

# Direct marketing

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



In the morning as I wake up and check my email, I see a promotional advertisement in my inbox - and I actually welcome it! Why? Nandos boldly proclaims " Cricket with hot chicks is all about four play!" This is some thing that can be interesting I muse, planning a GT with my friends at Nandos. The reasons why I did not perceive this email as Spam were that:

- a. Nandos is a service of interest to me and,
- b. They've provided an " Opt out" option - I can back out any time.

This goes on to show the sophistication in Direct Marketing today - becoming more personalized, permission marketing with improved targeting so that the message goes only to those who would want to see it i. e the Target audience. This may be attributed to databases with more accurate and detailed customer information, reducing waste.

### Introduction to Direct Marketing

Ozair Hanafi, Managing Director of Orient Direct, a McCann-Erickson company, defines the discipline as such:

- \* " Direct Marketing is any marketing activity which creates and sustains a measurable direct relationship between you and your prospect or customer.
- \* " Direct Marketing is based on a strategy of one to one.
- \* " It is not just a medium like Direct Mail. It is not just a channel of distribution like Mail Order. It is these and more. It is a way of marketing, it is a method of Marketing.

\* " Direct Marketing empowers you to capture and capitalise on customers and adds profits to almost any business large or small.

\* " The most important word in Direct Marketing is 'measurable'. For if response can not be measured; if cost and income cannot be weighed and assessed, it's not direct marketing!

\* " Direct Marketing is the best way to win and maintain customers." 1

Thus direct marketing enables the company to create an ongoing relationship with the customer. Ozair Hanafi puts it thus,

Through Direct Marketing we generate a dialogue between our prospect and ourselves.

\* " Direct Marketing is Relationship Marketing. It is affinity marketing.

\* " Before approaching a customer or a prospect, we gather enough information about him or her. We have the profile of the customer before us. By knowing as much about him as we should we trigger the right response from our prospect." - Thus as we saw in Prelude, direct marketing today is targeted to the only the right respondent, the one who would be interested in the product or service.

With the advent of new media, direct marketing has been evolving the world over. This evolution has also reached Pakistani shores, with direct marketing becoming an exciting new medium available to Pakistani marketers today. However, to date, direct marketing remains a medium to be used in conjunction with others - not a sole or even major media vehicle for any

campaign. This can be attributed to the following, as pertains to the Pakistani environment:

- \* All areas not covered by traditional direct marketing media like snail mail or internet
- \* Non availability of data bases - For example: How to target people in rural areas by direct mail-order marketing?

Direct Marketing versus Mass Marketing and its role in the Marketing Mix

In mass advertising we are busy in a monologue. In Direct Marketing we generate a dialogue.

- \* " Direct Marketing should be used, as a key component for developing and designing the total Marketing Strategy of an organisation.
- \* " Mass marketing has its own value. Direct Marketing helps mass marketing in measuring results. We don't tell our clients, 'do this but don't do that'. It's not at all like that.
- \* " What we suggest is that, Direct Marketing is as important as the rest of the media. We are not here to replace the electronic or the print media.
- " In fact, Direct Marketing is here to support the total marketing programme of the marketer to get the right results in a cost-effective manner.
- \* " We have to see everything in its totality, and always keep the consumers' interest supreme.

\* " We have to remember that it is the 'human element' that gives the desired depth and dimension to effective marketing, and this comes about through Direct Marketing"

### International Trends

Ruth P. Stevens, president of eMarketing Strategy says: Video baked inside a banner ad is being used a great deal. I've seen some really cool ads run by such companies as IBM [Corp.] and Cisco [Systems] on some of these technology sites where some of these IT people are hanging out. They are sophisticated and really appealing. I think they break through the clutter. I expect to see a lot more of that. 2

Scott Marden, Director of Strategic Marketing at Vertis says, Direct Mail Responses: Internet vs. Snail Mail

" Customer Focus" demonstrates a trend towards more traditional response methods. In 2000 and 2001, Vertis revealed that consumers were increasingly responding to direct mail via the Internet. In 2002 and 2003, providing a business reply envelope is even more important than your website address. For example, in 2001, when readers of financial, insurance, and non-profit direct mail were questioned about how they had responded to direct mail in the past 30 days, only 27 percent of those who responded did so via mail. In the 2002, survey that number has risen to 57 percent.

Special Offers, Discounts, Timing

In the current economy, when advertisers are competing for the few discretionary dollars available, incentives are more important than ever. Consumers have generally been reluctant to respond to poorly conceived mail pieces; and this year, more people consider special offers and discounts to be an important factor in determining which direct mail pieces to open. In 2001, only 34 percent of respondents listed these types of promotions as a factor. That number increased to 43 percent in 2002.

Another strategy that is important to consumers this year is the timing of direct mail. Up 10 percent from last year, 68 percent of adults say they open direct mail based upon appropriate timing. This increase not only reveals consumers' reluctance to open just any direct mail, but also compels marketers to identify which consumers are in the market for their product or service."

Biegel, managing director of the Winterberry Group, a New York City-based advertising and marketing strategic consulting firm, outlined the following trends he suggests marketers and marketing suppliers stay on top of this year:

[1][2]1. An acceleration of mobile opportunities. The growing adoption of smartphones and apps-combined with increased marketer and agency experience-will allow for more targeted and effective mobile marketing. " Even if you can't make money from mobile, you still have to keep an eye on it," Biegel said.

2. Local marketing dollars migrate online from traditional budgets. " As geo-targeting capabilities improve via search, display and mobile, we'll see more local advertising online," he said<sup>3</sup>.

### Trends in Pakistan

In this section, I shall be discussing some exciting new initiatives on the Pakistan direct marketing landscape:

#### Home Express

Home Express and certain other magazines are vibrant magazines comprised solely of direct marketing messages and delivered to homes within certain geographic vicinities. Home Express, for example, is delivered to 50,000 homes in Defence and Clifton and advertises products and services of interest in the area along with coupons also. Vibrant, well designed and well laid out, Home Express is looked forward to by all households in the area.

If you are looking to reach a specific segment, direct mail is the best way to get to niche audiences compared with broadcast, print and email<sup>4</sup>. Thus companies targeting households in Defence may use this medium to narrowly target their customer at a much lower cost versus other media.

#### Gul Ahmed's magazine

The Gul Ahmed Magazine can easily be called the most eagerly awaited magazine of the summer for most Pakistani women! It boasts of gorgeous designs, superb printing, explosion of colour and cutting edge fashions - all dropped free of cost in households all over Defence. This is an open

invitation to all women to flock to the Gul Ahmed Ideas shop - an invitation that few women can resist.

While other lawn manufacturers have not distributed such magazines free of charge, Crescent gave a free catalogue to all attendees of their exhibition at Park Towers. However the print quality was average and it failed to make the same impact.

Other retailers have tried to get the same personal contact with their customers at a lower cost by inviting them to their facebook pages or websites via their Out of Home billboards.

With facebook contact, companies can get a better profile of their customers and elicit more information about them to be able to contact them and sell to them in a better manner.

Deluxe beauty parlour - Throwing pamphlets induces trial, says a housewife. For me Deluxe was an unknown beauty salon but having received their pamphlet at the Gulf shopping Centre, advertising 50% off, I decided to pay them a visit. I was pleasantly surprised and shall definitely go there again.

Advertising such discount schemes via direct mail also generate Word of Mouth. I went on to tell my friends about the Deluxe offer.

Prospects for Direct Marketing in Pakistan in the future

This is best stated by Ozair, " Mr. Direct Marketing Pakistan", when he stated:



" We believe that direct marketing can flourish in a society such as ours. The future is bright. It is going to grow with the economy.

\* " We would love to have as many players in the field as possible. So there is competition. Because that is what will help us improve. The more the merrier. It will provide us with more opportunities."