



14 Proven Money-Making Offers for Direct Mail

A Special Report Brought to You by Automatic Mail Services

There are hundreds of offers and millions of offer combinations and variations to choose from when you're planning a direct mail campaign. To help you decide, here are a few offers that have proven themselves in countless mailings over the years.

Free Trial – This is a powerful offer that lets people try your product or service without charge before they make a buying decision. The trial is usually for a specified period of time, such as 30 days. This allows you to move a potential customer closer to buying while removing perceived risk.

Money-Back Guarantee – This is often not considered an offer, but it is. The offer is: pay upfront, but if you're not happy, you can return the item for a full refund. Like the free trial, this offer removes risk. Few people take the trouble to return something even if they are unhappy, so it almost always creates higher sales and profits.

Free Gift – A gift usually generates a better response than an equally valuable discount. That's because it presents a more tangible benefit. It also helps to preserve the value of your core product or service.



Limited-Time – Any time you put a time limit on an offer, you will tend to get more response. A time limit forces people to get off the dime and act immediately. Experience shows that the more quickly you can get people to decide, the more likely the decision will be in your favor. People don't like to “miss out” on a good deal.

Yes/No – This is a powerful offer you generally see used with subscriptions. However, it can be adapted for many types of products and services. You simply ask your prospect to respond with a “yes” or “no,” often in the form of two checkboxes, repositionable stickers, or tokens. By forcing people to clearly choose one or the other, you will generally end up with more “yes” responses.

Negative Option – The negative option is often used with a free trial. For example, you allow your potential customer to try your product for free then enter the order automatically unless the customer cancels the transaction. This can be used with shipped products, subscriptions, ongoing services, and other items. Just be sure to make the offer clear to avoid confusion or complaints.



Sweepstakes – This offer is not as popular as it once was, but it can still be effective. Entry into the sweepstakes is not linked to a purchase, but the excitement of the contest can translate into purchases either upfront or on the back end. An important point to remember: sweepstakes are regulated and you must follow the rules carefully. Also, you should consider the downside of creating a customer list solely from sweeps offers. They are often larger, but tend to be inferior to lists created from straightforward sales.

Dollars Off – This is a classic. You simply include a certificate or coupon featuring the

discount, which is redeemed with a purchase. This sort of offer is sometimes used as a “loss leader” to acquire customers. Real profits come from future purchases.



Introductory Price – Similar to dollars off, the introductory price allows people to try your product or service at reduced cost for a specified period of time. It is used to acquire new customers quickly.

Installments – When you don't want to lower your price but think a smaller payment would improve sales, try the installment offer. A product that sells for \$99 can be sold for 3 monthly payments of just \$33 each. This removes some of the pain of buying while putting the full price in your pocket.

Free "Keeper" Gift – The keeper gift is a nice way help potential customers make a purchase decision. When they buy, they get your product and the gift. If they change their mind, they return the product but keep the gift as a token of your appreciation.



Free Information – If you sell a product or service that is expensive or that requires a significant investment of time or resources, it's likely you will need to break the sale into two or more steps. By offering free information, you can create a qualified list of prospects for further marketing or sales efforts. You can offer a catalog, booklet, video, fact kit, checklist, etc.

Samples – Do you have a truly superior product? Does it “sell itself”? If so, sending samples could work wonders for you. If you sell personalized calendars, for example, you could print one with the prospect's name and mail it. No amount of sales copy can take the place of seeing the product up close.

Free Cost Estimate – Here's a perennial favorite for service businesses. If you're in the lawn care business, for example, you could offer to send a representative to the potential customer's home to examine the property and provide a written estimate for mowing and fertilization. This offer also works well for consulting businesses.

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Automatic Mail Services, Inc

45-01 34th Street

Long Island City, NY 11101

718-361-3091 (Fax) 718-937-8568

info@automatic-mail.com www.automatic-mail.com

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