



1:1 (Personalized) Printing: Top 5 Best Practices

This best practices white paper is excerpted from “1:1 (Personalized) Printing: Boosting Profits Through Relevance,” a look at issues related to 1:1 print marketing from the buyer’s and printer’s perspectives.

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Marketer's Primer Series: 1:1 (Personalized) Printing

1:1 PRINTING: BEST PRACTICES

It's a tough marketing world out there. The media mix is fragmenting. Marketers no longer have the freedom to worry only about "the big three": television, radio, and print. They need to worry about blogs, viral marketing, online advertising, search engine marketing, podcasts, and more. As media continue to splinter, consumers expect to be targeted on a demographic, even individual, basis.

At the same time that there are more places for companies to spend their marketing dollars, marketers are increasingly called onto the carpet to justify their spending decisions. With the U.S. just starting to pull out of the recession, every decision becomes that much more critical. 1:1 (personalized) printing offers the appeal of quantifiable metrics that help marketers justify their budgets in a way that many traditional media do not.

Let's look at some of the most critical best practices for 1:1 (personalized) printing so you can get the most out of these campaigns.

1. Traditional marketing rules apply.

When marketers begin implementing 1:1 printing applications, there can be the misperception that because of their personalized nature alone, 1:1 pieces will drive response. Not so. This is still marketing, and it is the creative, the marketing message, the offer, the segmentation, and the incentive, among other components, that determine success. The personalized nature of these communications must be part of this larger effort.

2. Focus on relevance, not "personalization."

It doesn't matter how "personalized" a document is. If it isn't relevant to the person receiving it, that personalization is worthless. Take the shoe market. Clearly, you don't want to market orthopedic shoes to teenagers. You can personalize the document to the hilt—deck it out with text messaging terms, pictures of X-Games, references to all of the contemporary language and culture, but it's still not a relevant message unless the teens need to purchase a birthday present for grandpa. Relevance — not data alone — drives response.

3. In each campaign, focus on a single, meaningful segment of your database rather than mailing to the whole list.

In order to maximize your investment in 1:1, it's important to select your list carefully. Unless there is a reason to mail to the entire list, you might want to carefully cull your list for the most likely respondents to each particular offer. This not just reduces the number of mailers, but it minimizes the number of



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irrelevant and useless mailers that would otherwise be thrown into the trash. You are restricting that investment to the most valuable prospects.

4. Get to know your customers.

The more you know your customers, the better you will be able to develop relevant marketing campaigns. When the National Hockey League committed to developing 1:1 communications with its customers, for example, it asked them to fill out a survey that indicated, among other things, where they lived and their favorite hockey team. It discovered that 40% of its fan base lives outside their favorite team's home market. That means these fans can't easily go to games or access highlights. Imagine the opportunity for the league!

5. Invest in the database.

Make investing your database a priority. It takes time, dedicated resources, and manpower, but in terms of marketing, this is one of the most important capital investments you can make. Develop a basic database, then make the investment in refining it, adding variables, updating, cleansing, and so on. As you gain information about your customers through 1:1 marketing, don't let that data go to waste. Make sure that data goes back into your database so you can capitalize on it in your future marketing programs.

6. Provide multiple response mechanisms.

Not every segment of your customer base wants to respond the same way. Give them multiple response mechanisms (phone, tear-out forms, personalized URLs, Web links, even QR codes) depending on the target audience.

7. Evaluate the cost of the programs differently

In order to benefit from 1:1 printing, marketers need to think in new ways and evaluate the success of these marketing programs differently than they have in the past. Cost per lead, cost per response, and ROI are an entirely different language, but this is a language that, if marketers want to be profitable, they need to learn.

The University of Toronto, for example, slashed its mailing database by 50%, then personalized its communications. The results? The university's actual donor base increased by 80% and its revenue jumped by 30%. Meanwhile, its costs actually *dropped* by \$16,000.

For a full list of best practices, see "1:1 (Personalized) Printing: Boosting Profits Through Relevance," part of the Marketer's Primer Series.