create anticipation.

− Postcards have limited space to tell a story.

− They have fewer opportunities to create tactile involvement with your message.

− Postcards have a shorter shelf life and response curve than envelope mailings.

− They aren't appropriate for every brand, product or offer.
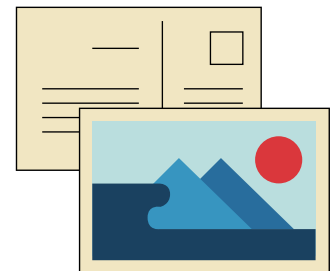
Postcard Mailings

Focus

Keep your postcard focused; don't try to make it do too much.

Orientation

Mail is typically delivered address side up which means the addressing side of a postcard is seen first. Design and write accordingly. At the same time, never assume both sides get read. Put the most important information on both (e.g. phone number, deadline).

Size

Mail non-standard size postcards if you don't want yours to stack neatly with others in the day's mail. Even if it costs more in postage or printing, it may be worth it. Test to confirm.

Color

White may be tidy, but neon green, hot pink and a palette of other colors stand out more in the mail.

Weight

The heavier the card stock, the more important a postcard feels to the recipient.

Texture

Use textured card stock or ask your printer to add texture with a varnish, embossing, debossing, even lamination. The more tactile the piece, the more it stands out in the stack.

Perforations

Build in a retention device with a perforated coupon, business or appointment card. Another option is to mail a double postcard with a tear-off reply card.
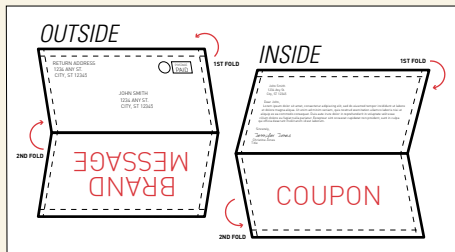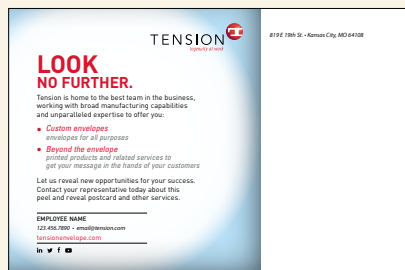

Peel-Off

The Peel to Reveal Postcard transforms an ordinary postcard into a 3 sided postcard with an entire panel that peels off to reveal another full-panel message beneath. Please work with your sales representative to determine postal rates.

FRONT

FRONT REVEAL

BACK

Die-cut

With 99.9% of all postcards perfect rectangles, make yours stand out by investing in a die-cut card. Check with the USPS to see how it affects postal rates and machinability.

FRONT

BACK

Special Effects

Affix a peel-off magnet. Add a scratch-off reveal. Use scratch 'n' sniff ink for olfactory impact or glow-in-the-dark ink for intrigue. Foil stamping and metallic inks add elegance.

Picture Postcards

Send a picture postcard that fits your message. It looks personal, especially when it's mailed using a postage stamp.

Short Copy

Don't try to say too much. Keep it short and offer-focused.

Eye Flow

Use type and design to move the reader's eye to the call-to-action on both sides.
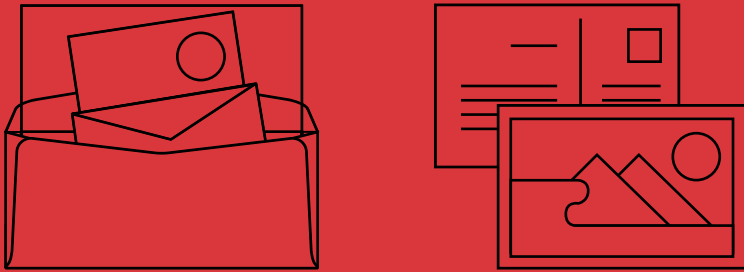
Over, Please

Give readers a reason to turn the postcard over and read both sides. Reinforce the get-over message with an arrow or teaser, "→ See back for _____."

Variable Data Printing

Use variable data printing (VDP) to personalize postcards by customizing headlines, offers and images with what's relevant to the individual recipient.

When sending a fundraising appeal, generating new leads, or thanking a customer or donor, envelope packages and postcards are proven tools in your media mix.

After reading this white paper, you should now understand how, when and why to use each format.