

# Direct marketing

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



Today, however, spurred by rapid advances in database technologies and new marketing media-- especially the Internet-- direct marketing has undergone a dramatic transformation. Benefits of Direct Marketing Benefits to Buyers For buyers, direct marketing is convenient, easy, and private. Direct marketers never close their doors, and customers don't have to trek to and through stores to find products. From their homes, offices or almost anywhere else, customers can shop the Web at any time of the day or night. Business buyers can learn about products and revise without tying up time with salespeople. Direct marketing gives buyers ready access to wealth of products. Direct marketers can offer an almost unlimited selection to customers almost anywhere In the world. Direct marketing channels also give buyers access to a wealth of comparative information about companies, products and competitors. Good catalogs or Web sites often provide more information in more useful forms than even the most helpful retail salesperson can provide.

Direct marketing is immediate and Interactive: Buyers can Interact with leers by phone or on the seller's web site to create exactly the configuration of information, products, or services they desire and then order them on the spot. Moreover, direct marketing gives consumers a greater measure of control. Consumers decide which catalogs they will browse and which Web sites they will visit. Benefits to Sellers For sellers, direct marketing is a powerful tool for building customer relationships. Today's direct marketers can target small groups or individual customers.

Because of the one-to-one nature of direct marketing, companies can interact with customers by phone or online, learn more about their needs. And personalize products and services to specific customer tastes. In turn, customers can ask questions and volunteer feedback. Direct marketing also offers sellers a low-cost, efficient, speedy alternative for reaching their markets. Direct marketing has grown rapidly in business-to-business marketing, partly in response to the ever-increasing costs of marketing through the sales force.

Online direct marketing, results in lower costs, improved efficiencies, and speedier handling of channel and logistics functions, such as order processing, inventory handling, and delivery. Direct marketing can also offer greater flexibility. It allows marketers to make ongoing adjustments to prices and programs or make immediate, timely, and personal announcements and offers. Direct marketing gives sellers access to buyers that they could not reach through other 1 OFF and post toll-free telephone numbers to handle orders and inquiries.

Internet marketing is a truly global medium that allows buyers and sellers to click from one country to another in seconds. Even small marketers find that they have ready access to global markets. Customer Databases and Direct Marketing Effective direct marketing begins with a good customer database. A customer database is an organized collection of comprehensive data about individual customers or prospects. A good customer database can be a potent relationship- building tool.

The database gives companies a 360-degree view of their customers and how they behave. A company is no better than what it knows about its customers. In consumer marketing, the customer database might contain a customer's geographic data (address, region), demographic data (e. G. Age, income, family members, birthdays), cryptographic data ( activities, interests, and opinions), and buying behavior (buying preferences and the regency, frequency, and monetary value [RFM] of past purchases).

In a-to-B marketing, the customer profile might contain the products and services the customer has bought, past volumes and prices, key contacts, competing suppliers, the status of current contracts, estimated future spending, and competitive strengths and weaknesses in selling and servicing the account. Companies use their databases in many ways. They use databases to locate DOD potential customers and generate sales leads. They mine their databases to learn about customers in detail and then fine-tune their market offerings and communications to the special preferences and behaviors of target segments or individuals.

In all, a company's database can be an important tool for building stronger long-term customer relationships. Like many other marketing tools, database marketing requires a special investment. Companies must invest in computer hardware, database software, analytical programs, communication links, and skilled personnel. The database system must be user-friendly and available to various marketing groups, including those in product and brand management, new- product development, advertising and promotion, direct

mail, telemarketing, Web marketing, field sales, order fulfillment, and customer service.

However, a well- managed database usually results in sales and customer-relationship gains that more than cover these costs. Forms of Direct Marketing The major forms of direct marketing--include personal selling direct-mail marketing, catalog marketing, telephone marketing, direct-response television (DRAT) marketing, kiosk marketing, new digital direct marketing technologies, and online marketing. Direct-Mail Marketing Direct-mail marketing involves sending an offer, announcement, reminder, or other item to a person at a particular physical or virtual address.

Using highly selective mailing lists, direct marketers send out millions of mail pieces each year-- letters, catalogs, ads, brochures, samples, DVD's, and other " salespeople with wings". Direct mail is by far the largest direct marketing medium. Direct mail is well suited to direct, one-to-one communication. It permits high target-market selectivity, can be rationalized, is flexible, and allows the easy measurement of results. Although direct mail costs more per thousand people reached than mass media such as television or magazines, the people it reaches are much better prospects.

Direct mail has proved gourmet foods, clothing, and other consumer goods to industrial products of all kinds. Charities also use direct mail heavily to raise billions of dollars each year. Some analysts predict a decline in the use of traditional forms of direct mail in coming years, as marketers switch to newer digital forms, such as e-mail and mobile cell phone) marketing. E-mail, mobile, and other newer forms of direct mail deliver direct messages at

incredible speeds and lower costs compared to the post office's "snail mail" pace.

However, even though the new digital forms of direct mail are gaining popularity, the traditional form is still by far the most widely used. Mail marketing offers some distinct advantages over digital forms. It provides something tangible for people to hold and keep. E-mail is easily screened or trashed. "[With] spam filters and spam folders to keep our messaging away from consumers' inboxes," says one direct marketer, "sometimes you have to lick a few stamps".