

PressLines

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Mastering the Art and Science of Direct Mail Envelopes

We tend to focus resources on the internal components of a direct mail package, but success or failure may rest equally with the outer envelope. A mere three seconds determines whether your mail gets opened or not, so devoting more attention to the envelope is more than justifiable.

There is both an art and a science attached to creating a successful envelope. You need to master both.

The Science

Tension Envelope points to research showing that recipients' eyes go to four distinct hot spots on an envelope. Get these right and you'll increase your success rate:

- **Mailing address.** People check to see if the envelope is addressed to them and if their name is spelled correctly. It's another great reason to get your database as accurate as possible.
- **Area immediately to the left of the mailing address.** This is your opportunity to use teaser copy that builds interest. Simple tips include employing headline rules, creating interest without trying to close, using directive language, promising a benefit or asking a question.
- **Return address.** Recipients like to evaluate whether the sender is of interest to them.
- **Postage area.** Many people determine a mailer's importance by postage type. Actual stamps, including precanceled Standard-rate stamps,

are much more personalized than metering or permits. For small mailings designed to simulate personal mail, you may want to consider First-Class postage.

The Art

To maximize the "open me" impact of your mailing, you need good outer envelope design strategies. Here are some to consider:

- **Size.** Think about your purpose. A closed-face #10 can convey either a business-like look or a more personal correspondence look. Window envelopes tend to be equated with bills, but they also enable greater personalization on



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Have You Talked about Your Address Data Lately?

Guest Editorial By Vicky Dansereau

If you've done any amount of reading in the business world lately, you have probably read about the importance of data. Data seem to drive everything today, from analytics and being able to track trends to statistical data that can help you find new growth areas for your company. The uses are endless. In fact, the Direct Marketing Association (DMA) recently changed its name to communicate the importance of data. The organization is now known as the Data & Marketing Association.

In the mailing industry, we use address data to keep in touch with our clients, and in the retail world it is very important that your data work effectively for you. Misaddressed and misdirected packages are costly, especially when there are ways to be more efficient. Realizing these efficiencies is vitally important to the United States Postal Service (USPS) as it moves forward in restructuring and reducing costs to remain competitive in the digital world. Thus, the USPS is leveraging address data to ensure the mailing industry is supplying the correct address the first time.



What does this all mean to you?

As a mailer, pricing is driven by the quality of your address data. Poorly structured data currently drives higher priced postage and will soon result in additional charges via the USPS Scorecard. One of the biggest problems the USPS faces is letters and packages that are undeliverable as addressed, or what they call UAA mail. The USPS has now created a mandatory database against which mailers are required to check their address data, correct address moves and, in turn, receive discounted pricing.

The software, National Change of Address (NCOA), compares your data to the USPS data to determine if the addressee has moved. If your data are not fielded strongly and the NCOA software can't match addresses and names/companies, you are going to have to make changes to avoid assessments.

We're in this together.

As a Mailing Service Provider, the quality of your data also affects us. NCOA errors are initially assigned to the Mail Service Provider and will affect our USPS Scorecard. The USPS is relying on us to make sure we are "getting it right the first time." Over the next several weeks, we will be monitoring your mailing data and will be in communication to address any concerns that could negatively impact the NCOA process. We want to be able to offer you different options to help either correct your data or provide alternatives until you are able to strengthen your data quality.

We put together a helpful document called **“Address Data Management Tips”** to help you assess if your data is strong and able to work effectively with the USPS NCOA program. If you are interested in a copy or having a consultation on your address data, please contact Customer Service at 800-321-3136 or our Mailing Specialist Vicky Dansereau (vickyd@ripontprinters.com).

RIPON



Little did I know when I received a Fitbit for my birthday a couple of years ago how it would change my life – and not necessarily in a good way!

First of all, it’s been great to see how Fitbit has quickly become accepted in our country. For the few of you who don’t know, a Fitbit is a small device that fits somewhere on your body and keeps track of how many steps you take in a day. I used to keep mine in my pocket, while others have it on a wristband. Of course, there are other models



Andy Lyke

of activity trackers, but Fitbit seems to be the Kleenex of the activity trackers. How a Fitbit keeps track of your steps (and other metrics) is a mystery, although I’ve learned you can get a whole bunch of steps by mowing your yard. If you are truly into self deception, hang your Fitbit on Fido and rack up the steps!

At first, I worked to get the recommended 10,000 steps per day. Soon, however, I found you can share your data with others, and next thing you know you get a weekly report showing how you compare with your friends. As an added “benefit,” Fitbit users get a special “badge” from Fitbit for reaching certain milestones. You can earn the Serengeti badge for logging 500 miles, and the Nile badge is yours for a mere 4,132 miles, for example. There are many more badges!

I’m sure as a whole our society has benefited greatly by people using activity trackers. I found myself taking the stairs rather than the escalator, and parking further away from the front door to get more steps, and I’m sure others have followed suit. However, as I progressed, I increased my goal to 15,000 steps per day, and would get up early (4:30 am) to go to the gym to be sure I got a jump on those steps. Rather than lift weights every other day like I used to do, I dedicated myself to cardio to make my Fitbit happy. I knew I had a problem but was too addicted to kick the habit.

Finally, I mustered up my self control and gave my Fitbit to my son. Although I used a Fitbit for over 2 years, I only lost one, and that was when it fell into an unreachable spot in my sister-in-law’s car. My son, on the other hand, lost the one I gave him within days. (Darn teenagers!) It was liberating to be out of the clutches of Mr. Fitbit, and while I still take advantage of getting more steps, my workouts are more balanced. I guess that’s a challenge we all face everyday – finding the balance in our lives! **RIPON**



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the inside. If your mailing is clearly promotional, larger sizes give you more room for graphics and messaging and stand out in the mail stack.

- **Paper stock.** High quality paper tends to make your mailing look important. Color and texture are also great ways to cut through the clutter. The slightly higher cost can easily pay big dividends.
- **Back-of-the-envelope.** This is the most underused space on envelopes, yet one of the most visible. You can double your impact at little or no additional cost.
- **Personalization.** Inkjet imaging offers low-cost, highly effective opportunities to personalize

copy and incorporate simple graphics during the addressing process. Check out the many font and color choices available.

- **Animation.** Create a multisensory experience by adding an Augmented Reality image to make your envelope come to life. Repositionable notes, stickers and other involvement devices also boost response.

The Printer

Ripon Printers has a wide range of capabilities and direct mail expertise to help you create direct mail envelopes that increase marketing ROI. Contact your representative or send an email inquiry to sales@riponprinters.com. **RIPON**