

Real Issues

1

Setting objectives

Improving communication, raising awareness or even an increase sales by 10%? These are all objectives but understanding these from the outset will help you apply the right communication medium or combination of channels to achieve maximum results. Understand that the medium e.g. a brochure is not the objective, just a means to an end. Looking at it this way may challenge convention and open your eyes to a better way to communicate.

2

Creating a schedule (and the benefits of working backwards!)

Determine your final delivery date and calculate your schedule by working backwards from this key point. Set milestones at key stages of the process and get a grasp of the main issues and timelines from your chosen supplier(s). Allow suppliers the right amount of time for each process - squeezing timelines in the wrong places may result in a sub-standard job or incur unnecessary overtime expenses.

3

Identifying the right people for the job

Involve key suppliers in the early stages of the design/concept stage and get their buy-in. Be receptive and open to fresh ideas in the initial stages - it could make for a better and more cost-effective job. Remember, it's no good coming up with great ideas after the Chairman or Board has approved the initial concept - by this time the die is cast.

4

Getting your data early

If your campaign or project involves some form of mailing or distribution, make sure you obtain your data before you go to print. All too frequently, sourcing data is left to the last moment and usually takes place during the print run or even after. At this point it's too late to prosper from the benefits of a reduced mailing list that has been de-duplicated and cleansed of "goneaways" or incomplete addresses.

So, the message is clear, source your data early and get a firm grip on the real numbers. Don't be left with excess stock on your hands with no home to go to - it's an expensive waste, storage does not come cheap and it will damage your environmental credentials too.

Real Answers

5

Scratching beneath the pricing surface

In some cases, choosing which supplier to use is a straight contest over pricing. Your suppliers have already met the pre-qualification criteria and the deciding factor is simply price. However, customers are increasingly looking for suppliers who will yield a higher return on investment. The days of print in a box or envelope are numbered. Ask yourself which of your suppliers will help you deliver better results and not just the one that on the surface appears to be cheaper.

Consider this example from a recent mailing for a leading financial services organisation:

2,500 A4 leaflets printed 4 colour process throughout onto 150gsm gloss art paper:

Printer A = £360.00

Printer B = £410.00

At face value, Printer A should be awarded the order because his price is £50.00 less than his closest competitor.

However, by scratching beneath the pricing surface, Printer A can only print in a timeframe that will allow for 1st class postage in order to meet the client deadline. Printer B, has understood the client objective in more detail and has organised production in time to capitalise on [Mailsort](#) postal discounts that yield significant savings to the client.

Printer A = £1,193.00 at 1st Class postage rates.	Printer B = £986.00 00 at Mailsort 1400 postage rates.
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When combined, the figures take on a different complexion and Printer B is the most cost-effective supplier to the client:

	Print	Postage	Total
Printer A	£360.00	£1,193.00	£1,553.00
Printer B	£410.00	£986.00	£1,396.00

Printer B offers an overall saving of £157.00

Real Results



Using your budget wisely

Put your savings in point 5 above to good use by combining your print campaign with another communication channel to reap even higher results.

For instance, if you are running a mailing campaign, refine your mailing list to only hot or warm leads and discard the unlikely prospects. This will inevitably reduce your print run and simultaneously your costs too, but could leave sufficient room in your budget to create a microsite for recipients to interact/respond to.

Research shows that most people prefer to receive a proposition in printed form via the post but to respond to the offer or deal online. It is not uncommon for response rates to reach double figure percentages, even as high as 20%. Compare this to the established norm of between 1%-3% using traditional direct mail (DM) response methods. What's more, there's no return postage charge or time-consuming and tedious collation of results as analysis is compiled in real time, enabling you to make informed decisions and steal a march on your competitors.



Ask for your data back

Having reduced your outlay through data cleansing, make sure you ask for a copy of the amended file. Firstly, it will help your response team in processing results. Secondly, the amended file can become the source file for improving your own CRM module or database and thirdly, you may wish to have a conversation with your data supplier!

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