

**A REVIEW ON: DIRECT MAILING IN MARKETING****Aashutosh Yadav\***

Student, Badalapur, Jaunpur, Uttar Pradesh, India.

Article Received on  
11 March 2025,Revised on 31 March 2025,  
Accepted on 20 April 2025

DOI: 10.20959/wjpr20259-36416

**\*Corresponding Author****Aashutosh Yadav**Student, Badalapur, Jaunpur,  
Uttar Pradesh, India.**ABSTRACT**

Direct mailing is a traditional yet effective method of promotion that involves sending promotional materials to potential or existing customers directly via the postal or electronic mail. The method allows companies to target specific segments based on location, purchase behavior, or interests, thereby reaching them in a personalized way. Despite the rise of e-marketing, direct mailing remains a classic that continues to fare well since it is a physical product that generates good response rates. It is widely used for product announcement mailings, promotions, catalog mailings, and brand awareness campaigns. When combined with data analysis and segmentation of customers, direct mailing can serve to give high ROI and create long-term customer relationships.

**KEYWORDS:** Direct Mail, Targeted Marketing, Marketing Strategy, Return on Investment (ROI).

**INTRODUCTION**

Direct mailing is an old marketing technique where promotional content is mailed directly to a specific group of recipients in postal or electronic mail. In contrast to mass advertising, which targets a large group, direct mailing is all about personalized communication, and therefore it is a highly targeted and strategic marketing practice. This method allows businesses to contact potential clients or communicate with existing clients with targeted messages, offers, or product information based on what they like, have purchased before, or demographic data. The method of direct mailing has been around for decades, first thriving in the form of hard copy mailers such as brochures, postcards, catalogs, and flyers. While with better technology and data analysis, direct mailing also branched out to include email campaigns along with better digital print variations, its application became more effective

and widespread. While channels such as social media and search engines have been on an explosive rise in digital marketing, direct mailing is still valuable due to the personalization of direct mailing, greater visibility (especially in its tangible forms), and ability for measurable follow-up.

In today's competitive environment, where consumer interests are split across several channels, direct mailing offers a more personal and focused method of communication. It is used not only to sell products or services but also to build customer loyalty, reactivate dormant users, and generate leads. If planned with caution, accurate audience segmentation, and good content, direct mailing can provide a good return on investment and solidify brand-consumer relationships.

**Literature Survey:** Direct mailing has also been proven to be an effective marketing communications tool, and there is considerable research supporting its effectiveness and evolution over the years. The basis of direct mailing is founded on the principles of direct response marketing, whereby the aim is to create a measurable response from potential consumers. Research through the years by academics and the industry has studied its strategic usage, response rates, personalization capacity, and convergence with new technologies. Initial research (Kotler & Armstrong, 1996) placed the focus on direct mailing as a cheap way to reach precise targets, especially compared to mass marketing. Such research stressed the value of focused communication, enabling businesses to address customers by their profile, thereby increasing the chances of engagement. Stone and Jacobs (2001) in *Successful Direct Marketing Methods* concur that relevance and personalization are the key drivers of success in direct mail campaigns. Their research showed that segmented data-based campaigns had significantly higher response rates than generalized messaging-based campaigns. This was supported by later research by Peppers and Rogers (2004), who further showed that customer-centric approaches in direct marketing can enhance loyalty and retention.

The impact of digital evolution on direct mailing was examined by Belch and Belch (2012), who suggested that while traditional mail is still useful, the integration of email marketing, CRM software, and data analysis has made direct mailing a hybrid process. Using customer databases enables better segmentation and tracking, improving ROI. Another recent study was carried out by Wreden (2016) that emphasized the application of psychographic and behavioral data in direct mailing. The research indicates that campaigns leveraging high-end

analytics along with AI-powers personalization experienced significantly better customer response and conversion rates. On the other hand, critics such as Godin (2007) in Permission Marketing criticized the ethics and effectiveness of spam direct mail, encouraging permission-based alternatives instead. This led the best practices to shift, preferring opt-in mailing lists and consumer approval.

Besides, multichannel marketing research also confirmed that direct mail, when coupled with digital, improves campaign overall performance. A DMA report (2020) reports that hybrid campaigns incorporating both print and digital mail components have the ability to enhance consumer engagement by up to 40%.

### **Direct Mailing in Marketing**

Direct mailing is direct marketing that necessitates sending advertising material directly to a person or an enterprise via mail—either physical (post) or electronic (email). The fundamental objective is to communicate a message that encourages the recipient to embrace a specific behavior, such as a purchase, becoming a subscriber of a service, or an internet site visit. This type of marketing is highly targeted and often individualized, making it more effective at reaching specific customer segments than more broad types of advertising like TV or billboard ads.

### **Types of Direct Mailing**

Direct mail can be in the form of

1. **Postal Direct Mail:** Brochures, catalogs, flyers, postcards, newsletters, samples, and coupons by regular mail.
2. **Email Marketing:** The electronic version, which comprises promotional emails, newsletters, product announcements, and targeted offers.
3. **Dimensional Mail:** A more innovative type of direct mail that comprises three-dimensional packages to grab attention and stand out.
4. **Catalogs and Magazines:** Particularly for retail, fashion, or lifestyle brands featuring ranges of products.

### **Key Features of Direct Mail**

**Targeted:** Described by purchasing behavior, preference, geography, or customer demographics.

**Personalization:** Messages are addressed with the person's name, previous purchase history, or hobbies.

**Measurable:** Response can be clearly monitored utilizing promo codes, QR codes, URLs, or response cards.

**Tangible (postal format):** A sent item of mail can stick around longer than impressions from digital, ephemeral advertisements.

### Advantages of Direct Mail

**High ROI:** Research (i.e., DMA) indicates direct mail does provide a better return on investment than certain internet media.

**Increased Engagement:** With physical mail in particular, individuals will read and open a well-designed object.

**Emotional Connection:** Personalized information speaks to customers more emotionally.

**Most Addressable:** You can speak to a given subset of your audience with the right offers.

**Simple to Trace:** Performance can be traced using simple tracing mechanisms.

### Modern Breakthroughs in Direct Mail

In order to get ahead of the digital trend, direct mailing has turned high-tech:

- **QR Codes & PURLs:** Direct mail recipients to digital landing pages.
- **Augmented Reality (AR):** Interactive mail coming alive with mobile applications.
- **AI and Predictive Analytics:** Helps segment audiences and predict campaign success.
- **Eco-Friendly Practices:** Leveraging recycled materials and minimizing waste.

**The Future of Direct Mailing:** The future of direct mailing is in hybrid marketing, wherein traditional marketing is supplemented by digital media. Savvy business houses are incorporating direct mailing into larger campaigns that utilize the physical and the digital, delivering a unified and effective customer experience. In a noisy digital world, direct mailing is a breath of fresh air. Its capacity to break through the clutter, build relevant touchpoints, and provide quantifiable outcomes makes it a tactic that's not just hanging on—but adapting.

### CONCLUSION

Direct mailing remains an important part of contemporary marketing through its provision of a personal, physical, and targeted means of customer interaction. Its capacity to target certain audiences, trigger emotional reactions through physical contact, and support digital

campaigns makes it a valuable addition to an integrated marketing mix. Yet, for direct mailing to be effective and affordable, companies need to have high-quality data targeting, creative design, effective messaging, and clear calls to action. With proper implementation, direct mail can produce high response rates, build brand recognition, and foster customer loyalty, making it a valuable investment even in the digital era.

## REFERENCE

1. Fortenberry JL Jr. Health care marketing: tools and techniques. 3rd ed. Sudbury: Jones and Bartlett, 2010. **Google Scholar**
2. Feinberg D. Why advertise and why not? Mark Health Serv., 2011; 31(2): 3. **PubMed Google Scholar**
3. Elrod JK, Fortenberry JL Jr. Formulating productive marketing communications strategy: a major health system's experience. BMC Health Serv Res., 2018; 18(Suppl 3): 926. **Article Google Scholar**
4. Elrod JK, Fortenberry JL Jr. Billboard advertising: an avenue for communicating healthcare information and opportunities to disadvantaged populations. BMC Health Serv Res., 2017; 17(Suppl 4): 787. **Article Google Scholar**
5. Berkowitz E. Essentials of health care marketing. 4th ed. Burlington: Jones and Bartlett, 2017. **Google Scholar**
6. Thomas RK. Marketing health services. 3rd ed. Chicago: Health Administration Press, 2014. **Google Scholar**
7. Fortenberry JL Jr. Cases in health care marketing. Sudbury: Jones and Bartlett; 2011. **Google Scholar**
8. Kotler P, Shalowitz J, Stevens RJ. Strategic marketing for health care organizations: building a customer-driven health system. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008. **Google Scholar**
9. Fortenberry JL Jr. Nonprofit marketing. Burlington: Jones and Bartlett, 2013. **Google Scholar**
10. Schiavo R. Health communication: from theory to practice. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2014. **Google Scholar**
11. Parvanta CF, Nelson DE, Harner RN. Public health communication: critical tools and strategies. Burlington: Jones and Bartlett, 2018. **Google Scholar**
12. Elrod JK, Fortenberry JL Jr. Healthcare establishments as owner-operators of digital billboards: making the most of excellent roadside visibility and high traffic counts to

better connect with patients. BMC Health Serv Res., 2018; 18(Suppl 3): 928.

**Article Google Scholar**

13. Elrod JK, Fortenberry JL Jr. Driving brand equity in health services organizations: the need for an expanded view of branding. BMC Health Serv Res., 2018; 18(Suppl 3): 924.

**Article Google Scholar**

14. Nash E. Direct marketing: strategy, planning, execution. 4th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill; 2000. **Google Scholar**
15. Stone B, Jacobs R. Successful direct marketing methods: interactive, database, and customer marketing for the multichannel communications age. 8th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008. **Google Scholar**
16. Kotler P, Keller KL. Marketing management. 14th ed. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2012. **Google Scholar**
17. Elrod JK, Fortenberry JL Jr. Catalyzing marketing innovation and competitive advantage in the healthcare industry: the value of thinking like an outsider. BMC Health Serv Res., 2018; 18(Suppl 3): 922. **Article Google Scholar**
18. Perreault WD Jr, Cannon JP, McCarthy EJ. Basic marketing: a marketing strategy planning approach. 19th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2014. **Google Scholar**
19. Belch GE, Belch MA. Advertising and promotion: an integrated marketing communications perspective. 11th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2018. **Google Scholar**
20. Andrews JC, Shimp TA. Advertising, promotion, and other aspects of integrated marketing communications. 10th ed. Boston: Cengage, 2018. **Google Scholar**
21. O'Guinn TC, Allen CT, Scheinbaum AC, Semenik RJ. Advertising and integrated brand promotion. 8th ed. Boston: Cengage; 2019. **Google Scholar**
22. Godin S. Permission marketing: Turning strangers into friends and friends into customers. London: Simon and Schuster, 1999. **Google Scholar**
23. Elrod JK. Breadcrumbs to cheesecake. Shreveport: R&R Publishers, 2013. **Google Scholar**
24. Tapp A, Whitten I, Housden M. Principles of direct, database, and digital marketing. 5th ed. London: Pearson, 2013. **Google Scholar**
25. Andreoni, James. 1990. "Impure Altruism and Donations to Public Goods: A Theory of Warm-Glow Giving." *The Economic Journal*, 1990; 100(June); 464. **Google Scholar**
26. Becker, Gary S. "A Theory of Social Interactions." *Journal of Political Economy*, 1974; 82(6): 1063-1093. Crossref Web of Science.

27. Belk, Russel. "Gift-Giving Behavior." In *Research in Marketing*. Ed. Jagdish Sheth. Greenwich, CT: JAI., 1979; 95-126. Google Scholar
28. Biswas, Abhijit and Scot Burton. "Consumer Perceptions of Tensile Price Claims in Advertisements: An Assessment of Claim Types Across Different Discount Levels." *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 21 (Summer), 1993; 217-229. CrossrefGoogle Scholar
29. Boskin, M. J. and Martin S. Feldstein. "Effects of the Charitable Deduction on Contributions by Low Income and Middle Income Households: Evidence From the National Survey on Philanthropy." *Review of Economic Statistics*, 1977; 59(August): 351-354. CrossrefWeb of ScienceGoogle Scholar
30. Brockner, Joel, Beth Guzzi, Julie Kane, Ellen Levine, and Kate Shaplen.. "Organizational Fundraising: Further Evidence on the Effect of Legitimizing Small Donations." *Journal of Consumer Research*, 1984; 11(June): 611-614. CrossrefWeb of ScienceGoogle Scholar
31. Cheal, David. "Showing Them You Love Them: Gift Giving and the Dialectic of Intimacy." *Sociological Review*, 1987; 35(1): 150-169. CrossrefWeb of ScienceGoogle Scholar
32. Dawes, R. M., Faust, D., and Meehl, P. E. "Clinical versus Actuarial Judgment." *Science*, 1989; 243: 1668-1674. CrossrefPubMedWeb of ScienceGoogle Scholar
33. DeJong, William and Arvo J. Oopik. "Effect of Legitimizing Small Contributions and Labeling Potential Donors as 'Helpers' on Responses to a Direct Mail Solicitation for Charity." *Psychological Reports*, 1992; 71(December): 923-928. Google Scholar
34. Della Bitta, Albert J., Kent B. Monroe, and John M. McGinnis. "Consumer Perceptions of Comparative Price Advertisements." *Journal of Marketing Research*, 1981; 18(November): 416-427. CrossrefGoogle Scholar
35. Dillard, James P. "The Current Status of Research on Sequential-Request Compliance Techniques." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 1991; 17(June): 283-288. CrossrefWeb of ScienceGoogle Scholar
36. Einhorn, Hillel and Robin Hogarth. "Behavioral Decision Theory: Processes of Judgment and Choice." *Annual Review of Psychology*, 1981; 32: 53-88. CrossrefWeb of ScienceGoogle Scholar
37. Folkes, Valerie S. "The Availability Heuristic and Perceived Risk." *Journal of Consumer Research*, 1988; 15(June): 13-23. CrossrefWeb of ScienceGoogle Scholar



38. Fraser, Cynthia, Robert E. Hite, and Paul L. Sauer. 1988. "Increasing Contributions in Solicitation Campaigns: The Use of Large and Small Anchorpoints." *Journal of Consumer Research*, 1988; 15(September): 284-287. CrossrefWeb of ScienceGoogle Scholar
39. Gaeth, Gary J., Irvin P. Levin, Deborah A. Cours, and Susan Combs. "Framing of Attribute Information in Product Description." In *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 17. Eds. Marvin E. Goldberg, Gerald Gorn, and Richard W. Pollay. Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, 1990; 147-152. Google Scholar
40. Garner, Thesia I. and Janet Wagner. "Economic Dimensions of Household Gift Giving." *Journal of Consumer Research*, 1991; 18(December): 368-379. CrossrefWeb of ScienceGoogle Scholar.