

Guide: Direct marketing

Direct marketing is contacting the seller personally to engage them in the sales process. This is generally done around a certain offer or event, as this type of marketing is not appropriate for general awareness marketing.

Direct marketing is generally done by telephone, email or letter.

Telemarketing

Telemarketing is where you call customers or prospective customers directly to make them an offer.

With this sort of direct marketing you will need an accurate database with names and phone numbers, and a script.

Telemarketing works best in conjunction with other marketing media, so ensure you send out any marketing emails or mail-outs before commencing your phone calls.

Use to support your other marketing

Telemarketing works best in conjunction with other marketing media. Don't put all your eggs in one basket.

If you have not yet started your marketing campaign, use your phone call as a heads-up as to what's about to happen.

If you have sent out any marketing emails or mail-outs, follow these up with a telemarketing call to reiterate your email marketing — but don't simply double up.

Don't be one of those annoying telemarketers

Telemarketing carries a certain sort of stigma, and is seen as invasive, so reserve it for business to business direct marketing during business hours.

Keep your phone call short and follow it up immediately with an email.

Be honest

Always introduce yourself, don't be evasive. If you try to pull the wool over the receptionist's eyes it is unlikely you'll get much further.

Commercial telemarketing

If you are interested in a large-scale telemarketing operation, there are plenty of organisations in New Zealand which offer complete call centre telemarketing packages.

Email marketing

Email marketing is where you email your customer database with an offer. This could be an impersonal group email, or a personalised email letter merge or e-newsletter.

With this sort of direct marketing you will need an accurate database with names and email addresses of the opt-in variety.

Standard Practice

This is a great non-invasive way to keep customers up to date with what is going on in your business. For most businesses, sending an e-newsletter has become standard practice and customers expect it.

Send out an e-newsletter at least once every quarter, just to keep your customers up to date. And throw in special issues when you have sales, special news or offers and of course let your customers know if you shut down for holidays.

Online marketing specialists

Depending on how serious you want to get with your email marketing, consider consulting one of the many marketing companies who specialise in online marketing, as they can help you plan a professional campaign.

Getting customers to open your email

Sending out email marketing is easy, actually getting customers to open your email is not.

Your subject line is key.

Keep your subject line short and attention grabbing. Figure and numbers are a key feature which people respond to e.g. '75% of ...', '3 out of 4 ...', '6 ways to ...'.

Don't try to be abstract or clever, try to sum up a benefit they will get or something else exciting.

Spam filter triggers

Some words will trigger spam filters to block your email, so try and avoid the following in your subject line (or in the body of your email):

#1	Click / Click Here / Click Below	No hidden costs
100% satisfied	Congratulations	No obligation
4U	Cost/No cost	Now
Accept credit cards	Do it today	Offer
Act Now!	Extra income	One time/one-time
Additional Income	Free (or FREE)	Order
Affordable	Guarantee	Performance
All natural	Hidden	Please read
All new	Increase sales	Price
Amazing	Investment/no investment	Profits
Apply online	Legal	Risk free
Bargain	Marketing	Sales
Best price	Money	Save
Buy direct	Month trial offer	Solutions
Call free	Never	Special Promotion
Cards accepted	No Gimmicks	Win

Direct Mail

Direct mail is where you mail your customer database with an offer. In the electronic age, this can be a very effective way to get your message across. However you will need to take into account the high costs of postage.

With this sort of direct marketing you will need an accurate database with names and addresses including postcodes.

What to send

You could range from a generic postcard or DLE card flyer, to a personalised letter.

Ad agencies can help you do clever and unexpected campaigns, such as articles with hand-written post-it notes, or pop-up cards with cut-outs.

However, if you have a smaller customer base whom you know well, you may find it easier to write real notes to your customers and send them with interesting things every now and then. For example, a photocopied

page from a new catalogue which shows an item you know they'll like, or an article from an industry magazine.

Get real with costs

Before you start on a potentially expensive exercise, make sure you get a realistic breakdown of all costs involved.

Include postage, paper, envelopes, printing, and take into account the time taken for people to stuff envelopes etc. Don't underestimate what's involved.

Buying or acquiring a database

Spam Act 2007

If you do not have an established customer database, you can purchase a database of contacts in your field of business.

There are businesses around which specialise in selling databases, however you must be careful not to breach the Unsolicited Electronic Messages Act 2007.

This means that you cannot send electronic messages i.e. email or SMS messages to email addresses or mobile phone numbers which essentially have not given their permission. If they have not opted in to a list or if their email addresses have been harvested from the internet, you cannot use them.

You also must keep any database you acquire up to date. This means if a person unsubscribes, you must remove them.

Where to buy

You can purchase databases with just names and addresses; names, addresses and phone numbers; or names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses.

Business to business lists can be bought from New Zealand company Martins www.martins.co.nz/

Good starting point

Think of a purchased database as a starting point for those with no existing database.

It is best to keep your database up to date yourself, or face high costs in updating from the company you purchased it from. Delegate this task to one person in your business to ensure maximum data integrity.

Involving your sales team in your direct marketing

If you have a devoted sales team, it is best to involve them from square one.

Let them know what you plan to do and seek their input about where they come in.

Because they handle the sales process, it makes sense that direct marketing leads straight to them.

Telemarketing

Your salesperson is perfect for this. Their outgoing nature most likely makes them a good telephonist, and if they don't know the customer yet, this is a great opportunity for them to introduce themselves.

Salespeople will also know how to close the sale and lead into the sales and ordering process, so it makes sense for them to be the one point of contact.

Email marketing and direct mail

Your e-newsletter or direct mail could come from the business owner, manager or salesperson — logically you would choose the person who has the best relationship with customers. You can always change this as familiarity builds.

Of course, the person who writes it does not need to be the person whose name is on the bottom. This is a task which can be delegated effectively.

Keep your salesperson as a contact on the email or direct mail e.g. 'For more info about our new sandblasting equipment email bob@sandsoftime.co.nz'

Disclaimer

Stephen Larsen and Co has provided this report on the understanding that:

1. The report is a guide only and should not form the sole basis for any decision without first obtaining proper professional advice.
2. We will not be responsible for and expressly disclaim liability, whether under contract or negligence:
 - (a) For the results of any use made by users of the report
 - (b) For any errors or omissions in this report
 - (c) For any direct or consequential loss or damage to arising from the use of this report, whether to a direct purchaser of this report or to any other person who may borrow or use them
 - (d) If any part of the report, whether used in its original form or altered in some way by the user, proves invalid or does not attain the result desired by the user
 - (e) For any negligence in the publication or preparation of these reports
3. This disclaimer extends to the user and to any client of the user who suffers loss as a result of the use of these reports.
4. The user acknowledges that it has not told us any particular purpose for which these reports are required and that it has not relied on our skill or judgement to provide a paper suitable for any such purpose.

Intellectual Property Notice

Stephen Larsen and Co:

1. Holds the exclusive authority to use all copyright, trademarks and other intellectual property rights comprised in this paper.
2. Does not allow these rights nor any part of this paper to be used, sold, transferred, licensed, copied or reproduced in whole or in part in any manner or form whatsoever without its prior written consent.

Last reviewed on 13 July 2020