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5 Ways Automated Storefronts Save You Time and Money



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5 Ways Automated Storefronts Save You Time and Money



These are some of the top benefits of digital storefronts, but they are by no means the only ones. How much money could you save by making this simple change?

1 SLASHES ADMINISTRATIVE TIME. How long does it take your employees to place orders for, say, 1,000 copies of your product brochures, 500 business cards for six different employees, and a customized order for a 5,000-piece direct mail campaign? It's not just the time it takes them to place each of those orders. It's what's they are not getting done while they do.

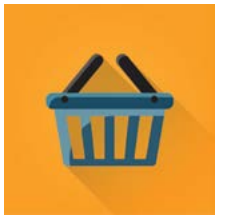
2 MINIMIZES OUTDATED INVENTORY. How much inventory do you waste every year because you order in large quantities to keep the cost down, but then unused inventory goes out of date? When you order through a digital storefront, you order what you need, as you need it, in small quantities. If you are warehousing these materials, going POD saves you money on warehousing, as well.

3 ELIMINATES ERRORS. When you approve and centralize all of your materials in a digital storefront, the branding elements are locked in. Your brand colors don't get messed up. You don't need to worry about using the wrong image, last month's offer, or an outdated logo. You save money in remakes, brand erosion, and embarrassment.

4 TEMPLATES REPLACE CUSTOM DESIGNS. Many jobs can be transferred to templates while still allowing you to customize, update, and segment them without sacrificing creativity or flexibility. You'll still want the most creative one-off jobs produced by designers, but simple, recurring projects can be handled in-house without compromising your brand.

5 FASTER TURNAROUND. As the saying goes, "Time is money." By starting with a brand-approved template, you can turn around projects in hours rather than weeks, even when you need to make changes to the copy, offer, or image. This allows you to respond more quickly to market changes (such as moves by competitors) or to launch a pop-up sale.

Want to save money on your print marketing without changing anything but the way you order? Instead of sending an email request or placing an order over the phone, why not set up an automated storefront instead? Here are five ways this simple, cost-effective approach saves you time and money.





Tapping the Power of Reciprocity

If you've ever felt the pull to make a donation because a charity mailed you free address labels or a patriotic pin, you are experiencing the power of a psychological principle called "reciprocity." This is a highly effective tool that marketers can use, as well. You can use this tool in all of your direct marketing, whether direct mail or digital.

How does reciprocity work? The idea is that when you do something nice for someone, they feel the urge to do something nice back. For a nonprofit fundraiser, for example, a veterans organization might mail out inexpensive flag pins, or a child sponsorship organization might mail personalized notepads.

The principle of reciprocity was first identified in the 1960s. Since then, it has remained a time-proven method of influencing buyer behavior.

Reciprocity works even when the gift does not have a high monetary value. For example, research from Monmouth University found that waiters and waitresses could increase their tips simply by bringing a small candy with the bill. In fact, one study found that customers who received a small piece of chocolate along with the check tipped 17.8%, on average,

compared to 15.1% for those who did not. Another study found that dining parties who received two pieces of candy per person tipped more than dining parties who received only one.

This phenomenon is consistent from vertical to vertical and from decade to decade. How can you apply it to your business? Here are a few ideas:

When sending a direct mail piece, include a free sample of your product.

Include coupons for free stuff in recipients' local area. Say you're a local dentist or veterinarian. You purchase a "new movers" list within 10 miles of your business, and in your introductory letter, include coupons for free pizza.

Include branded items like pens, hats, and tote bags. Even inexpensive items have proven to increase intent to buy, even if the promotional item has nothing to do with the products and services being sold.

Reciprocity is a powerful tool. The key is to provide the gift free and clear. It can even be completely unrelated to what you are selling. The point is to make people feel good. Like other direct mail and digital marketing investments, the simple principle of reciprocity can have a tremendous payoff at the end.

DESIGNING for DIRECT MAIL



You've dabbled with direct mail, maybe sent out a few postcards now and then, but now you're ready to start taking deeper advantage of the beauty, tangibility, and interactivity of print. What do you need to know?



POSTAGE RATES

To get the best postage rates, you must design within the United States Postal Service's requirements for automation. You don't want to design a beautiful piece that costs a fortune to mail. For example, you can mail a 6x11" postcard for automation rates, but if the piece is folded, it must measure 6x10 1/2" to qualify.

At the same time, mail pieces you think might be more expensive might not be. For example, as long as a rectangular postcard is not folded, it costs the same to mail regardless of size. It costs the same to mail a 6x11" piece as it does one that is 6x9" or 5x8". (Square postcards do not qualify for automation.) For a nominal extra cost in paper, you can take advantage of the larger surface area.


There are other guidelines for stock weight, trim size, and placement that are important, as well.

ATTENTION-GETTING TRICKS

There are a variety of attention-grabbing tricks that mail specialists can share with you. For example, instead of using permit indicia, you might want to use specially designed "pre-canceled" stamps. This trick is used for runs over 250 pieces, and it makes the mailing seem more personal. This technique uses specially designed stamps that look like canceled USPS stamps (but aren't), and the postal cost is the same as for indicia. These stamps are available for Nonprofit, Standard, or First Class mailings.

PROTECTION IN THE MAIL STREAM

When designing for digitally produced postcards and self-mailers, it's also important to consider the need for protection in the mail stream. Although digital prints have become much more durable than they used to be, marking can still occur. Aqueous coating can protect your mailing from being damaged in the USPS postal processing equipment. Or, if you have a design for which aqueous coating isn't appropriate, you can use First-Class Mail to bypass the high-speed automation process.



There is lots to learn about direct mail, but with the right partner, you can get up to speed quickly. It just takes a little experience and insight to get the highest quality piece at the best possible postage rate.



5 SURPRISING WAYS TO MARKET WITH PACKAGING

If you are selling products on the retail shelf, packaging is one of your most important faces to market. When buyers are making a decision between two products, labels and product packaging can be the deciding factor. When buyers plan to purchase one product, great labels and packaging can entice them to purchase another.

DESIGN

1

Put as much attention into the design of your packaging as you do any of your marketing materials. Bright colors, glossy coatings, and specialty techniques like embossing and foil can help your packaging stand out. But so can other techniques, such as vintage effects or the use of minimalism (e.g., black-and-white). Get creative!

Here are five ways you can use product packaging to stand out on the retail shelf and create competitive differentiation.

TARGETING AND SEGMENTATION

2

Did you know that you can break your packaging into target segments just as you do with other marketing materials? For example, you might create complementary packaging for different audiences—one for older and one for younger audiences. Or, if you sell into areas with a high percentage of Spanish-speaking consumers, you might print a portion of your packaging with messaging in both Spanish and English.

PERSONALIZED PACKAGING

3

Just as with any other digitally printed product, packaging can be printed in runs as short as one. Allow customers to purchase your hand-ground coffee in bags with their names on them (for example, "Joan's Favorite Breakfast Mix") or with the names of friends and family to use as gifts. Allow businesses to brand your products for corporate events.

Nearly one-third (31%) of brand owners want to offer their customers more personalized or customized packaging (NAPCO Research, 2019).

4

TESTING

The ability of digital presses to produce very short-run packaging cost-effectively means you can run tests of different designs with different images or copy, and see what works best. You can also add tracking codes to test calls to action, tear-off coupons, or other incentives. Does it make a difference if the coupon is for \$1 off or \$1.50 off? Does it make a difference if the picture on the label is a man or a woman? Run a test and see.

MOBILE CODES

5

Using mobile codes like QR Codes or augmented reality, you can add interactivity like videos and instant coupons. Send buyers to educational videos, customer testimonials, or demos of the product in use. Interactivity sells!

Packaging is a powerful marketing tool. Make the most of it.