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Determining Your Target for Direct Mail Marketing by Azalea Perron

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Direct mail marketing through a consumer mailing list is a good way to reach prospective buyers of a product or service. It offers many advantages over other forms of marketing, but can only be effective if the targeting of the list is accurate. Just like an archer shooting at a target with an arrow, your advertising will be most effective if it hits the bulls eye. It does no good if, like the arrow, it misses the target entirely, and will be less effective the farther it is from direct centre. It also wastes the arrow.

So determining the target audience of your product or service is the most important step in the process of improving your aim in direct mail marketing with a consumer mailing list. To do that effectively, you first must know and understand the description of the people who will most likely purchase your product.

If you are already selling your product, this will be much easier because you should already have some hard data regarding your buyers to work off of. If not, then you will have to make an educated evaluation of your product and determine the criteria that best describes these buyers. The focus for this should be things like the genders of the buyers, whether they use credit cards, mail in checks or money orders, any comments or complaints they have registered, and anything else you determine to be relevant. Every product or service will be unique and have a definite type of buyer associated with it.

Once you have this information determined, the next thing to do is to start defining the desired consumer mailing list from it. The best way to do that is to start with the most general information that describes the most likely buyers of a product or service first, and then tighten the parameters as you go.

So for a targeted mailing list, the first consideration should be the most general information that will reduce the targeted consumer mailing list the most. In all cases this should be whether your buyers are more likely to be male or female. If it isn't both genders equally, this one consideration will eliminate half of the potential targets for your mailing list, double its effectiveness, and reduce wasted expense. Remember, anyone sent an offer they are not interested in is wasted marketing potential and costs you money better used elsewhere.

The next general area of targeting is age. How old are your buyers likely to be? If the product is aimed at retirees, targeting younger buyers will likely be wasted, just as targeting retirees with a product meant for the young will be. The user's age of a product or service will usually be easy to determine. If not, then ignore the criteria.

Some other general things to consider are income, occupation, and home ownership. Beyond these, consider specifics about the product. For example, if you were selling a new golf club, then it would surely pay to target only golfers.

All of these things can limit the scope of those being targeted, getting your marketing arrow closer and closer to the bulls eye for everyone contacted. It will also keep you from wasting money on advertising to uninterested people, making every marketing dollar spent on a targeted consumer mailing list more effective.

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