

tips&resources

Postcards

Start using the #1 direct mail piece

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1 We love postcards—they're a quick, cheap way of getting one idea or message across to your prospective customers, and they can be incredibly creative. Postcards cost little to mail, and come in a variety of sizes. They are also the number one way to promote web sites. With a very creative design that simply has your URL and encouragement to your clients to discover your web site—watch your hits zoom. Postcards are more effective than ad banners, because they can target the very customers YOU want to reach! Think of postcards as the print version of an ad banner.

They come in a variety of sizes—from the smallest 4 1/2" x 6" to the largest (6" x 9"). The postal service has a minimum requirement of a 7 point (about 100 pound cover weight paper) card stock, and the cards must have a clear area on the right and bottom sides for mailing purposes.

3 The biggest mistake people make in designing a postcard is thinking the side without the postage/address is the "front." They typically put the headline on that side, and other information on the "back" — info that only makes sense if you've read the other side first. But remember, when you get your mail the address/postage is always looking right up at you! So, consider the postage/address side of the card as the "front" side, or as a stand-alone from the other side. Put your most important message on the mailing side, it's quite effective there.

If you've decided you want your own cards, you have several options. The first is a Tria-designed postcard. (Yeah, you knew we'd stick this in here, didn't you?) The second option is to buy preprinted cards you can personalize and run through your laser or inkjet printer. In either case, you might consider "variable data" or short-run postcards so you can target different promotions for different clients.

5 If you choose to have your card designed by Tria, one-, two- and four-color cards can be printed economically; but even the most extravagant—a jumbo, full-color postcard with a 10,000 quantity—costs only \$1,200 to print, about \$1,000 to design and produce. That's 22 cents a piece!

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Don't overlook the potential for a really great design or funny headline. Postcards are the perfect vehicle for trying something wild. They need to stand out from the rest of the mail, so why not do something totally unexpected?

7 The most important thing to know about your postcard campaign is: don't rely on a one and only mailing. Create a series of 3 or 4 postcards—each featuring a different theme (or product or service) over the course of the year. Your prospects will remember the one they got before, and building awareness is the first step in building sales. The cards do not all need to look the same, but they should look as if they came from the same company (there are design tricks to accomplish this).

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Consider creating your own "designer series" of blank postcards. Send a set to each client as a thank-you gift. We received a set of cards from a printer years ago. They were simply done, with a gorgeous photo and their name on one side, blank on the other. We STILL use those cards to send notes to friends and we still think of that printer when we do!

Postcards in a nutshell:

- A great marketing tool.
- The front is the postage/address side, the back is the nonmailing side.
- Leave room on the right and bottom of the front side, or the post office will put ugly barcode stickers over your content.
- Consider variable data marketing for your postcards.
- Try something unusual.
- Think "campaign" and do more than one!
- Consider printing a "designer series" as a gift.