



# Direct Mail Postcards:

Statistics & Tips for Using Them  
in Your Next Campaign

**Marketing postcards, like other direct mail pieces, offer something unique in the digital age: a way for your B2C audience to **physically engage** with your communications.**

Unlike the daily bombardment of digital advertising, marketing postcards capture and hold a recipient's attention right at the mailbox, giving them something to hold in their hands and post on the fridge. They're a persistent reminder to act in a world where most messages are fleeting and forgettable.

When all the ingredients of a great postcard campaign are present (a highly-target mailing list, personalization, and a compelling offer), that attention isn't lost. Coupons make their way into wallets and event reminders get posted in the home — coveted spaces that keep brands top-of-mind in a way other channels simply can't match.

**Whether this is your first time planning a postcard campaign, or you're interested in informing your efforts with data and best practices, read on for a quick stats and tips of how well postcards are working and where they fit best in your marketing mix.**

# Making the Case for Direct Mail Postcards

If you're considering a postcard campaign as part of your multi-channel campaign, but not sure if you can justify the investment required to design, print, and mail postcards, consider a few statistics:

- **Direct mail response rates are actually growing.**

According to the 2018 ANA/DMA Response Rate Report, direct mail response rates were 9% to a house list and 5% to a prospect list. By comparison, the 2017 report showed a response rate of 5.1% to a house list and 2.9% to a prospect list. Going back even further, the average between 2003 and 2015 was 3.6% to a house list and 1.6% to a prospect list. **Taken together, since 2015, customer response rates for direct mail have increased 37% and prospect response rates have more than doubled with a shocking 190% increase.** What accounts for the increase? A few things are likely happening: Marketers are getting smarter about sending mail to people who appreciate receiving it; data has enabled better-tailored offers, and cheaper digital printing means more volume for less money.

- **Most young people report spending time consuming mail and over half prefer scanning it over email for useful information.** ANA/DMA's 2017 and 2018 research finds that more than **3 in 4 millennials (84%) take the time to look through their mail. Similarly, 64% would rather scan for useful information over email**—believing it to be a more viable and reliable source of communication from brands.



- **Direct mail still outperforms any digital direct marketing channel for response rate.** The 2018 ANA/DMA Response Rate Report pegged **direct mail response rates at 5 to 9 times greater than that of email, paid search, or social media.**
- **Postcards are the most likely marketing mail pieces to be read by recipients.** Some slightly older AMA/DMA research parsed the differences between various types of direct mail pieces and found that over half **(52.5%) of consumers reported that they'd read a postcard versus less than a third who said they'd open a letter-sized envelope.**
- **Survey respondents report responding to relevant, compelling postcards more than letter-sized envelopes.** The same AMA/DMA report that looked at response rates for different types of direct mail pieces found that **23.4% of consumers will respond to postcards that are relevant and of interest to them**, compared to 7.9% for letter-sized envelopes.

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# How to Effectively Incorporate Postcards into Marketing Campaigns

Generally, marketing postcards are best-suited for B2C brand awareness campaigns, local coupon/inventive promotions, event announcements or reminders. By comparison, larger direct mail formats like brochures tend to be better for introducing new products as they allow businesses to add more in-depth information.

## 1. Brand Awareness

Since postcards are relatively inexpensive compared to other types of direct mail and their envelope-less delivery means virtually no work for your message to get to your audience, marketers love them for brand awareness campaigns at virtually every level—local, regional, and national.

These can be especially effective for companies with multiple locations across several regions who routinely roll out new products and/or services or are regularly expanding to new locations with new audiences—such as retailers, local dealerships, healthcare clinics, franchises and similar consumer-facing organizations.

While this might seem like a lot of work to plan, organize, create, and deliver, today's premier print and marketing execution partners offer centralized marketing platforms that solve the problem of complexity and more—allowing you and your end-users to build, order, print and track campaigns from a single system, thereby making campaigns both easier to execute and better at achieving their goal.

With the right platform, corporate marketing teams enable their end-users, such as franchise owners, store or clinic managers, to access branded design elements and customize them to fit the needs and audiences of their local market. Approved campaigns can be ordered directly from the system where all the printing, fulfilling, and distribution is handled by the end-to-end marketing execution provider and reported back to you. This type of rich reporting data is now becoming a standard expectation in measuring marketing success, specifically for campaigns like this.

## 2. Coupons, Incentives & Promotions

Postcards are also one of the most popular types of mail pieces for coupon campaigns. In addition to offsetting the costs of the discounts to maximize your offer's profitability, postcards offer an ideal "vehicle" for printing and presenting coupons to customers and new prospects.

The postcard format doesn't overcomplicate things, which is especially important for getting coupons noticed and creating localized campaigns for multiple locations at scale. Organizations wanting to create awareness in local markets, can capitalize on using cost-effective postcard mailings in conjunction with EDDM (every door direct mail), allowing for hyper-localized targeting.

Again, this is where end-to-end marketing supply chain providers shine brightest. End-users can simply grab pre-designed design elements, create a local campaign, send it for approval, and get the order printed and mailed. When combined with variable data, postcards can get even more personalized, speaking to recipients with tailored offers on a one-to-one level based on customer data.



### 3. Customer Loyalty Programs

Effective direct mail continues to be an excellent channel for maintaining and building relationships through a loyalty program. A steady stream of postcards can strengthen your relationship with customers over the short and long term.

Postcards, compared to other mail formats, are an inexpensive way to both kick off and then maintain a loyalty program through regular communication that spurs interest and keeps customers engaged.

Here's a few ideas for using postcards to power your loyalty program:

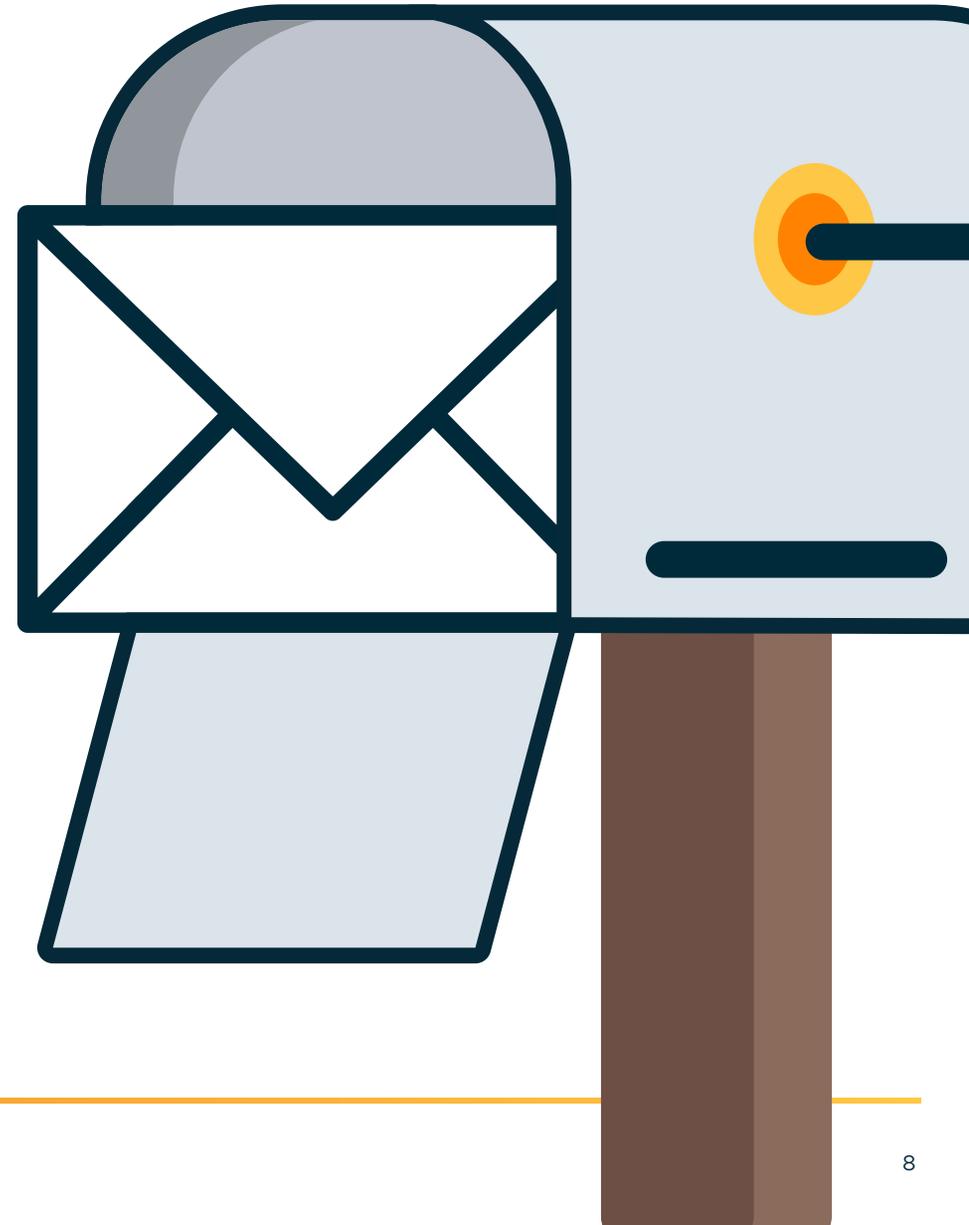
- **Send an introduction postcard.** This should present and explain how your loyalty program works. Use your customer data to target messaging and increase response rates through personalization.
- **Use customer data to segment postcard campaigns based on spending habits and interests.** If you have rich data on what your customers buy, or how much they spend, create a series of postcard campaigns that keep them engaged with your loyalty program based on their individual behavior.
- **Boost retention rates through reminder campaigns.** Postcards are also a relatively easy, inexpensive mail format for sending gentle reminders to those who haven't engaged with you in a while (often times referred to as dormant mailings). With the right CRM data and a reliable print partner, this can be a powerful, largely automated process for retaining loyal customers.



## 4. Sale or Event Reminders

Sales and special events are great ways to nurture existing customer relationships and entice new customers to engage. A simple postcard with a brief, concise message with event information can be a powerful, inexpensive local traffic driver.

Typically, the larger the sale or event you're hosting, the higher ROI you can expect from your mail campaign. Postcards keep these costs to a minimum while getting essential information across to recipients.



# How to Find the Right Vendor

Companies are now competing at a customer experience level — with marketers needing to produce content that is personalized, customized and localized. To ensure you're meeting the high expectations of your customers while maintaining costs, finding a partner that can help you manage, produce, distribute — and then analyze — your campaigns is key.

Here are a few key points when looking for a vendor:

- 1. Does the vendor provide full end-to-end marketing supply chain services to minimize time finding, assessing and managing multiple vendors?**
- 2. Can you create all of the content types and formats you need on-demand?**
- 3. Do they have in-house postal expertise to help reduce mailing costs?**
- 4. Do they handle the printing, fulfillment and distribution in-house and at scale?**
- 5. Do they offer comprehensive, onsite mailing services (USPS DMU (detached mail unit), EDDM, CASS-certify, NCOA, etc)?**

# Step Up Your Direct Mail Marketing Game

From initial address hygiene and CASS/NCOA certification to intelligent inserting, carrier route coding, five digit and First Class pre-sorting, we have the solutions in place to help maximize your direct mail return on investment.

We mail over 155 million pieces of mail each year, and have USPS experts on staff to ensure your mail pieces meet all regulations and are mailed at the most cost-effective rates possible.

To learn more about how OneTouchPoint can help take your national, regional, and local direct mail and marketing efforts to the next level, schedule time with one of our direct mail experts.

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