

Written by company president Michael Missmer for a DM magazine in 2006:

**Why do we like getting mail? (Admit it - we do like to get it)**

Do you like getting mail? 206 billion pieces of mail delivered by the USPS every year tells me someone does. My guess is that a good deal of the 206 billion pieces are direct mail advertisements mixed in with our wedding and baby announcements, tax refund checks, letters from old friends, etc. Come on; admit it...somewhere inside us we like to get mail, which in itself separates Direct Mail from ALL other types of marketing.

To figure out why Direct Mail continues to stand the test of time we need to look beyond the flashy surface of current marketing, past the 30 second TV spot, and beyond the internet - even forgetting for a moment direct mail response rates and measurability.

The answer lies in watching my eight year old son when I open the mail box, hand him something, and simply say "it's for you". The smile is ear to ear. It doesn't matter if it's a birthday card from Grandma, letter from a friend, a new dinosaur magazine or direct mail offer – as long as it has his name on it something magical happens.

Like it or not, we are conditioned from early childhood to love the mail. Certainly if someone cares enough to put my name on the envelope or card it must be important. Why would they bother for any other reason? Do you remember how you felt as a child when your mother let you go to the mailbox and get the mail yourself for the first time? Do you remember the standard parental "don't drop anything, it could be important" she conditioned you with as you raced to the door. Of course it's going to be important if it's the Darth Vader action figure I sent for 4 to 6 weeks ago with my cereal box tops... really Mom.

Let's face it; there is something we like about anticipation, that same feeling of opening the mailbox that we had as a child. *We* receive the mail and *choose* to look at it. Direct Mail has many differences that set it apart from other forms of marketing. The biggest two being; we like to get it, and almost as important, we choose to look.

Do we choose to view the 30 second TV commercial midstream into our favorite show? Do we choose to listen to the announcer ramble on about "best deals ever"... and "lowest financing"... in-between our favorite music on the radio? We do not. They are annoyances. It is estimated that 70% of us already employ a digital recorder – not to catch the *All in the Family* reruns – but to skip the commercials. Within five or ten years nearly everyone will be able to choose to simply press a button and eliminate most of the marketing garbage that is thrown at us. But the beloved mailbox will still be that tiny break in the day where we can go to see, touch, and even smell the unexpected.

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