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PROFITABLE YEAR EVER!

More

Money

That's What Local Businesses Need

And That's What They'll Have, If They Avoid

The **10 BIGGEST**

Direct Mail Mistakes

Seri The Tech Granny

THE TEN BIGGEST DIRECT MAIL MISTAKES

The Tech Granny

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A Big Texas Shout Out to my brother Rodd—an awesome brother, son, husband, dad, farmer and business owner, who has been by my side every step of the way as I discovered and developed my passion and purpose.

Sevi

“The future belongs to those
who prepare for it today.”

• *Malcolm X* •

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INTRODUCTION

Hello! I'm Sevi, the *Tech Granny*.

Here's a brief story about why I wrote this book, and what it will do for you.

It's not easy being a local business these days. The internet has forever changed how business is done, and now localpreneurs have been forced to up their game. We live in an information age—there's no shortage of information. In fact, we are in information overload. The problem is, much of it is “bad” information.

I'm here to set the record straight about direct mail. This book is about the Top Ten Mistakes Local Businesses Make with Direct Mail. Before we dive in, allow me to share a bit about myself, and why I care so deeply about local businesses and the people who own them.

Local business owners are so much more than faceless men and women who own the businesses near where we live. They are family, friends, neighbors and our brothers and sisters in Christ with whom we worship weekly. Our children and their children attend the same schools— many play Friday night football together. High school football is big in Texas.

Many of these men and women are unsung heroes, who unselfishly give their time and money to support a variety of causes, including our little league teams as sponsors and coaches. They're always there, good stewards of our community—from donating cash so the

Pearland, Texas little league baseball team could travel to compete in the Little League World Series to happily allowing our kids to hold bake sales, car washes and sell girl scout cookies in front of their businesses.

They step up to help those in need, whether it is by cheerfully installing an air conditioner free of charge or by spending their weekend making much-needed repairs to the home of an aging resident.

When tragedy strikes our communities, they stand ready to help in any way possible. It may be through donating furnishings to a family who has lost everything in a fire, or by allowing their businesses to be used as shelters for refuge after a flood.

If you are reading this book, you're likely a local business owner too. Perhaps by looking at local business owners in this context, we'd realize that we are each other's best chance at preserving the local business.

If you believe as I believe, please join me, commit today, right now to seek out more goods and services each month, such as items you buy for your office, home, social group and church that are offered by local businesses. Sure, it's easy to jump online to purchase from big eCommerce sites—we all do it, and we always will. But, just imagine the possibilities, what a difference it would make if we ALL simply increased our purchases from local businesses vs. Internet retailers and Big Box Chains by just two additional monthly purchases, each month, every month without fail. We'd all sell more while strengthening our communities and making new friends along the way.

Please don't limit yourself though to doing business with only the local companies within your Business

Meetup, Business Council, Go Local Chapter or area Chamber of Commerce. Rather, reach out and discover new businesses and services to buy from, and members of other local business groups. Because after all, what matters most is that we are local businesses and we are all in this together.

Gandhi once said, “We must be the change we wish to see in the world.”

Ok my friend, let’s learn something about direct mail. We live in an e-mail, text message and digital marketing world, however, businesses are still spending over 150 billion dollars yearly on direct mail advertising.

Many people consider physical mail as ‘Old School.’ To them, it’s not hip, techie or new, however, it still works!

The United States Post Office as of January 2018, processes over 21 million pieces of good old fashion physical mail per hour, every day! In fact, even Google uses physical mail for specific promotions.

Keep reading to discover the pitfalls that cause many local business owners to believe that direct mail does not work and how you can blend direct mail with digital ads to reach ideal prospects within the area of your business.

As a strategic advisor who is tuned in to the current state of local businesses, you're going to love what I'm sharing with you today.

There are three BIG takeaways:

- First, I want to reveal the 10 Biggest Mistakes Local Businesses Make with Direct Mail.

- Secondly, I'll give you my 10 Proven Direct Mail "must do's," that are straight out of my playbook. Once implemented, they will transform not only your Direct Mail results but all your marketing and advertising.
- Third, I'll start a conversation with you, so we get to know each other through my writings, blog and social media. With my help, you'll learn how to simplify your marketing processes, which will help you to accomplish more, sell more and make more.

This book is about direct mail. However, the strategies I share in this book are straight out of my playbook. Think of it as Direct Mail on Steroids!

Implementing the strategies, will forever shift your way of thinking about your business, its profits and your role as the Owner, CEO or Captain of Your Ship.

I did not write this book in hopes of it becoming a New York Times Best Seller, but rather as a tool, a super-practical blueprint written to help serious business owners, like yourself, discover new marketing methods that once implemented will help you to sell more and, make more. We can't do business today the same way we did business five years, two years or even a year ago.

It's essential for local business owners to understand that an effective marketing campaign must include strategic methods that include technologies designed to automate processes and gather data. This will enable them to make better marketing decisions and create for themselves the best possible environment for their local business to thrive than ever before.

However, businesses who are slow to or refuse to adapt, risk getting left behind and may be forced to close their doors.

These changes level the playing field for local businesses enabling them to compete and win in this new era of business brought about by the Internet.

If you want to connect with people, earn and keep their business, you've got to be where they are 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Inside their mailboxes and on their desktops and mobile devices.

You'll need to deliver positive experiences to both prospects and customers at every interaction—from your business' physical location to online services, from ordering to fulfillment, and returns, guarantees, and service after the sale.

We can't afford for prospects, customers, and patients to have a bad experience with any area of your business or practice because bad experiences are bad for business.

Everything a consumer wants to buy is only a click away on their mobile devices, thus fueling the popularity of online shopping. Online shopping is causing major industry disruptions that affect local businesses and their local community's tax base which is largely funded by taxes local businesses pay. Billions of dollars are being stripped from local economies each year creating an economic crisis that most seem to be ignoring.

Most owners are guilty of the same lousy thinking—using only one method of lead generation, and the poor business practice of focusing on one-time transactions.

Most leave whether the prospect buys, up to chance. What's even sadder—if the prospect does buy, whether they will purchase again or refer a friend or relative, is also left up to chance.

Doesn't trying a new method laid out by a marketing pro with years of experience make more sense than beating yourself up because you simply didn't know what you were doing wrong?

Join me and let's create the next local business success story—yours! We'll start with direct mail, yep, good 'ole fashioned direct mail... *Tech Granny Style*.

Here are a few Golden Nuggets you can look forward to discovering as you continue to read.

Chapter 1 gets into my secret sauce of combining Direct Mail + Digital Ads + Automated Follow-up.

Chapter 4 is all about Strategy; I've received several atta-girls on this chapter from readers.

Pay close attention to Chapter 6—it's the most crucial component of your mailer. Nail this one thing, and you're nearly guaranteed to have a winning mailer.

CHAPTER 1

Direct Mail, Tech Granny Style

Your Local Business Everywhere Now!

Direct Mail + Digital Ads + Automated Follow-up = \$\$\$

I will start by detailing the proven system I use—a combination of direct mail, digital ads and automated follow-up. It's a good starting point, because before we can discuss the mistakes business owners make with direct mail, we've got to first cover how direct mail fits into a digital age and how by implementing a strategy that uses all three components, you will sell more than if you used any one of the three alone.

As promised, here is my go-to local strategy, my blueprint, starting with direct mail. As a bonus, I'll be sharing wisdom gleaned from decades of business in the trenches, gained by observing the methods of successful companies and contrast to what went wrong for those that crashed and burned.

It's the answer to why some local businesses are wildly successful and enjoy all the new and repeat business they can handle, while others are struggling to make ends meet, are barely getting by and destined to fail.

Direct mail is an essential component of your integrated strategy. It works very well in conjunction with digital marketing and automated follow-up and is

more successful than if you implemented either one individually.

Here is a quick overview of how it works. I target prospects near my local client's businesses by carrier route using Every Door Direct Mail®. I include a compelling offer with a strong call to action designed to drive the prospect to the client's website to take immediate action. The call to action could be to request information, request a quick quote, or for a special coupon code that's available only on their website.

The customer's visit to the website triggers the digital ads. This is called retargeting. Are you starting to see the value?

I'm driving interested mail recipients to their website. However, studies show that only a small percentage of those visitors are ready to buy immediately. What about the majority who visit the site and don't purchase?

Sadly, for most businesses that advertise, this is where their marketing usually ends. Now, pairing digital ads triggered by the action of visiting the website is just the beginning—the beginning of a profitable journey for my clients and now for you, if you choose to implement my *"Your Local Business Everywhere Now Program"*.

I explain it all right here; you now have my proven strategy to convert more leads into buyers. Instead of potential customers visiting your website only never to return, you're now able to continue the journey by creating touch points—displaying your ads on social media and across Google's vast network of news sites, shopping sites, blogs and email providers like Yahoo's email sidebar.

Displaying your ad to the same people whom you mailed to, the same people that went to your website. That's not only smart; its laser targeting that eliminates waste—which is powerful!

Have you ever wondered how it is that you went online to shop for an item, left the site without making a purchase, only to have ads of those same items begin showing up almost immediately everywhere you go online?

Those are digital ads triggered by the action you took of going to that website and then leaving without making a purchase.

You showed tremendous interest and are a very likely prospect. This type of marketing used to be expensive and only very large companies could afford to use it. However, with technology, businesses of practically all types and sizes can now afford it.

Instead of wasting marketing money on displaying ads to uninterested people, your ads are only shown to those that indicated an interest in your product or service by visiting your website.

The last step is an automated follow-up. Most sales are missed because businesses give up too fast. Think about your current sales and follow-up process. Chances are, it goes something like this—you spend money to generate a lead, a prospect responds, you answer a few questions, perhaps even provide a quote, then after you call'em back a couple of times—that's it. You're done trying to sell them.

You go back to buying more leads and repeating that same unprofitable process over and over again. Did you

know that a prospect will often see your advertisement an average of seven times before they act? By merely increasing follow-up to between 10 and 15 touchpoints that consist of emails, calls, and physical mail such as a brochure or report, you'll increase your sales closing rate by a whopping 37%.

As your reach will be targeted, you will spend less on overall leads affording you to follow-up properly on a more ideal prospect. You just never know, when a prospect will convert. You'll be surprised; they'll continue to trickle in for months from past ads because you continued to follow-up using automation. The result is, you'll end up with a continuous pipeline of prospects all converting to buyers along the way.

What would that do for your businesses bottom-line? It's a lot more profitable than continuing to buy leads that you poorly work and toss aside.

People go to their mailboxes every day. According to an article in Target Marketing Magazine, "when a person receives your mailer, they'll do one of four things:

1. Immediately make a purchase
2. Visit your website to learn more
3. Save it aside to read or act later
4. Throw it out."

If you've mailed to a prospect that has an interest, need or desire for your product or service then physical mail works well. However, if you are marketing to prospects with no need, want or desire or can't afford your product, then it wouldn't matter how you serve up ads—whether it is in their mailbox, via email, on the

radio, using digital ads, or smoke signals, they ain't buying.

Message to market match; a great offer coupled with ad repetition across multi-channels works.

The more marketing channels, the more profitable your marketing will be. You'll save enough to mix in targeted radio, and/or cable TV ads if you choose to. Once the prospect buys, all you've got to do is to deliver on what you promised with a good product or service and awesome customer service. With this approach, you will be well on your way to a successful, profitable business.

Before we move into "The 10 Biggest Direct Mail Mistakes", here is the bonus promised:

It's important for me to share with you what I consider to be the Biggest Mistake businesses make in marketing and building a successful business, PERIOD!

Here's where most miss the mark; you can choose to sell smart and easy or dumb and hard. The correct process begins by removing your salesperson's hat, which is preoccupied with only making another sale, to stepping into the shoes of the prospective customer. As you take this empathic approach, you begin to see things from the customer's perspective—they have a problem that needs solving.

When you focus on solving their problem, taking care of their needs, treating prospects, customers and patients as you'd like to be treated; ensuring that all the people you serve receive the type of customer service you'd appreciate receiving then everything begins to change.

It is said that hearing “NO” from a prospect, does not really mean NO. No is often an objection which actually means:

- “Give me more information.”
- “I don’t yet trust that your product or service will solve my problem.”
- “I don’t trust what you say yet.”
- “I have not justified making the purchase yet.”

Traditional selling is trying to convince people they need to buy what it is that you sell—it’s about your needs. Instead, focus on qualified leads, those with a problem that you know your product or service will solve. Get in front of them and spend your time staying top of mind to that group of prospects while building trust and authority.

This method helps to ensure that when they are ready to purchase, they’ve grown to know and trust your company. And, their decision to choose your company is their only logical choice.

Once you’ve earned their trust and allowed you to serve them, always remember—they had a choice, and they chose you. Always strive daily to continue to earn the customer’s trust and business, and you’ll build a business beyond what you ever dreamed possible.

CHAPTER 2

The Ten Biggest Mistakes Local Businesses Make with Direct Mail

As promised, here are the “10 Biggest Mistakes Local Businesses Make with Direct Mail” followed by my “10 Proven Mail Strategies” that will help you to transform your ho-hum, drab, ineffective mail into ***Mail That Sells!***

1. **Bad Planning or None at all** – Success with direct mail, just as with any type of marketing, requires a plan. Begin with the end results you desire to have.
2. **Mailing to Uninterested or Unqualified Prospects** – Failing to wisely choose whom you are targeting will result in a poor response.
3. **A Poorly Crafted Headline** – A strong headline is imperative to capture the recipient’s attention.
4. **Creating Boring, Ineffective Mailers** – Poorly targeted, poorly designed mailers with an ineffective message that fails to grab the prospects attention is a waste of money. A well thought out message crafted to grab attention and speak directly to your ideal prospect will deliver great results.
5. **A Weak Offer** - Weak offers do not convert well and can cause your mail program to flop.

Give prospects a compelling reason to try your product or service. Look at the first sale as the beginning of a long profitable and happy relationship.

6. **No Deadline, Expiration or Urgency to Respond** - All offers need to have an expiration date. Long expiration times are not advised as they simply diminish the effectiveness of your offer. People get busy and forget. Create urgency with an expiration date for your offer and reward people for taking timely action on your irresistible promotion.
7. **No Call to Action** - Ads that don't end with a strong call to action miss opportunities to sell. A call to action tells the prospect what action they need to take immediately after reading your mailer.
8. **Failing to Test, Track and Measure** - How do you know if your ads are profitable? Marketers have an old saying, "You can't manage what you can't measure." Savvy owners track their advertising to determine not only what ads are working, but what elements of the ad can be tweaked to help increase conversions. Tracking helps to separate the losers from the winners faster, thus saving those precious advertising dollars.
9. **One and Done Mailings** - Mailing to a prospect only once will not deliver the full impact of just how effective a direct mail

campaign can be. Repetition increases responses a whopping 37%

10. **Lack of Agility** – Agility is “the ability of a **business** system to rapidly respond to change by adapting its initial stable configuration (Wikipedia).” In a **business** context, **agility** is the ability of an organization to rapidly adapt to market and environmental changes in productive and cost-effective ways.

In Chapter 3, I cover the basics of Every Door Direct Mail®. In Chapter 4, as promised are ten proven mail strategies straight out of my playbook.

CHAPTER 3

The United States Postal Service (USPS) - Every Door Direct Mail® Explained

The USPS Every Door Direct Mail® program is the most cost-effective and laser targeted advertising system available today!

What makes the USPS Every Door Direct Mail® program so great?

Here are a few compelling reasons:

Low postage rates help local businesses who advertise using EDDM Retail® to gain, maintain and enjoy a competitive advantage in their niche!

No Postage Permit Required.

Before EDDM, to order to bulk mail postcards at a reduced rate, businesses were required to have a postal bulk rate permit which could cost as much as \$450 per year. This annual fee is waived for EDDM Retail®.

No Mailing List Needed.

The post office uses what they describe as a simplified address to process your EDDM mail for delivery, so no mailing list is required. You simply select your card size from the EDDM® approved postcard size chart, affix the EDDM Retail® indicia on the card before printing, and the local postal carrier will deliver your marketing mailer to the postal mailing routes that you request.

Large Size Cards = Stand Out & Sell More!

Postcard sizes can be as large as 9''x12'', which means you have plenty of room to deliver a powerful message to your prospect.

The 9''x12'' is gigantic when compared to a standard 4''x 6'' postcard, and its postage is \$0.09 less! (At the time of this printing, postage is \$0.18 per mailer.) To check current EDDM postage rates, visit: MailThatSells.Com/eddm-postage-rates

Send EDDM Retail ® from Your Local Post Office

EDDM Retail® mail can be dropped off at the local post office. You can pay the postage with cash, by cheque or debit. To view the latest version of this information, visit:

MailThatSells.Com/EDDM-Basics

For a list of the types of businesses that I believe do best by using Every Door Direct Mail®, visit MailThatSells.com

CHAPTER 4

Creating Your Marketing Strategy

Congratulations, You've Made It!

Chapter 4 contains *10 Proven Mail Strategies* that will help to transform your ho-hum, drab, ineffective direct mail into ***Mail That Sells!*** Implement these, and they'll deliver exceptional results.

Your overall marketing strategy is key to the success of your entire business and incorporating Every Door Direct Mail® into your overall plan makes good business sense.

Take prospects on a buying journey using automation and touch points designed to convert them from prospect to buyer.



This includes positioning your business as the go-to for more affluent patrons—those with discretionary income, willing to pay premium prices for a great product and personal service.

Please allow me to take just a moment to share a bit of intel that will help you to understand just how important creating a marketing strategy is.

Many large and very well-known brands either filed for bankruptcy protection in 2017 or are closing many of their locations in 2018 amid slumping sales and increased competition from internet sales.

If these major businesses are facing challenges, then likely, you are too!

Sears	Kmart	JC Penny
Payless	The Gap	Ann Taylor
Michael Kors	Radio Shack	Alfred Angelo
Macy's	Lane Bryant	Wet Seal

Gone are the days of relying on word of mouth, drive-by traffic or loyal patrons who simply walk in or call to do business with you, like you've come to expect and rely on over the years.

Consumers are different these days—savvier and more demanding. The Internet gives them endless choices and instant price comparisons.

Many judge businesses on their ability to provide awesome service, an exceptional customer experience, the best value, the instant gratification of buying online and immediate in-store pick-up.

You can't be expected to run the day to day operations of your local business and keep up with all the changes in buying behaviors, technology, and processes

designed to help you compete and win in this fast-paced and ever-changing business environment.

To assist businesses, I also write a monthly newsletter. It covers what's working now and what's next, in marketing and technology for local business. My featured section is titled: Technology for the Technologically Challenged Business Owner. It's not boring or stuffy. Rather, it's a fun, easy to understand and an interesting read.

Being a Southern girl who loves to cook, my newsletter often includes a favorite recipe we enjoyed growing up, from my mom Bessie's Southern fried chicken to sho' nuff Creole gumbo. I also feature a variety of contributors who discuss topics they excel in that matter to local business owners. So, we'll learn together.

I'd love to share it with you. There's no cost or obligation. Request your copy here: [TheTechGranny.Com/Local - News](http://TheTechGranny.Com/Local-News)

As a local business, you'll never be able to go head to head against mega-companies or internet giants, but you can compete and win where they fall short.

It all starts with an excellent product or service, followed by data-driven decisions. Smart owners make business decisions based on facts. Accurate data and analytics provide the facts that help them avoid making bad and often emotionally driven decisions.

You'll also need to be able to adapt quickly to the demands of your clientele and begin to shift to processes that enhance their experiences while saving them time. Time is priceless to busy consumers.

Your marketing strategy should be made up of several wheels, each designed to reach and convert the “creme de la crème” of prospects who want, need and/or desire your products and or services. Every dollar spent on ads needs to deliver a return on your investment.

Here are the four groups that I recommend you target:

- Your ideal prospects
- Your current customers/patients
- Past customers/patients
- Referrals

As a business owner, why would you skimp on what delivers leads and sales? If you are getting x amount of leads from one channel, how much more money could you make, if you had four or more sources all delivering quality leads and hot prospects seeking what you sell?

Set a marketing schedule and test your ads. Allow some time to see if your ads are working, and test and tweak your messages often. Here’s how to test. Let’s say you have a headline that is working well and delivering good conversions. That headline would be called the control.

You’d then split test the control with another headline to see if the new headline would outperform the current one. If it does, then that new headline would become the control and you’d test a new headline against that one. You should test headlines, offers, colors, copy, even what days you mail. Making these incremental improvements by testing will help the effectiveness of your ads.

When you track and measure an ad's pull, you can quickly identify and cut poor performing ads, thus giving you more of a budget to run your winning ads harder.

CHAPTER 5

The *Who* - Your Ideal Prospect

There are only three major components of any successful marketing campaign.

The *Who*, the *What*, and the *How*. The *Who* is the most critical. Who are you targeting as a prospect?

Most business owners miss correctly identifying their most ideal prospect—the *Who*. When asked whom their product or service is for, many respond with “everybody.”

Savvy owners study their best clients or patients. This helps them to craft a message for prospects that mirrors the best clients or patients they already have and want more of.

In this chapter, we will focus on *the Who*.

The What refers to what are you offering the customer as a product or service and *the How* is the delivery method you are using to reach them, and in this case, we’re learning why direct mail and digital ads are smart choices.

Who are you targeting/advertising to?

Success happens when you get into the minds of your ideal prospects, become one with them, and anticipate their problems, needs, and desires.

What problems do they have that your product or service will solve?

Your message and offer must be all about them and not about you or your company or practice. Make sure they quickly see “what’s in it” for them.

To command their (your prospect’s) attention, you must immediately convey to them something they recognize as important, valuable, and/or beneficial in your mail copy.

This is where most business owners miss the mark—the operate based on what they believe is important to the buyer rather than what is of interest to the buyer.

Regardless of what business you think you are in, you are in the business of meeting the needs and solving the problems of the people whom you serve.

I can’t emphasize enough to business owners the importance of an excellent business reputation. In my *eBook and Audio Book* “How to Make More & Enjoy a Fabulous Lifestyle!” you’ll discover how successful localpreneurs use the awesome reputations earned only by them consistently delivering excellent service to their customers or patients to: Attract and- Serve A More Affluent Clientele.

Find it here: TheTechGranny.com/Best-Customer-Ever

Every Door Direct Mail® is the perfect advertising tool to help you reach your ideal prospect—a more affluent one located near your business or practice, using household income as a *select*. A *select* is a criterion used in direct mail to help identify a target audience.

Success comes from knowing your ideal prospect, the *WHO*.

Ask yourself these questions to help you identify whom to target:

- Who is your ideal client?
- How old are they?
- Are they male or female?
- What are their interests?
- Do they have kids?
- How much do they earn?
- What do they do on weekends?
- What keeps them up at night?
- Are they homeowners?
- What's their average age?
- Are they liberal or conservative?
- What makes them likely to buy?

Once you study the best of those whom you already serve, it will be far easier to plan and create an engaging profitable marketing strategy and to choose the best methods to deliver your message to attract more of the people you consider ideal!

The internet combined with a well-planned direct mail campaign that's fortified with a strategic follow-up system for targeting prospects and existing patrons will help skyrocket your sales.

You can use direct mail to:

- Drive the prospect to your website.
- Capture their contact information, inclusive of what their problem is, what their wish or desires are and what they require assistance with.

Strategically guide them through the process of conversion from a prospect to a purchaser who then buys again and spreads the word about your awesome business to their friends, family, and co-workers.

By following-up with prospects, customers or patients (active and inactive), you'll enjoy more sales and all the referrals you can handle.

CHAPTER 6

How to Write Ads That Make Money

If you're a local business owner who is tired of wasting money on ineffective advertising, then smile, because you're about to discover how to create advertising that generates leads and sales.

Don't waste your time on traditional branding—that's for large companies like Apple, Coke Cola, Amazon, Intuit, and Google. It's too expensive for small businesses to accomplish successfully. Your goal with advertising is to drive sales, but if branding occurs while advertising, awesome!

Branding should not be your goal. Your goal is to generate leads and make sales. The type of marketing best suited for local businesses is called Direct Response Advertising.

Traditional Branding—No. Brand Loyalty—Yes!

What is Direct Response Advertising?

Direct response advertising demands a response by compelling prospects to take some specific action, such as calling for a quote, going to your website for more information or coming into your business to redeem a coupon and buy.

This type of advertising uses effective sales copy with a compelling message and makes an offer of specific interest to a business' ideal prospects.

The advertising should contain an “irresistible offer” that’s tied to the next step you want your reader to take (Your Call to Action). Your irresistible offer should focus on the prospect rather than on you, the advertiser. The copy should speak to their interests, desires, fears, frustrations or problems.

Your Mailer Must Be:

1. Visually appealing, which will create interest.
2. Of interest to your ideal prospect whom you targeted.
3. Persuasively written and containing an irresistible offer.
4. Easily understood, with specific instructions of the action you’d like the prospect to take after reading.

Informative and factual advertising will help to persuade the reader. Once you write a good ad that converts prospects into buyers, run it until the ad’s responses begin to dwindle. You may also use split-testing, to find another ad that outperforms the current ad.

Direct response marketing focuses on a specific problem—it educates the reader and offers your product or service as the solution.

A common myth in marketing is that people won't read long sales ads. This couldn't be further from the truth. Think of it logically. If you are interested in something, let's say a new car or a cure for diabetes, you would search the web and read as much information on the topic as you could find. The same is true for your prospect.

Look at it this way. If a person has no interest in what you are selling, they're likely not going to read your advertising, regardless of how long or short it is.

You are not writing for that person, you are writing to your ideal prospect, the one who has an interest, want, need or desire for what you sell. And, since they are seeking a solution, they WILL read long, engaging and well-written copy.

People are bombarded with thousands of ads daily that are trying to persuade them to part with their hard-earned money. Advertisements are everywhere—on the TV, billboards, radio, mail, bumper stickers, t-shirts, internet, cell phones banners and more, all compete with your mailer.

The mailer's wording must hook'em fast with a compelling reason to continue reading, setting the stage so you can clearly explain your offer.

- Who is your product or service for?
- What does it do?
- Why is your product or service perfect for them? (even if until now, they didn't even realize they needed, wanted or desired it)

This approach to advertising allows you to deliver value, build trust and show your prospect that you are an

expert, a reliable and trusted source and the only logical choice when they are ready to buy.

Nobody likes to be sold to. However, when a person does make a purchase, they want to make an informed decision. So, those prospects who do respond to your advertisements are hot leads.

When a prospect visits your location or website, they are identifying themselves as being very interested in your product or service. This is the beginning of a relationship, and 50% of your sales job is now done!

Not all Direct Response Advertising is designed for the prospects to take the action to purchase. Sometimes the business' desired call to action from their mailing is to get the prospect to respond by requesting more information or to schedule a consult.

Once the prospect shows interest, you capture their information, while continuing to inform and educate them as they move through your sales process; until they are ready to make the purchase.

When writing your ad, use the following writing tips:

1. Use short words, short sentences, and short paragraphs; especially for the first paragraph. Long paragraphs turn readers off.
2. Personalize your wording as if you are speaking one-on-one to the prospect.
3. Make your ad helpful by providing the reader with some useful information.
4. Always include at least one testimonial from an actual happy client. Testimonials are powerful!

5. Position your product or service as the solution to your prospect's problem, want or desire.
6. Use easy to read serif fonts and keep font sizes to 10 points and larger.
7. Use bullets, numbers or check marks in lists where possible and for added impact and emphasis, use bold and italics.
8. Use images and illustrations (charts/ graphs) and keep them as simple as possible. When using a picture, be sure to include a caption underneath.
9. Use quotes from authority sources.
10. The use of a large Cap letter at the beginning of a paragraph increases readership by a staggering 15%.
11. Setting your type in reverse decreases readership.
12. Use ALL CAPS sparingly; they make reading harder.
13. Incorporate **persuasive words**.

Direct Response Marketing Legend, David Ogilvy in his book, "Confessions of an Advertising Man," wrote: "Words That Work Wonders Are:"

Suddenly	Now	Introducing
Improvement	Announcing	Amazing
Sensational	Remarkable	Revolutionary
Startling	Miracle	Magic

Offer	Quick	Easy
Challenge	Wanted	Compare
Bargain	Hurry	

Two of the most powerful words in advertising are also “free” and “new.” Ogilvy advised, “Don’t turn up your nose at these clichés. They may be shopworn, but they work. That is why you see them turn up so often in the headlines of mail-order advertisers and others who can measure the results of their advertisements.”

Direct Mail should be a part of your marketing system. Done right, it will deliver phenomenal results.

Once you decide what a client, customer or patient is worth to you, you can build a highly focused system that maximizes your advertising investment. You determine this by figuring out what it cost you to acquire a customer or patient and what their lifetime value is.

If you knew that for every dollar you invested into your marketing you’d get ten bucks in return, then how many dollars would you be willing to invest? If I was a betting woman, and I am, I’d bet you’d invest all you could get hold of.

CHAPTER 7

It All Starts with a Great Headline!

Seasoned Copywriters All Agree that an Awesome Headline is Critical to Getting your Mailer Read!

Your headline must be informative, make a bold statement and tout the most significant benefit of your product or services. It does the “heavy lifting” in your mailer, and its purpose is to grab the audience’s attention, so they keep on reading. It’s essential for the headline to flaunt your product or service as the solution to a problem or satisfy a need of the reader.

With so many distractions today, it’s essential for your headline to be stronger than ever. Nothing will get your mailer trashed faster than a headline that’s as plain as vanilla, weak, lacking in luster and non-eyeball grabbing. Ensure that your headline will immediately grab the reader’s attention and sustain it long enough so that your prospect keeps reading until they get to your offer. A great headline is worth its weight in gold and often equates to 90% of your mailer’s success.

If you can get your headline right, you’re well on the way to crafting a compelling offer.

Always answer this question for the reader, 'What's in it for me?' As you only have about two to three seconds to get their attention, utilizing questions and adding quotations are helpful techniques for crafting that attention-grabbing headline.

The Headline Has Two Major Roles:

1. To be so compelling, that it demands attention by appealing to the reader's most significant problem or desire.

2. To engage the reader. They must feel that it's speaking directly to them which is the difference between them continuing to read vs. tossing your mailer in the trash.

Writing multiple headlines and then choosing the best is the most ideal strategy to help assure that you've written an effective headline. As a copywriter, I often write dozens of headlines before choosing the one I feel will stop the prospect in their tracks and get them to read the first paragraph.

The purpose of the first paragraph is to get the second paragraph read, and so on. Your headline is the key to getting your first paragraph read. A concise benefit statement, highlighting your key features will help to ensure a positive ROI.

Writing attention-grabbing headlines is an art and mastery requires time and practice. If it were easy, then copywriters like me wouldn't be in demand.

But even the best writers struggle at times to write strong headlines, so follow my recommendations by crafting several and then choosing the best. But, don't discard all the headlines you wrote; you'll use many of them as sub-headlines in your mailer or as titles of blog posts on your businesses website.

CHAPTER 8

The *What* - A Great Offer Equals Sales!

Most print advertising is doomed from the beginning because of cheap, poorly explained offers.

Cheap offers will stop a well-intentioned advertising campaign dead in its tracks. For example, if you're planning to offer 10% off a low-ticket item or service, *save your money and don't waste it on ineffective advertising.*

We talked about three major components of any successful marketing campaign—The *Who*, the *What*, and the *How*. The Offer is the *What*.

A Great Offer Must Be:

- ✓ Of interest to your ideal prospect whom you targeted.
- ✓ Persuasively written and contain an irresistible offer.
- ✓ Feature a strong call to action. What action do you want the prospect to immediately take, after reading?

Your message must command a presence and wording so compelling, that the reader can't help but pay attention. All too often, ads contain a lot of unnecessary information about a company—a waste of precious space.

Let me be brutally honest and share a secret that perhaps salespeople who simply want the sale (your money) or are untrained and ignorant in writing compelling copy have not told you—a list of facts about your business such as the number of years in business, doesn't carry the weight it once did.

New start-ups are dominating markets and their length of time in business is not a factor.

Success comes when you realize that it's not about you, but instead about the consumer. You've got to quickly and effectively let prospects know:

- ✓ What you've got
- ✓ How, what you sell, solves their problem
- ✓ How can they get it?

That valuable real estate on your mailer should best be used to tell your prospect how they benefit from using your product or service.

Explain how your product or service will make things better, faster, and easier, and how the prospect can get it (your *Call to Action*).

People love stories—prospects can relate to them, and they are great to help establish a relationship. What they don't like is uninteresting facts about your business; for example, a pest control company shouldn't waste space on their mailer touting how many years they've been in business or that they were chosen as the business of the year by the pest control association.

Examples of stories that work would be the story of how a person's problem was solved through using your product, or how your pest control tech while on a service call noticed a senior woman's home needed repair and

your company took a Saturday to make repairs at no cost. Marketing stories that relate to social action work exceptionally well.

In today's innovative world, factors such as "good," "fast" and "easy," trump length of time in business. Startups are winning every day because they solve problems, save people time, can easily be purchased and are easy to use.

A smarter use of that space on the pest control guy's mailer would be to talk about how many diseases cockroaches carry and how they can protect family members from the spread of disease through dangerous pests such as cockroaches that could infest the home if left untreated.

Concerned parents would surely want to know that cockroaches carry diseases that could affect the health of their children.

Do you see how much more compelling this is compared to how long the company has been in business? Keep it Simple:

- ✓ What you got.
- ✓ How, what you sell, solves their problem.
- ✓ How they can get it.

Sometimes it solves a problem they did not even realize they had until you informed them.

Persuasively Written Copy Containing an Irresistible Offer

People need a compelling reason to stop and take notice of your mailer. Examples of a great offer are:

- Buy one get one free.
- 30-day free trial.
- Visit our website to receive an additional gift with purchase.

An offer does not have to be a percentage off or buy one get one free. An offer can also be information that will answer questions the prospect has; no cost consultations and inspections also work well.

Most people start the buying process seeking information on a solution to a problem they have or for something they desire to have.

Most owners advertise to make a sale instead of advertising to gain a customer. They perceive a purchase as a one-time transaction, instead of for the lifetime value of acquiring a customer. If you break even on the initial sale, that's great because now you have a customer or patient who (if you properly serve them and follow up) will buy again and refer others.

Success and becoming the authority in your specialty, in your area, is all about gaining trust. So, when it's time to buy, buy again or refer a friend or family member, you are the only logical person to call and or refer.

CHAPTER 9

Provide Enough Information

Advertising Messages and Special Offers sent to laser targeted prospects get read. Interested prospects want information and will read your marketing message.

Studies show that a longer sales copy helps to sell your product or service better than a shorter one.

A misconception in advertising is to make an ad or mailer uncluttered; using very little wording.

Creating mail with very little wording is terrible advice given by individuals who don't understand marketing.

The first thing that you need to understand is that your advertising isn't for everyone; it is for specific persons with an interest in or need for your product or service.

If an offer is crafted to speak directly to attract "your ideal prospect," then your ideal prospect will stop to read your information.

If your headline reads "Attention Fast Car Enthusiasts," a person with no interest in fast cars wouldn't be interested. However, someone who loves fast cars will be eager to read your message.

Now, consider a headline that reads, "Health Information for Women Over 40." If you're a 25-year-old guy, you're tossing the card while women over 40 will take notice because this card is speaking to them.

Fifteen words won't get the person who has no interest in fast cars to read the first card, and 15 words would not be enough wording to explain a health message to women over 40.

Does that make sense? Stop taking bad advice and start providing information in your ad or mailer that a serious prospect—your ideal prospect would appreciate receiving.

CHAPTER 10

Make an Outrageous Guarantee

Often, local business owners will state that they can't offer a guarantee. That is simply not true—it can be done. It just means that one will have to think more creatively to formulate the guarantee.

Strong guarantees help to close more sales— it's risk reversal. Risk reversal involves removing the risk of doing business with you from the consumer and places it on your business.

Here is an example; some car sales companies will let you return a new car if you don't like it. Carvana advertises a 7-day return policy on new cars sold. How many more cars will they sell simply because of that awesome guarantee? More car sales mean more profit!

Regardless of what you sell, there is something that you can guarantee. Your unwillingness to stand behind what you sell and offer a bulletproof guarantee infers to the prospective buyer that you don't stand behind your product or service. A strong guarantee helps you to close the sale and make repeat sales.

Guarantees should be disclosed upfront and displayed prominently for your prospects to see. There are many ways to guarantee what you offer; and the stronger your guarantee, the more sales you will make.

Some businesses guarantee the lowest price, "We Won't Be Undersold." However, I wouldn't suggest using

the lowest price as a guarantee, because I don't want you catering to bargain hunters!

A guarantee of quality is a better option that doesn't affect your initial sale. For example, FedEx makes the promise that your overnight package will arrive on time or it's free. If the package arrives on time, no refund is due.

A pest control company can guarantee that once they treat the structure, if the pest problem reoccurs within a stated timeframe they will treat again at no cost. Strong guarantees remove the risk of purchase from the buyer and helps them commit and buy.

Studies also show that longer guarantees result in fewer returns. It's true. This is because the buyer has so much time that people get busy and forget. A ninety day to six-month guarantee results in fewer returns or claims.

Structure your guarantee carefully. Be sure to include disclaimers that protect you, but be fair, and above all, honor it.

CHAPTER 11

A Clear Call to Action

A successful mailer must end with a strong call to action. What action do you want the prospect to take? This does not always mean asking for the sale. Here are some examples of Calls to Action.

- Come to your store.
- First-time shoppers who register online receive an additional 20% off, both regular and sale priced items.
- Call to schedule an appointment.
- Go to your website to purchase or to order a free report.
- Call to schedule a no-cost consult or inspection.
- Respond before April 10th to receive a gift with purchase.

Don't leave it to chance. You must tell your prospect what you want them to do immediately after reading your advertisement.

By providing clear instructions at the end of your mailer copy, the reader knows exactly what you want them to do next.

CHAPTER 12

Follow-Up Increases Sales

Studies show that follow up increases sales by a whopping 37%. It is the key to success of any marketing strategy. A “one and done” single mailing, as with any “one and done” shot at marketing, is usually ineffective.

Most business owners focus on the immediate sale, those ready to buy now, which is usually only about 5%. Ponder this—what happens to the 95% that are ideal prospects but may not be quite ready to buy?

If you can master follow-up, you’re well on your way to becoming a successful and wealthy business owner.

The old way of doing business means you make a sale and hope customers come back again. But chasing new sales every month and hoping customers purchase again is stressful and unpredictable.

The new way is to view the first sale as the start of a long and profitable relationship. After the first sale, continued follow-up with prospects, customers, and even your inactive customers in a non-salesy, friendly and informative way will increase loyalty. They’ll buy more often and refer their friends, family, and co-workers.

Remember, if you fail to love on the people whom you serve, someone else will. After all, it is a relationship!

“The easiest money you’ll ever make is by making another sale to someone who has already patronized your business.”

Author unknown

At mailthatsells.com, we find that our clients who invest in our **“Your Local Business Everywhere Now Program,”** get the best results with direct mail because we blend digital ads and automated follow-up into a client’s mail strategy.

It’s not difficult nor rocket science. We just choose an area for mailing and laser target our client’s ideal prospects. We then set up and run digital ads to those same areas on Facebook and Google’s vast network.

We retarget digital ads to their website visitors for the specific item the visitor came to the site to read about, and then we add a follow-up sequence. One for prospects, one for existing customers or patients and one to reactivate inactive customers or patients. It’s very simple and yields predictable results month after month.

Following Up with a New Prospect

Before mailing, start with the end in mind. Your follow-up with the prospect you’ve mailed to should have one specific goal.

You want the prospect to take a specific action: either call to schedule an appointment, come to your location to make a purchase; visit your website and request a quote,

further information or a no-cost inspection or consultation.

Once the prospect acts, they have “raised their hand,” indicating they have a keen interest.

I am often asked “How many times should I follow up?” The answer is FOREVER!

It’s important to adjust the frequency of mailers accordingly and rotate offers. Sometimes follow-up isn’t a sales message, but maybe a holiday greeting card—a physical card, not an impersonal e-mail greeting. You never know when the prospect will be ready to buy. Once you have an interested prospect, you should continue to follow-up with them.

When to decrease the frequency of contact depends on your industry and budget. Ideally, follow-up using a variety of methods is the preferred approach.

Follow-up marketing can include:

- A detailed informational letter.
- A different offer.
- Email follow up.
- A Holiday Card.
- Notification of a Sale.
- A promotional item appropriate for your industry.
- A phone call to provide further information.

Initially, your goal is to provide enough information by answering any questions they may have or to overcome objections.

Continued follow-up helps you to remain top of mind; it also helps to establish you as the expert, a trusted advisor in your industry so when they are ready to buy, you are the obvious choice.

Follow-up that's "done right" is by far the best investment a local business can make to double, triple or even quadruple sales. With this approach, a company will be able to maintain an edge over both local and e-commerce competitors.

This is where many businesses miss the mark. They do not understand that it takes a lot more than merely using Customer Relationship Management Software (CRM) that sends ad hoc, BUY MY STUFF messages in hopes of converting prospects to buyers and buyers into repeat buyers.

Success with follow-up requires a well thought out plan, carefully crafted messages, including physical mail, phone and informational pieces that are all designed to achieve your desired result.

Smart owners realize the power of follow-up and use this method to make most of their sales. They work less and get more done while making more money than they ever dreamed possible.

Placing your ad in-front of consumers both offline and online 24-7 increases your visibility which will get you more leads and sales.

“We can't solve problems by
using the same kind of
thinking we used when we
created them.”

• *Albert Einstein* •

CHAPTER 13

Conclusion

Thank you for taking time to read *“The 10 Biggest Direct Mail Mistakes”*. I sincerely hope you discovered valuable nuggets that when implemented will help you to get more leads, make more sales and create wealth.

I’m truly blessed and feel fortunate to be able to share my wisdom with you. If you enjoyed his book, then please check out my newest book: *The Local Business Revolution* available for sale in paperback and free in kindle format on Amazon.com

Thank you for investing this time with me. I promise always to deliver my very best to you.

Stay in Touch!

Like me on Facebook and follow me on Twitter:
@thetechgranny



P.S. *#IncludeLocal* —I created this hashtag. Which stands for – Include local businesses in tax incentives for Local Businesses to Create Jobs currently reserved for Big Rich companies like Amazon, Walmart, and Apple.

There are unfavorable economic effects for local businesses and the communities they serve. Because of this, I believe ALL local businesses should have the same opportunities as big rich companies that are offered incentives to open businesses in our towns to provide jobs.

Here's why—as I stated earlier, state governments are offering these companies billion-dollar financial incentives to open a location in their state. On the local level, cities have the option to waive permit fees and forgive large chunks of the local property tax these businesses would usually owe. This creates a hardship on local businesses, often forcing them to close their doors.

The reason cited for these tax benefits and incentives is that jobs are created when a company builds a plant or opens a store.

I'm all for jobs, but not at the expense of local owners who live, own businesses, pay taxes, and raise their families in these communities.

Consider this, how many local businesses are in your town? What if all these locally owned businesses received similar tax credits and incentives to create jobs?

- ✓ Jobs would be created
- ✓ The money would stay in the community
- ✓ Local businesses would get their share of these incentives currently reserved for big rich mega companies who open locations in our towns that put us out of business.

If you believe, as I believe, please share the hashtag: #IncludeLocal. Elected officials pay attention to organized voting blocks. Collectively, they will hear us and recognize this request as a win for all involved and hopefully pass legislation to include local businesses in tax benefits and incentives to create jobs which is currently reserved for very large companies like Apple, Walmart and Amazon.

“God doesn't require us to
succeed; he only requires that
you try.”

• *Mother Teresa* •