



# Cross-Media Marketing: How New Media Choices are Revolutionizing Marketing for Small Businesses





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Today's small business owners and managers have a universal challenge when it comes to marketing their business: With all of the new media choices available, how do I know which ones will effectively attract, maintain and enhance customer relationships?

Most of us have only about 1,000 waking minutes each day. Throughout those 1,000 minutes, we are bombarded with more than 3,000 commercial messages vying for our attention. We simply don't have the time or the mental space to process all that noise and still carry on with our daily lives. Our only option is to ignore it.

A few years ago many of us thought the answer might be the Internet. Build a better website and they will come, we believed. Search engine optimization, pay per click advertising, social networks ... they all looked like the silver bullet for successfully marketing a small business.

At the end of the day, more often than not, we were right back where we started: more noise, more expense and little, if any, additional business.

That's why a growing number of entrepreneurs, executives and innovative small business owners have stopped trying to force themselves and their marketing messages into the minds of their customers and prospects with even louder, more insistent messages.

Instead, they are turning to a strategy that is built around attracting, maintaining, and developing customer relationships which are individualized and personalized, but on a mass scale.

### Businesses Need Customers, Not Advertising

This guide explains how measurable marketing results are achieved by a growing number of small and mid-sized businesses in a variety of different industries and markets. These innovators are reinventing personal, one-to-one selling and combining it with state-of-the-art printing and Internet technology. With this approach, they reach, communicate and simultaneously serve an unlimited number of customers on an individual, personal basis. At the same time, they are spending far less than the traditional advertising efforts they are replacing.

2

The term for this approach is called cross-media marketing and the simple definition is this: **communicating with customers and prospects using multiple forms of media to present the same integrated message across a single campaign, all while tracking results in real time.**

A cross-media campaign typically includes a direct mail component and an electronic strategy like email. The addition of a personalized landing page, or PURL, enhances one-to-one communication. A PURL is a Web address used for capturing online response



to a direct mail or email promotion. It has two parts: the recipient's first and last name (**johnsmith**) and a campaign-specific domain name (**johnsmith.freebanking.com**). PURLs are a cost-efficient tool with built-in measures to gauge the effectiveness of your message and collect important customer data. (More about PURLS on page 7.)

The distinguishing factor of a cross-media campaign is integrating these strategies so they support each other in a coordinated way with consistent messaging and timing, rather than using each media channel independently. By combining direct mail, email and PURLs into one integrated campaign, you increase the odds of a favorable return on your investment (i.e. better response rates and conversions.)

### The Original Cross-Media Marketing Strategy: A Letter, a Phone Call and a Pair of Well-Worn Shoes

Long before the term "cross-media" found its way into common usage, successful salespeople and the companies that employed them relied on a three-pronged strategy to reach their prospective customers and to sell their products.

First, a letter was mailed to the prospect introducing the salesperson, the company and the product being offered. An appointment with the prospect was requested, and a return envelope was provided to allow a convenient way to respond.

A few days later, a follow-up phone call was placed to remind the prospect of the letter and the benefits of learning more about the product or service being offered. The sales call itself concluded the process where product or service features, advantages and benefits were spelled out. Hopefully, the final result was a sale and a new customer.

The effectiveness and timelessness of this approach is well-established and widely-used. If you think about it, the time-honored sales process has many similarities to the basics of direct marketing:

1. **Focus.** Just one message directed to one individual at a time.
2. **Personalization/Relevance.** The content of the message is relevant to the particular needs and wants of the receiver.
3. **Media Integration.** The particular strengths of each medium – the letter, the phone call, the sales presentation – are integrated and used to maximize effectiveness. When combined, the precision targeting, high readership and personalization of direct mail, the immediacy and connectivity of a phone call and the interactive nature of a personal sales meeting create the ideal opportunity to gain the attention, stimulate the interest, build the desire and motivate the buyer to action.
4. **Interactivity.** Enabling two-way communication between the salesperson and the customer makes it possible to better understand the customer's needs and to reveal potential obstacles in the sales process. As a result, the sales presentation can be more specific and relevant, and obstacles can be uncovered and addressed.



## It's effective, BUT ...

While its effectiveness is unquestioned, implementing this sales strategy is time consuming and labor intensive, not to mention expensive. Estimates of the cost of a sales call today is more than \$300. What's more, making personal sales calls to recipients of a campaign just isn't feasible for many types of small businesses. In addition, actually reaching someone on the phone is next to impossible with all of the technology today including answering machines, voicemails, caller ID, and robo calling. Today's marketers need to be more targeted and relevant right from the start, which in turn will allow for only qualified prospects to be identified throughout the course of the campaign.

## Don't Throw the Baby Out With The Bath Water!

Now businesses no longer have to weigh the effectiveness of a personal selling strategy against its costs and difficulties. Today's cross-media campaign is even more targeted and personal. While the process remains similar, the use of new media is elevating its success. Instead of a form letter, each letter can be completely personalized with text and graphics at mind blowing speeds and at a surprisingly low cost. Instead of the high costs and difficulty reaching someone on the phone, personalized email messages get through to remind and reinforce the sales message. And, rather than making sales presentations one at a time, it is possible to make hundreds of personalized sales presentations simultaneously using Internet-based training.

Personal selling still plays a role in a cross-media campaign, except now the salesperson pre-qualifies the prospects before making contact. With the information gathered throughout the campaign, the salesperson can hold meaningful conversations with prospects and offer strategic solutions to their problems.

The result: By combining the precise targeting of direct mail, the relevance of a personalized Web page and the immediacy and convenience of email, small businesses are experiencing dramatic improvements in their response rates and increased sales.

## The Cross-Media Campaign – Define Target, Attract Visitors, Test & Analyze Results

The best place to start for a cross-media campaign is with your existing customers. Here's why:

- Maintaining and enhancing relationships with your current customers is vastly more profitable than acquiring new customers.
- The process of categorizing your existing customers based on their specific interests, needs or wants will give you insights and ideas on how best to reach and attract new customers with similar defining characteristics.

4

## Define and Identify Your Target Markets

As you begin to identify the defining characteristics of each of your target market segments, you will gain valuable insight needed to identify new sources of people (or businesses) with similar needs, wants and interests. What demographics describe your markets? What interests do they have in common? What magazines do they read? Where



do they live? What political, religious or other reference groups do they belong to? Are they members of an ethnic group? What games do they play? How do they spend recreational time?

One way to help stimulate your thinking is to spend some time looking through the Standard Rate and Data Service (SRDS) of mailing lists available online and at the library. With over 50,000 lists available on every conceivable market, topic, interest or niche, you can find a universe to match virtually any criterion you can imagine.

And that's really just the beginning. A good list broker or direct mail partner will have valuable insight and access to many additional lists which may not be available in the SRDS. In addition, local, state and federal government licensing boards and institutions maintain and make available (under the Freedom of Information Act) lists and information on a vast array of businesses and professional licensees.

If you have a clear idea of defining characteristics of the target markets you want to reach, you can rest assured there are lists available to reach them.

### Attracting Visitors

Now that you have defined the market you want to reach and you have a mailing list that matches your criteria, you need to create a direct mail piece that will motivate them to visit the personalized site you have prepared for them.

The biggest obstacle facing you is human inertia. It is always easier to simply do nothing! To overcome this you'll need to rely on more than simple curiosity.

You'll have to offer the reader a benefit, a reason to stop what they are doing and visit their PURL online. You will need to appeal to their self interest – and the only way to do this is by providing information relevant to their needs and wants.

If it is consumers you are targeting, how can you help the reader save time or money, gain prestige, enjoy better health, end drudgery, live more comfortably, be free from worry, or have greater security and personal safety?

With business-to-business messages, you should still appeal to emotions. (After all, there are people behind those business decisions.) What can you offer to help them advance on the job? Look good to superiors? Most often – if your market is business, industry or intermediary buyers – the most compelling appeals are economic ones concerning price, availability, quality and suitability. The economic motive can be expanded upon to include efficiency in operation, dependability, reliability, durability, enhancement of productivity and economy of use ... all factors, that in the end, make the individual or team look good.

5

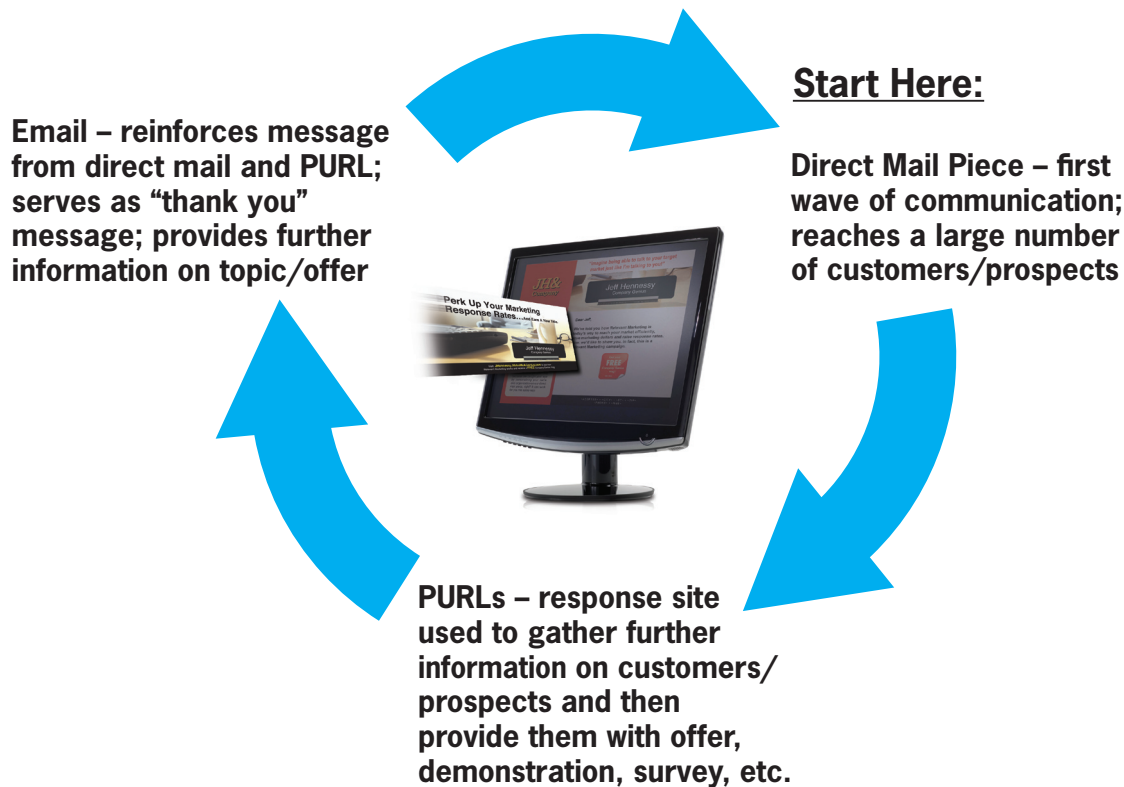
### The Nuts and Bolts of a Campaign

The first piece of the campaign is a direct mail piece, usually a postcard or envelope package. The direct mail piece should include a clear call to action. An example might be to direct the recipient to a PURL: Visit [www.janesmith/easygardening.com](http://www.janesmith/easygardening.com) to download your free guide, receive \$25 off, view our presentation, learn more and so on. From



there, the role of the PURL is two-fold. First, it provides more information on your special offer. Second, it asks information-gathering questions of your customers and prospects, capturing more details about their specific needs ... information that can quickly be delivered to your sales team for follow up.

Now, email joins the process. As prospects visit their PURL, you can gather email addresses, opening another communications channel.



## Direct Mail

The role of direct mail in a cross-media campaign is to introduce prospects to your offer and drive them to the PURL. Blanketing the marketplace with a generic direct mail campaign is very costly. Targeted direct mail makes it an affordable and effective strategy for small and mid-sized businesses.

6

Direct mail success is built on three legs: the mailing list, the creative package and the offer. Of these, the mailing list is the most important followed by offer and finally, the mailing package. Here are some key things to consider when creating your direct mail package:

- Always have a relevant offer in your direct mail that has perceived value.
- The appeal, or reason you give the reader to visit their personal website, is the most important element in your mailing. Make sure this message is conveyed loud and clear.
- What you say is more important than how you say it.



- Tell the reader specifically what you want them to do, how to do it, and why.
- Appeal to the reader's self interests and give a compelling reason to ACT NOW!
- Write in an informal me-to-you style, using simple words, short sentences and short paragraphs.
- Count the number of times you refer to the reader and the number of times you refer to the writer. The "you" and "your" references should outnumber the "we" and "our" references by a margin of at least 2 to 1.
- A letter with a reply envelope almost always outperforms a postcard. Test it for yourself.

#### **DIRECT MAIL FACTS**

**48% read mail to unwind.**

**42% look to mail for financial savings.**

**38% use mail to stay informed.**

**64% order from mail received within the last month.**

Source: "The Role of Mail," United States Postal Service

## PURLs

The key to an effective cross-media campaign is to personalize the message across all media. While the process of creating PURLs can be accomplished manually to create one or two landing pages, special software is required for larger projects.

The goal of your PURL is to provide each customer with more complete and relevant information, while excluding content which is not relevant to their needs.

For example:

- A travel agent may provide a PURL to their customers centered on the type of travel they prefer – adventure, cruise, Europe, etc.
- A Web design firm may want to provide a PURL to conduct a survey of the company's website needs.
- A heating and air conditioning company may want to provide customers with a PURL featuring a recommended maintenance schedule for their particular equipment along with energy savings tips and new products of interest.
- A telemarketing company may want to provide a PURL for prospects to visit their website and view an industry specific demonstration of their calling procedure.

The PURL is prominently featured in a personalized direct mail piece – anything from a postcard to a three dimensional mailing – and the recipient is driven to his or her own personal Web page.

Once there, the content on the landing page can be anything you want it to be – a product demonstration, a video infomercial, useful information, a survey or questionnaire or a special incentive/offer. Just remember to keep the content personal and relevant. Creating a landing page with relevant messaging can increase conversion by 2.3 times, and according to Jupiter research, relevant campaigns increase revenues up to 18 times.

Remember, the landing page is simply another stepping stone on the path you have laid out for your customer or prospect. Its purpose is not to complete the sale but to lead the



recipient toward the sale by providing reasons and persuading them to take a specific next step. It's essential that you make it easy for your customers to enter their contact information by providing pre-filled forms and a clear sequence of requested actions.

One of the biggest advantages of using PURLs is information-gathering. This information can be used in future campaigns to tailor both the message and offer to the unique recipient. PURLs also give you the ability to track responses in real time, which means you can monitor the effectiveness of your campaign and schedule a time frame for the next wave of communications including any necessary changes. At the same time, PURLs also help you to cleanse and expand your customer database since online forms allow recipients to enter/update their contact information quickly and easily.

## Email

Email marketing is growing in popularity. According to the Direct Marketing Association's 2009 Response Rate Report, 57.1 percent of marketers planned to increase their use of email. The study also found that 12.6 percent of marketing budgets is dedicated to email, third only to direct mail and Internet marketing. Email's ability to be personalized and its low cost per touch make it a perfect fit for a cross-media campaign.

Best practices suggest that you should use permission-based email marketing in your campaign. You can satisfy this requirement by collecting emails with your PURLs. Email is typically integrated into the process as the vehicle for a follow-up "thank you" for doing what you've asked of them – visiting their personalized site. Email is also used as follow-up to any non-responders to provide them with another opportunity to respond. This could occur if you are using a "house" list for your campaign and have a healthy email database already. There are some people who will feel challenged to re-key a PURL into their Web browser from a direct mail piece. When targeting existing customers (whose emails you already have), having the PURL as an active link in an email removes the barrier. Now it's just a click – increasing your overall response rates.

## Testing & Analyzing Results

The key to success in cross-media marketing, or any marketing approach strategy, lies in testing all of the variables. Empirical proof is the only way you can separate well meaning opinion and belief from facts.

Testing can reveal very large differences in results caused by the media you choose, the appeal you convey in your messages, as well as other factors. As a result, it is not unusual to double or triple the effectiveness of your marketing campaign through testing. And while trends come and go and the pulse of the public is ever changing, there is one rule that never changes: test everything on a small scale before you spend money on a large scale.

8

The most important variables to test are:

1. The mailing list used to reach your market.

Start by testing to find out which mailing list produces the greatest response. Use at least two different lists so you can establish a baseline and compare how much actual business resulted from each list. Differences of 500% or more are not unusual. Another way to put it: one dollar is doing the work of five!



## 2. The appeal/offer used in your campaign.

Test two different appeals or offers. While copy, art, design, photographs, illustrations and production value all influence response, the basic reason you give for buying, visiting, requesting more information, or other desired action is by far the most important. Usually expressed in the headline of an ad, or opening paragraph of a mailing, the right appeal can overcome weak copy, poor graphics or any number of other sins. At the same time, beautiful design and clever copy cannot overcome a weak call-to-action.

## 3. The visitor's behavior on their PURL.

Finally, analyze visitor behavior on the response site. Today's PURL software packages come complete with tracking and analytic reporting. With these features you can instantly and extraordinarily get a deep understanding of your customers behavior and how best to reach them. In fact, the depth and amount of information available can be so overwhelming, you can easily lose sight of the most important and useful information.

If your PURL includes a link to your main website, you can also access and analyze reports here, too. First, focus on understanding the sources of traffic to your site and the relative profitability of each. Then work on improving conversion by testing and comparing content and design of any page on your site.

Google Analytics tells you how visitors found your site and how they interact with it. You'll be able to compare the behavior and profitability of visitors who were referred from each of your ads, keywords, search engines, and emails, and gain valuable insight into how to improve your site's content and design.

## The Bottom Line

Every waking moment, your potential customers are being exposed to a mind-numbing number of messages. And, as each one screams even more loudly for attention, it becomes more and more difficult for anyone and everyone to be heard.

Clearly, it makes little sense for a small business to add another small voice to the overwhelming noise of mass media. Instead, what is needed is a new strategy – a way to vastly improve the effectiveness and the efficiency of marketing communications.

It starts with recognizing and accepting some basic facts:

- First, the environment or channel through which an advertisement is delivered can actually, and sometimes profoundly, impact the way consumers respond.
- Next, not all channels are created equally. Each communications channel has particular strengths and weaknesses.
- Finally, the most effective marketing communication strategy is the result of integrating and combining media to leverage individual strengths while avoiding each medium's individual weakness.



Up until very recently, this kind of sophisticated cross-media campaign was beyond the reach of most small businesses. The costs and technical hurdles were simply too great. Now all of that has changed.

Combine the target ability, measurability, and high response rate of direct mail ... with a visually engaging, personalized Web page where your product or service can be demonstrated and your prospect emotionally engaged ... with the immediacy, low cost, interactivity and 24/7 availability of email ... **and you can achieve breakthrough results.**

### How Media Channels Compare

CHANNEL	PRIMARY GOALS	KEY STRENGTHS	KEY WEAKNESSES
<b>Mail</b>	Create awareness Generate leads Drive sales, traffic Support other media	Highly targetable Grabs attention High response rate Personalized Measurable Detailed information Interactive Long shelf life	Cost-per-impression Long lead time Single exposure
<b>Email</b>	Build awareness Sell products online Create Web traffic	Highly targetable Trackable Immediate 24/7 availability Interactive Low cost per impression	Intrusive, viewed as spam Competitive clutter Ignored, deleted, blocked Frequent crashes Low retention/comprehension Security/virus concerns
<b>Telephone</b>	Build awareness Generate leads Sell products via phone	High response rate Highly selective Person-to-person Immediate Fast response time Upgrade-sell potential	"Do Not Call" list High cost Hang-ups No visual appeal Limited household reachability Intrusive
"Media Choices Today – What's Getting Through" Published by United States Postal Service			



## Where Do You Go From Here?

As an owner or marketer of a small or mid-sized business, you are contending with a growing list of challenges – both internal and external – that influence your development of a successful marketing program. Fewer inside resources in people, time and dollars, increased competition in the marketplace and a proliferation of available marketing strategies that produce varying outcomes all seem to work against you when you need to demonstrate results.

### Where does a marketer begin?

Managing all of the components of a successful marketing campaign can be time consuming. Using multiple resources or an agency can be cost-prohibitive. Relying on freelancers is often inefficient. The most effective use of your staff, time and dollars is found in consolidating your program with a single source to develop, produce and deliver your marketing programs.

Beginning with strategy, we'll work with you to determine if direct mail – or a combination of other channels – makes sense for your business or organization. Then we'll precisely define your target audience to ensure your communications achieve maximum impact with minimal waste. Taking a concept to creation is the next critical step. We know how to develop and design marketing materials that drive results – all within your budget and timeline.

Of course, we all know a great marketing campaign will fall flat on its face if it doesn't get into the hands of the right people at the right time. That's where our mailing expertise comes into play. Our experts stay current with postal regulations and requirements, which means increased efficiencies and postage savings for you.

Allegra is locally-owned and operated. Our focus is on small and mid-sized businesses and organizations that need marketing services and print-related communications. We specialize in direct mail and cross-media campaigns, but also customer/donor communications, special events support and brand identity – whatever it takes to make an enterprise like yours not just survive but thrive.

Want to learn more? Contact your Allegra representative today.