

## Five Steps to a Great Mailing List

Whether you're a seasoned marketer or just started studying marketing, you probably know the golden rule of direct-mail marketing: 40/40/20. For the uninitiated, this simply states the theory that 40 percent of your direct-mail marketing success is contingent on the quality of your list, 40 percent is contingent on your offer, and the remaining 20 percent is contingent on everything else. The first step, of course, is your mailing list.



### 1. Understand your audience

It's one thing to know who your audience is, quite another to understand your audience. Where does your target customer go; what does he or she enjoy; what is their income: All of these things are easy to find out, but it's much more difficult to know what the life experience of your target customer is. Try living like your customers - go where they go, do what they do, and face the problems they face. Only then can you significantly understand your audience and be able to present solutions they're interested in purchasing.

To have a customer life experience means to actively engage with your customers. It is not pure observation (though you should observe as you interact). For example, if you wish to sell video games to gamers, you should be playing video games with gamers. It creates a better product, a better pitch, and a better profit.

### 2. Write it down

Write down the problem you're going to solve and all the fine-tuned characteristics of those who share this problem. Define exactly how you're going to solve it, and why your solution makes life easier. Now that you have your offer, put yourself back in your customers' lives - would you buy? If not, you need to make some adjustments. If you're salivating at the mouth, forge ahead!

### 3. Identify top customers

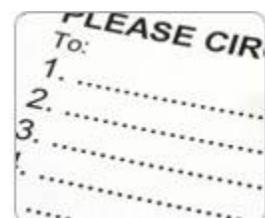
Identify your top three to five customers - those who currently spend the most money with you - and carefully comb their demographics for shared traits. What is it about your top customers that keep them coming back? What is it about your company that keeps them coming back?

### 4. Take note of trait trends

Cross reference your list of customer traits from your customer life experience against your shared traits from your top three to five customers. What traits do they share? Do you notice any trends? Refine your list of demographic characteristics based on this comparison.

### 5. Use a mailing list tool

Create a mailing-list using the tools available at Spectrum, or hire a list broker to compile or locate a list for you based on your perfect customer characteristics. You will now have a highly targeted list comprised of an



audience with a shared problem interested in paying you to solve that problem.

Compiling a great mailing list takes effort, especially if you loathe crunching numbers. Still, it's a necessary step that will pay off huge dividends in the end. A quality mailing list like the one you'll put together is primed for sales, so get out and be your customers.

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