

Clipper Magazine®

Featured In...

Clean Out the Competition with Direct Mail Marketing

A direct mail marketing plan can successfully help your business sweep up the competition! With the large number of home repair services in today's marketplace, it's extremely important to implement a cost-effective marketing plan that your potential customers cannot ignore.

Direct mail marketing is focused on driving purchases that can be attributed to a specific call-to-action such as purchasing certain name brand products and requesting your specialty services. Direct mail is distinguished from other marketing efforts by its emphasis on trackable and measurable results. It is also the most variable and efficient way to promote the name of your services and help attract new customers.

With more than 99% of American homes now turning to direct mail coupons to satisfy their everyday needs, many service oriented businesses have also turned to direct mail as a viable source for creatively increasing their revenue. Steve Zuckerman, president of *Clipper Magazine*, suggests the following guidelines and strategies to help your future direct mail marketing campaigns to be more successful.

Start with a Clean Strong Image

Remember that today's customers are very visually oriented. People tend to read advertisements with colorful photographs and logos that are supported by strong headlines with clear messages. It's good to be clever, yet when you get so cute that they do not easily know what you are selling, they may completely miss your message. You must be able to stop customers in their tracks with strong visual presentations.

Use Quality Photographs, Logos and Illustrations

For added effectiveness, try to maintain a very consistent visual image for your business throughout all of your advertising campaigns. If you have any photographs, use them. A picture is still worth a thousand words! The customers will read all of the small details, once they are magnetized by your consistently beautiful photographs, logos, and headlines.

Look for professional full color printing capabilities. Today, you can affordably market your services and products in full color to ensure the best possible redemption. Research has shown that full color advertising options can actually increase redemption rates by 30% to 60%.

Sometimes it may be best to hire a professional graphic designer, a marketing agency or a direct mail marketing team to design your direct mail campaigns rather than to create something that may look unprofessional. This is a great opportunity to make sure your direct mail device conveys the message that you want to get across.

Plug a Message of Savings

Spin your marketing with a powerful message! It is extremely competitive

in the service industry with the many discounts, special offers and promotions offered. Therefore, don't be afraid to sell up with specials and promotions.

"FREE" Always Works Great

Nothing beats "free" and it can surely help to persuade your current regulars to try new products as well as to get new customers to try you for the first time. Consider offering a free gift with a service or a purchase with purchase incentive. For example, "FREE Firelog with Every Service."

Dollars Off, Not Percentages

Customers will react much better to strong dollars off discounts and incentives. For example, "\$20 OFF Your First Estimate." Percentage discounts really are not perceived to be as strong, especially if they are only 10% to 20% off. Unless you use 50% off or higher percentage types of discounts, they will be perceived as weak offers and ignored.

Use Care with Disclaimers

Try to avoid excessive disclaimers and rules for what is not included in these varied offers. Try to keep your special offers simple with words like, "No Double Discounts. Expires 00/00/08." Use expiration dates of no more than 60 to 90 days to keep your offers timely.

Introduce New Services, Products or Equipment

Special new fireplaces, woodstoves, gas, oil and coal heating products and equipment can be featured seasonally with secondary coupon offers within the same advertisements. While it is best to promote your strongest and most popular items, it is still very important to promote those unique merchandise and



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"We Solve Chimney Problems"
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- All Types Of Chimneys Cleaned • Stainless Steel Caps
- Stainless Steel Liners • Oil To Gas Conversion Listings
- Water Leaks/Pooling/Tricking Problems Addressed
- Wirebrasting • Free-Fab Chimneys • Obstructions Removed
- Gas Company Shut-Off Service • Masonry Work & Repair
- Energy-Saving Fireplace Inserts Installed

equipment that most people do not know you offer. Most customers prefer convenience and one-stop shopping alternatives. So, if you offer something extra special, unique or distinctively different, take advantage of the opportunity to promote that. Many customers will buy several services at once to save time and money, so incorporate your services in some of your promotions.

Affordable Direct Mail Solutions

Look at various direct mail marketing and advertising opportunities available to you. You can create solo direct mail letters, newsletters, free-standing inserts, postcards and brochures. Visit your local Yellow Pages or the Internet to find direct mail resources near you. As homeowners are your main target, with direct mail you can specifically target neighborhood homes surrounding your business. It is best to target homes within three to ten miles of your business, while targeting at least 50,000 homes or

more. At approximately three to four cents per home, direct mail marketing is extremely affordable, as opposed to solo direct mail campaigns which usually cost between fifty cents to one dollar per home.

Direct Mail Magazines

Clipper Magazine, *Savvy Shopper* and *Mint* magazine sales representatives are prepared to help you plan the most effective annual direct mail marketing campaigns with customized advertising solutions for your business. For example, *Clipper Magazine* is a unique premier quality direct mail magazine. The cost of cooperative and magazine format direct mail is usually only three to four cents per home as opposed to solo direct mail campaigns which will usually cost between fifty cents to one dollar per home. When you add up the costs of artwork, printing, mailing labels and postage, it is a greater advantage to use upscale direct mail magazines, cooperative direct mail or a combination of both. These direct mail maga-

zines typically mail to 50,000 homes per targeted mailing area, so you can select the best ones that will work for your business.

Direct Mail Coupon Envelopes

The direct mail coupon envelope resources like Valpak and Money Mailer cooperatively mail loose independent coupons from various local businesses to 10,000 homes per targeted zone. When you add up the costs of artwork, printing, mailing labels and postage, it is a greater advantage to use cooperative direct mail or a combination of both.

Solo Direct Mail

If you are going the solo direct mail route, it is a good idea to send over-sized colorful direct mail postcards, full sheet fliers and free-standing inserts, whenever possible. The postage is less expensive than standard mail and unlike envelopes they don't have to be opened for the potential client to immediately see your offer. Use a high quality paper stock

for your postcards and fliers. They are more durable and they are more appealing to the recipient. For solo direct mail, you will need to write the copy, create the artwork, determine your targeted markets, and hire a local direct mail house to facilitate the mailing.

As you investigate the price of a solo direct mail campaign or cooperative direct mail, you may discover the wonderful financial and creative benefits of nationally respected direct mail resources like *Clipper Magazine*, *Savvy Shopper*, *Mint*, *Valpak*, *Money Mailer* and others that are available in your local community.

Quality Direct Mail Resources

Work with the best local and national resources available. Use reputable and nationally respected resources, with a proven track record. Avoid lesser quality resources. Ask to see samples of mailing devices of similar home repair services.

Find A Resource That Does It All for You

With valuable direct resources, such as *Clipper Magazine*, they do it all for you! Some offer pre-designed postcard formats, proper graphics, special offers and mailing lists to targeted demographics and zip codes. Benefits include complimentary marketing and advertising consultation services with vivid printing on high quality glossy paper stocks, professional photography, expertly designed layouts and a complete array of comprehensive high quality resources at an extremely affordable price.

Complimentary Marketing Consultations

No matter what form of radio, TV, newspaper, magazine or direct mail marketing you plan to use, ask your advertising sales representatives to share examples of what has worked well for other similar business owners.

No matter what direct mail resource you go with, explore annual agreements with direct mail programs throughout the year, to ensure consistency, maximized results and to reduce your costs. Regarding solo direct mail, many local direct mail houses will help you create, print, mail and facilitate the entire piece, while charging you for all of these comprehensive services. If you give them your own customer mailing list or tell them the zip codes or neighborhoods you want to target surrounding your chimney service location, they can easily facilitate solo direct mail campaigns for you.

Realistic Expectations

Direct mail really works, especially with repetition of very strong offers! Like any form of advertising and marketing, it usually takes a long term investment. Visit with your consultant to set realistic expectations, so you are not disappointed. Coupons are trackable! If you want to determine your effectiveness, plan to ask every cus-

tomers how they heard about you. Many customers will show you their postcards, mailers and coupons. However, many will respond to your direct mail advertising without keeping the coupons. You will also need to measure your total sales volume each week or month, especially on the products and equipment that you are promoting with your direct mail efforts.

As the primary job of a chimney service professional is to aid in the pre-

vention of fires related to fireplaces, you can also prevent your business from going up in smoke with a great direct mail marketing program.

For a complimentary direct mail consultation or more information about *Clipper Magazine*, *Savvy Shopper* or *Mint* Magazines, call 866-802-1429, email marketresearch@clippermagazine.com or visit their website at www.ClipperMagazine.com to find a local direct mail resource near you.

