

15 Direct Mail Campaigns for Generating All the Leads You Need

By Richard Roop

Real Riches from Real Estate Niches:

Part 1 of 3

Not having enough workable deals is a common challenge I solve for creative investors. Investing your time and attention fixing or improving your lead generating systems will pay you back huge returns through increased cash profits and more reliable cash flow.

There are 6 elements to any marketing campaign. The **market niche** or list is the most important element and carries the most weight in determining your successful results.

Buying and selling houses creatively is such a great business. You can literally stumble upon a “5 figure paycheck” sending **crappy** marketing just **once** IF it hits the right person at the right time. On the other hand, you can make a fortune delivering well-written, well-designed marketing messages **multiple times** to the **ideal** markets or lists.

Here in Part 1 of this report I’m going to reveal exactly **who** you should be mailing to and how often. In Part 2 and 3 you’ll learn more on what to mail to find great deals... how to sell your houses fast using the newest direct mail strategies... and how to systemize and outsource the entire process of printing, mailing and getting hard to find lists.

6 Key Elements of Any Marketing Campaign

Also known as “the 6 M’s” of marketing, these key elements include:

1. **Market:** Who is your target market and where are they located?
2. **Message:** What will you say to this audience in your marketing? I’ve created long copy yellow letters and personalized postcards that are proven and work incredibly well. The basic tone of these messages is, “I’m interested in buying your house at _____. We buy houses in your neighborhood and we’re looking to buy more. You can sell your house as is at a fair price on the date of your choice...” This approach works for all 15 of the marketing campaigns I’m about to give you.
3. **Media:** What media and mix of media will you use to communicate your message to this market? Direct mail is the silver bullet of cost effective media. Small, cheap postcards and personal looking letters handle this task.
4. **Money:** How much money on marketing will you spend to attract a great deal? Can you invest \$1,000 mailing 2,500 postcards to do one deal that nets you \$25,000? Say yes. If you got \$10 back on every postcard you mailed, how many would you mail? As many as possible!
5. **Multiple Hits:** How many times will you hit your market with your messages? Always plan sending 5 or more hits using direct mail.
6. **Months:** Over how many months will you spread out a direct mail campaign? This varies depending on the type and quality of the list you select. I’ll share effective frequency rates to use as a result of mailing millions of postcards and letters for myself, and my clients.

15 Proven Direct Mail Campaigns for Buying

Bankruptcy

Targeting homeowners who have filed Chapter 13 bankruptcy in the previous 3 to 9 months has proven to be a very profitable niche. They may or may not be keeping their repayment agreements and might need to sell their house. Target these aged filings plus recent dismissals and motions.

There homeowners are many times desperately trying to protect equity and have been in and out of foreclosure. You'll find very little competition as most investors never target this niche. Mail a yellow letter to capture their attention followed by a series of personalized postcards. Hit them 8 times:

- 1) **Aged filings** each month
- 2) **Recent dismissals** every 2 weeks and
- 3) **Motion filings** weekly.

Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) is an electronic public access service that allows users to obtain case and docket information via the internet at www.pacer.psc.uscourts.gov. PACER is a service of the United States Judiciary.

Rapid Drip Campaigns

The hardest mailing lists to locate or acquire tend to be some of the best niches. There are several small lists that work great but you'll have to research how to get them from your city or county.

A normal direct mail drip campaign is usually hitting a market every 90 days. A rapid drip campaign is every 30 days. Just keep mailing every month rotating a yellow letter and personalized postcard.

Mailing to any of the following 4 lists is cheap and very effective:

- 4) **Probate:** Recently deceased homeowners may not be motivated sellers but the heirs or the person handling the estate may need your help to liquidate the house. Mail to the executor, trustee, all the heirs and the homeowner of record. Why mail to the homeowner? Whoever is handling the estate is probably handling their mail.
- 5) **Divorce:** You might've discovered that one of the top reasons homeowners who call from your signs, ads and direct mail need to sell is because of a divorce. The effort invested into learning how to get this list locally will be well worth it.
- 6) **Property Tax Delinquent:** Homeowners who've been delinquent on their property taxes for 1-3 years are good prospects. They are potentially distressed homeowners, may be motivated to sell and many times they have no mortgage.
- 7) **Code Violations:** Target owners of condemned houses and properties with code violations. Check with your city government offices for a list. It may be very difficult to get but sometimes it's very easy.

Targeting for Equity

Unlike using ads, flyers and signs, direct mail allows you to **target houses with equity** to generate better leads. It's always easier to buy houses with equity. There's equity if you'd consider paying more than what's currently owed against the property. The seller can discount their equity for cash now, or collect it over time in a note, or wait for all of it until you sell or refinance many years later.

First American Core Logic at www.facorelogic.com offers a wealth of data services for real estate professionals including agents, mortgage brokers and investors. They're a good resource for data acquired through public records if you can't otherwise get it easily. Use them to find properties with equity.

Buy from more sellers with equity by targeting these 5 niches:

8) Wholesale Properties: My definition of this niche is property owners who have "junkier" houses or properties built prior to 1990 with a maximum loan to value of 69% and are in a price range below median. When you can get this specific selecting a list, mail a personalized postcard each month for 6 months. Then switch to a 90 day drip campaign.

9) Adjustable Rate Mortgages with Equity: This niche is defined as property owners who had adjustable rate mortgages on the property for 3 to 5 years and a maximum loan to value of 69%. Many times they are looking for relief from increased payments. Hit them monthly mailing a yellow letter, 3 postcards and then repeating.

10) Multi-Family with Equity: If you're interested in buying, holding or flipping income property, target owners of properties with 2 or more units who have a maximum loan to value of 69%. They may be tired of dealing with tenant management and deferred maintenance. They also may like the idea owner financing your purchase, deferring taxes on capital gains and collecting note income instead of net rental income. Hit them every 90 days mailing a yellow letter, 3 postcards and then repeating.

11) Free & Clear: This is my favorite niche defined as homeowners with 40% to 100% equity. According to the most recent U.S. census data, 33% of all single family homes are debt free with even more having high amounts of equity.

By buying with attractive seller financing and getting creative with a seller's equity you can always give them their price. The only question is when. You can structure terms that can make any property cash flow. You can also pull out cash the day you buy using hard money loans or private investors. Hold as a straight rental, occupy with a tenant-buyer or sell with wraparound owner financing.

Targeting free and clear houses, creating 0% owner financing and then rapidly paying off the debt to the seller from the income on the property is what I call "the ultimate strategy" for buying and selling houses. It works on any property... in any price range... in any area... during any market climate. Study the Free & Clear Cash Machine real estate training system for complete step-by-step instructions on implementing this powerful investing model.

Mailing list brokers and tapping into your local county tax assessor records can help you identify homeowners who have 1) a low loan balance, 2) no loan balance, or 3) have owned the property for 10 years or more. Mail cheap postcards every 90 days.

12) Out of Area: Also known as an Absentee Owners or Non-Owner Occupants, this is the list of homeowners whose mailing address on public record differs from the property address. It includes burned-out landlords who own single-family homes and multi-unit properties. These prospects many times own (and will be interested in selling) multiple properties.

Get this list from county records, mail postcards every 90 days, update the file after each mailing and then re-pull the list after 15 months.

Specialty Lists

13) Expired Listings: This is a great list of homeowners whose property was recently listed on the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) but expired without being sold. You know they recently were interested in selling but they may or may not have sold their house. A lot of times they have been beat up by the market, are panicking and are now very motivated.

You can expect a high response rate but many of these sellers will have little or no equity. Therefore you'll be sifting and sorting for deals that can work. A recommended campaign is hitting them once every 2 weeks alternating 5 yellow letters and 5 postcards.

You get the list from the MLS through your own access or through a real estate agent. The main problem you might face is matching the property address with the seller's name and mailing address. Real Estate Data X-Change, Inc. at www.TheRedX.com is an "expired listing research company" who can help you import, cross reference and manage leads from expired MLS listings. Check out their services.

14) Pre-Foreclosure: These are homeowners who are behind on their mortgage and facing foreclosure. They have a Notice of Default or List Pending filed publically. Sometimes they're motivated to sell... but many times looking to stay.

Consider first targeting other niches because mailing to the pre-foreclosure market is typically oversaturated and highly competitive. Almost every real estate investor, market broker, bankruptcy attorney and real estate agent thinks this is a good list to mail to. You're actually better off calling them on the phone or sending someone to knock on the door. That would give you a competitive upper hand. However, if this list must be compiled manually from court records, or otherwise hard to get for your area, then it's an awesome mailing list.

Hit them monthly mailing a yellow letter, 3 postcards and then repeating. There's real gold in skip tracing an owner when a mail piece comes back marked "vacant" by the post office.

15) In-House Follow Up: This is your number one best list. Yet few investors ever setup a system to mail to it. This is your follow-up list of warm leads. You made an offer; they did not accept it; and you still want to buy their house. These sellers usually think they have time or other options. When they run out of time or options, you want them to calling you back.

Simply working this list efficiently can **double** your closure rate and **triple** your income. Mail **anything** to them every month until the house is sold. You can start with a yellow "follow-up" letter, 3 postcards and then repeat.

Use this chart for easy reference:

Proven Direct Mail Campaigns for Real Estate Entrepreneurs				
Market Niche	Media sequence	Hits	Frequency	Source of leads
Who to target?	What to mail?	How many times?	How often?	Where to find the list?
Bankruptcy				
Chapter 13 Aged Filings	Letter, 3 postcards	8	Monthly	PACER
Chapter 13 Recent Dismissals	Letter, 5 postcards once	6	Bi-Monthly	PACER
Motions	Letter, 5 postcards once	6	Weekly	PACER
Rapid Drip Campaigns				
Probate	Letter, postcard	8	Monthly	County records
Divorce	Letter, postcard	8	Monthly	County records
Property Tax Delinquent	Letter, postcard	8	Monthly	County records
Code Violations	Letter, postcard	8	Monthly	County records
Targeting for Equity				
Wholesale Properties	Postcards	6	Monthly	1* American Core Logic
ARMs with Equity	Letter, 3 postcards	8	Monthly	1* American Core Logic
Multi-Family with Equity	Letter, 3 postcards	8	Quarterly	1* American Core Logic
Free & Clear	Postcards	8	Quarterly	1* American Core Logic
Out of Area	Postcards	8	Quarterly	1* American Core Logic
Specialty Lists				
Expired Listings	Letter, postcard	8	Bi-Monthly	MLS and The Red X
Pre-Foreclosure	Letter, 3 postcards	8	Monthly	County records
In-House Follow Up	Follow-up letter, 3 postcards	8	Monthly	Compiled in house

Continued in Part 2

7 Benefits and 7 Steps of Getting Your Mail Out

By Richard Roop

Real Riches from Real Estate Niches:

Part 2 of 3

In Part 1 of this report I revealed the “6 Key Elements of Any Marketing Campaign” and “15 Proven Direct Mail Campaigns for Buying Houses.” Here in Part 2 we will cover the “Top 7 Benefits of Using Direct Mail” and start exploring the “7 Steps to Getting Your Mail Out”

Top 7 Benefits of Using Direct Mail

Cost Effectiveness

The housing market is a moving parade. Homeowner’s circumstances change with time. Direct mail allows you to cost effectively hit ideal prospects multiple times over a period of time. This establishes more credibility for you than just a single hit. You can expect a bump in response rates after 4 or 5 hits plus you’ll get a trickle in response with multiple marketing pieces hanging around for years.

Controllable

Turn on or turn off your direct mail campaigns based on your capacity to handle the leads... or based on your goals. Mail more of what’s working best and drop campaigns that have tested poorly. Choose mailing dates to light up your phone when you know you’ll be around to handle the response.

Scalable

Send out only enough mail to get the number of leads you want now. As you develop people, processes and systems for handling more deals then you can crank things up. You’re only limited by the number geographic farm areas you select or your capacity to handle leads.

Focused & Targeted

You need to attract better deals. When I hear an investor say “I can buy all the houses I want but can’t sell them” what I really hear is that they can buy all the “non-deals” they want. If a property is hard to sell then it’s not a deal. Target properties that are easier to resell. Get picky and buy with better price and terms. You’ll eliminate wasted marketing dollars hitting only the homeowners or properties that meet your criteria.

Less Competition

Rarely will your competitors know what you’re doing if you using targeted direct mail. Few people will ever know how much you’re mailing and to who. Running ads in the classifieds or yellow pages brings in leads from a competitive environment. Direct mail is typically too much work for other investors who have not learned how to simplify the process and do it right.

Personalized

Merging the homeowner's name and property address into your direct mail message always increases response by grabbing more attention. This is nearly impossible to do with other media.

Reliable

You can expect first class mail to be delivered unlike managing others to distribute flyers, post signs or bring your leads.

7 Steps to Getting Your Mail Out

1. Choose your geographic areas

The first step in launching a direct mail campaign is to decide on where you want to buy houses. Which neighborhoods or parts of town do you want to dominate? Where do you want to become "a big fish in a small pond?"

These will be your "farm areas" where you'll plant seeds, cultivate the soil and reap in the harvest of real estate profits. By narrowing your focus as tightly as possible, you can cost effectively create "top of the mind awareness" with homeowners thinking of selling.

Pick a large enough geographic area for getting the amount of leads to meet your house buying goals. If you need even more leads then expand your farm area or add new ones. A single farm area rarely contains more than 50,000 households and usually has half that.

Concentrate all your marketing efforts as tightly as possible hitting the same prospects over and over. Publish ads, distribute flyers and post signs in these same areas to supplement your direct mail campaigns.

Stay as close to where you live as possible but be willing to go out as far as you need to find the most profitable housing areas.

Select farm areas based on the type of properties you want to buy. Older homes and older neighborhoods will get you more equity and more fixer uppers. Newer subdivisions will have less equity... more houses in great shape... and more buying and selling activity than older neighborhoods.

What home price range do you prefer? I like the median price range or bread and butter neighborhoods where most homebuyers can afford to live. Prices are more stable and you can enjoy numerous exit strategies. But if you want higher end homes or lower end homes you can select those parts of town as well.

Lower end neighborhoods generate more deals you can pay all cash for with opportunities to flip to wholesale buyers. Higher end properties can offer fatter profit spreads but your advantage when selling is usually from offering a great price... not flexible terms.

Another consideration is based on days on the market. You will find more motivated sellers by targeting areas with longer days on the market. However, if you're in a "buyer's market" with a lot of houses for sale, then consider going where the days on the market is lower. You can still sift and sort to find flexible and motivated sellers but occupying the house you buy will be easier.

It makes sense to expand your geographic area for the direct mail campaigns that tend to have smaller lists... like probate and bankruptcy. You might be willing to run all over town for a probate deal. On the other hand, there are plenty of expired listings, free and clear houses and absentee owner so stay concentrated on your smaller farm areas with those campaigns so you can afford to hit the list over and over.

2. Choose your mailing lists

Inform your mailing list provider that you need homeowners in your geographic areas that meet the “criteria” you desire most. This will be based on “property characteristics” or “homeowner characteristics.”

Property Characteristics

Type: Normally you just want single family homes. Then you can decide if you want to include or exclude condos, townhouses, mobile homes, modular homes, manufactured homes or multi-family.

Equity: These days you really want to do whatever you can to target properties with equity... the more equity the better. Seek homes with no mortgage, low loan balances or homes with older mortgages. Targeting properties owned for at least 10 or 15 years will get you more equity.

Price: When getting your mailing lists, ask for homes in the price range you prefer. Median price range for a larger pool of buyers; lower priced homes for wholesaling and rehabbing; and higher end homes if you have a good exit plan... or if want to find a new home at a bargain for you and your family!

Occupancy: Targeting non-owner occupied properties will get you vacant houses, probate, expired listings, investors and landlords. The owner may live nearby, out of town, out of state or out of the country. Non-owner occupied homes are great to target.

Homeowner Characteristics

In Part 1 of this report we revealed 15 proven mailing lists to target including what to mail, how often and where to get the lists. Most of these are based on homeowner characteristics such as bankruptcy, pre-foreclosure, probate, divorce and expired listings.

Other Proven Mailing Lists

- Transfers by quit claim deed
- Transfers by quit claim with out of the area owners
- For Sale by Owners or FSBOs
- Vacant or condemned houses
- Discontinued foreclosures

3. Acquire your mailing lists

There are 3 main sources of mailing lists:

Public Records including

- Tax assessor
- County courthouse
- County clerk and recorder
- Title companies

Data Subscription Services including

- Multiple Listing Service (MLS)
- First American Core Logic at facorelogic.com
- SalesGenie.com
- SiteXData.com

Mailing List Companies

- Infousa.com
- Melissadata.com
- [Sales Team Live](#)

[Sales Team Live](#) is not really a mailing list company. Instead they are a complete print and mail service for real estate investors. They can get you many of the best mailing lists as part of their service. They offer sophisticated direct mail campaigns sending the proven handwritten letters and personalized postcards I have developed over the years.

In Part 3 of this report will cover the rest of the 7 steps for getting your mail out.

Reaching the Right People with the Right Message at the Right Time

By Richard Roop

Real Riches from Real Estate Niches:

Part 3 of 3

In Part 1 of this report I revealed the "6 Key Elements of Any Marketing Campaign" and "15 Proven Direct Mail Campaigns for Buying Houses." In Part 2 we covered the "Top 7 Benefits of Using Direct Mail" and began exploring the "7 Steps to Getting Your Mail Out." Here in Part 3 will explore the last 4 steps to getting your direct mail campaigns launched for maximum response and profits.

7 Steps to Getting Your Mail Out

We already covered the first 3 steps including:

- 1. Choose your geographic areas**
- 2. Choose your mailing lists**
- 3. Acquire your mailing lists**

What's next?

4. Prepare your Media

After you have picked your "farm areas" and selected specific mailing lists to target, you're now ready to setup your postcards, letters, websites and recorded message lines to be used with your direct mail campaigns.

Postcards

There are two approaches to creating small 4 x 6 postcards. First is using an editorial-style look and the second is using a personal approach.

Using an editorial look is also known as an "advertorial" design. This means your advertising message is written and laid out to look like an article as if it appeared in a newspaper or magazine. It includes a headline, body copy and then a clear call to action.

I've created several advertorial style postcards with the following headlines... big and bold at the top of the card:

- How to Sell Your Houses "As Is" for a Fair Price on the Date of Your Choice
- How to Buy a Nice New Home without Bank Qualifying or Large Down Payment
- How to Avoid or Stop Foreclosure and Get the Cash You Need Fast
- How to Enjoy 300% Higher Returns on your Idle Cash or Retirement Funds

These cards typically offer a free special report with a title similar to the headline used. You can offer to mail this report or deliver it online. Either way it is ideal to capture the prospects contact info first to build you in-house list for follow up.

Below the headline are two or three columns of body text laid out like what you might see in a published article. The body copy or "marketing message" focuses in on the major benefits to the prospect of doing business with you. That includes what they can get as well as what they can avoid.

The main purpose of your postcard is to get the prospect to respond and provide details about their situation. The "call to action" is to call you direct, call an operator, listen to a recorded message, or to visit your website. It's best to offer multiple ways to respond, especially with an option to submit or get more information 24/7 without the threat of talking a live person.

The "personal approach" typically uses a courier or "typewriter style" font with merged fields. Make it read and look like you sent it just to one person, even though you may be sending it to thousands at one time. Merge in their name, city, property address and the mailing date seamlessly into the postcard message. Personalizing your mail this way has proven to increase readership and response.

Postcards are typically one-third the cost of sending letters so you can mail 3 postcards for the price of one letter. You don't have to get postcards opened so the use of automated addressing and postage is acceptable. With postcards, unlike letters, the use of mailing labels is OK and the use of live stamps is not required.

Letters

A one-page handwritten letter on yellow "legal pad" paper is a great design. I've written several handwritten letters using the same type of personal message used in the merged postcards. You may be familiar with the brief "yellow letter", but I use one you may never have see. It's longer, reveals that you're a real estate investor looking to buy houses in the neighborhood and offers multiple ways to respond 24 hours a day just like postcards.

Because the message in this letter fills up a full 8 1/2 x 11 sheet, the best way to produce is to create a handwritten "master" that is photocopied onto yellow paper or to using the special advanced handwritten font and printing technology using by Sales Team Live, my recommended "done for you" print and mail house for real estate investors.

Whenever sending letters you want a personal looking, handwritten envelope with a live first class stamp. Never use labels or a postal indicia to prepare these envelopes as it kills the personal design and make it look mass produced and impersonal.

[Sales Team Live](#) can acquire lists and manage multiple hit mailing campaigns for you using my best personalized postcards and letters. If you own the [Free & Clear Cash Machine](#) then you have my best personalized and instructions for mailing postcards on your own through [Click2Mail.com](#).

Free recorded message lines

I always include a recorded information line in my postcards and letters. It's one of the ways the prospect can respond. Any script you use cannot be too long...just too boring. Give your direct phone number right up front then again half way through...and again at the end.

Just like a "free special report" or lengthy sales letter, this message or script focuses on all the benefits the prospect can enjoy if they do business with you. The call to action is to submit their information online or to call you direct. They are now prequalified or "presold" enough for you to spend time talking with them on the phone. Make it easy for them to reach you or to reach anyone you've hired to take these valuable calls.

The proven 5-minute recorded message script I've used to buy hundreds of houses, and successfully used by thousands of other real estate investors nationwide, is included in the **Free & Clear Cash Machine**. Also included in this course is the free special report I use for attracting

buyers, sellers and private lenders that you can mail, email or post on your web site. [Here's a list of phone service providers.](#)

Buying and selling websites

Buying and selling web sites are valuable tools to be used with your direct mail campaigns. These are great for gathering and delivering additional information 24 hours a day. [Here's a list of web site resources.](#)

5. Mail your postcards and letters

Licking stamps, stuffing envelopes and printing postcards and letters out of you computer is not the best use of your time. You need a print and mail house to do this for you.

First you can investigate locally or national and find a company that will mail your postcards and letters for you. It may take some time to get them setup and trained but then a big load will be taken off you back.

Second you can use [Click2Mail.com](#). This is a good option for mailing advertorial or personalized postcards. Once you set it up you can mail thousands of postcards anytime within minutes. However, it's not a solution for personal looking, handwritten letters.

The third and highest recommended choice is hiring [Sales Team Live](#). They have my best "instant marketing tools" uploaded, designed and ready to mail to the lists they will acquire for you or to the harder to get lists you provide them.

6. Mail again

Through this series I revealed the best mailing lists to target including who to mail to, what to mail and how often. Rarely would you ever mail just once. You want to mail to these ideal lists over and over.

As a general...for the large shotgun lists like free and clear houses or "out of the area" homeowners you'd hit them every 3 months. For the smaller, more qualified lists like expired listings or financially distressed homeowners you'd hit them about once a month.

Our definition of a mailing campaign is to hit a niche list five or more times spending \$1,500 to \$3,000. So for example, if you had a list of 500 expired listings and spent 50 cents each on postcards...that would cost you \$250 a month...every month...for at least 6 months to run a complete campaign. If you buy one or more houses netting at least \$20,000 in profit then it is a success.

The market is a moving parade. The circumstances and motivation of your prospects will change over time. Each time your market sees your marketing you gain more credibility and "trickle in" response from postcards and letters hanging around...and for many years!

7. Manage a marketing budget

As a creative real estate entrepreneur you need deals. Spending marketing dollars to get deals coming to you can save a lot of time and labor. Using direct mail allows you to systemize and automate your lead generating activities.

We all hear over and over that you can buy houses with no money down. And this is true. You can use other people's money including your buyer's money to fund your deals. But you need money to run your real estate investing operation like a true business. You want to be spending money on marketing to really become super successful.

Many other businesses would be happy with a 3 to 1 return on their marketing dollars. But as an investor you should not be happy with less than a 10 to 1 return on your marketing investment to find deals.

If you knew you could net \$20,000 or \$30,000 on every \$1,000 you spend sending postcards and letters, how much can you afford to spend each month? Obviously there is no limit. You're only limited by your capacity to handle the leads and convert them into cash.

Plan to spend \$500 to \$2,000 for every house you want to buy which nets you at least \$20,000 profit. If on average you spend \$1,500 to make \$30,000 and you could only budget \$500 a month then split up a \$1,500 direct mail campaign in three parts, mailing on third each month. Then expect to do one deal and make \$30,000 during that 3 month campaign.

When you become more aggressive and start reinvesting your profits to relaunch the campaigns you've tested and proven to work in your market, you may decide to target buying 3 houses a month, for example. A marketing budget and a plan to spend \$1,500 to \$6,000 should help you achieve that goal, netting you at least \$60,000 in cash and equity **every month.**

Now that's a pretty exciting real estate business!