

HOW TO CREATE MORE EFFECTIVE **DIRECT MAIL**



REDC

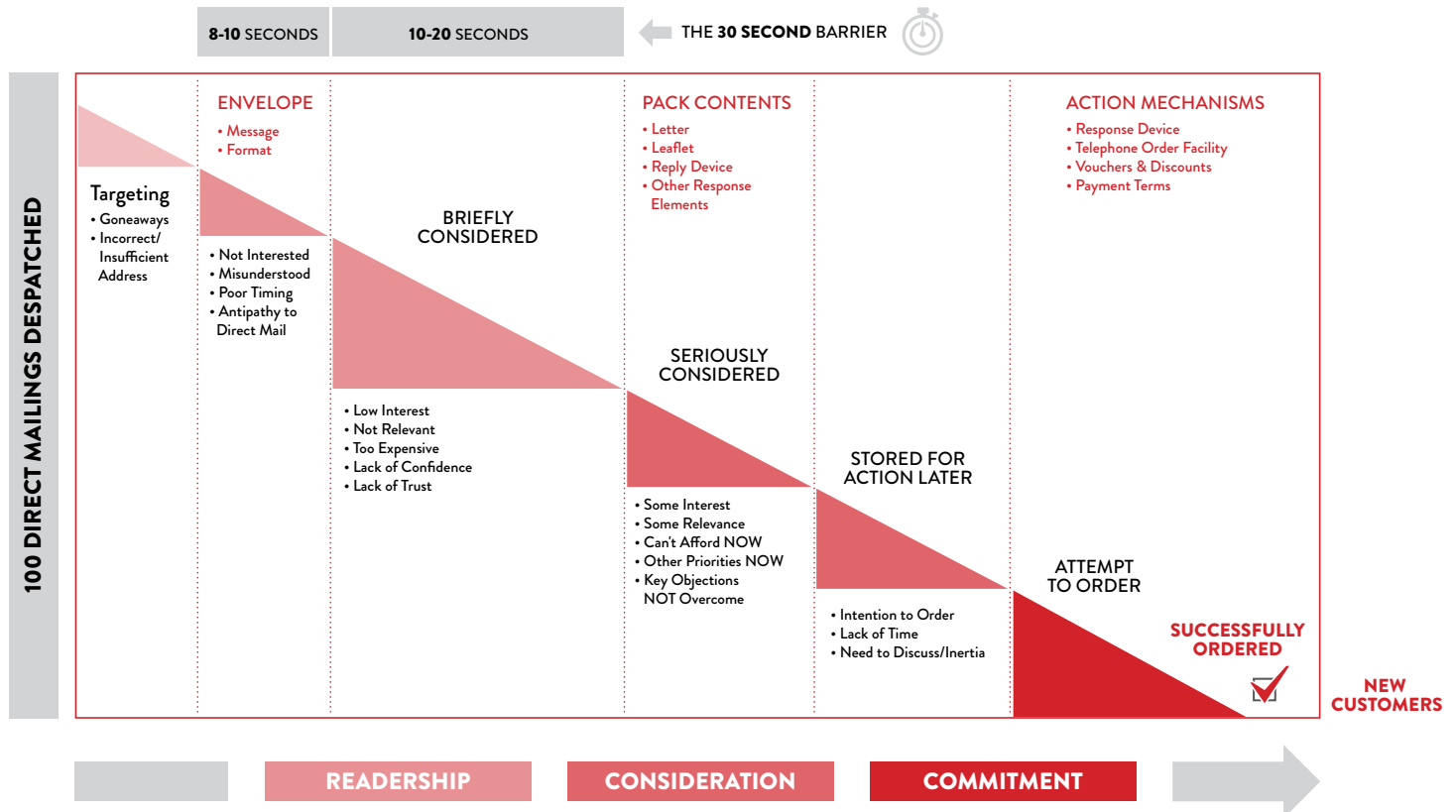
Your Key To Better Direct Mail

Despite your best efforts, the fact is that most of your carefully constructed direct mail packs end up in the same place: the bin.

**What if there was a practical and effective way to reduce this loss?
A simple tool that could help you create more responsive direct mail packs.**

Over the past two decades, Red C has studied how consumers open, read and digest direct mail, and other direct marketing communications. Using these studies, plus our extensive experience of what techniques work, we have created a model that we find consistently helpful in understanding how to develop more effective direct mail.

We call it The Direct Mail Fall Out Model



The Direct Mail Fall Out Model explained

The Direct Mail Fall Out Model explains the gradual loss (fall out) of readership, in different stages, as recipients absorb the contents of a direct mailing.

It imagines a mailing sent to 100 recipients, which results in a number of new respondents, customers, or applicants.

Along the diagonal it details how many potential respondents you can expect to lose through the three stages of casual Readership, Consideration of the offer, and finally Commitment to respond.

On the next page you'll find a closer analysis of these stages, plus a number of strategies you can employ to minimise fall out and boost response.

If you would like to create more responsive, more effective direct mail packs, get in touch with Red C today.

*Call 0161 872 1361 or email Steve White on
swhite@redcmarketing.com*

The First Hurdle

The first stage in the persuasive process is getting your recipient to open the envelope.

The biggest reason for 'fall out' at this stage is people reading the envelope message or company logo and binning your mailing unopened.



You could try a plain white envelope - but be careful. You run the risk of displeasing your recipient when they open it to find just another promotional mailing.

A stronger tactic is to 'put your best foot forward'

The people you most want to open your envelope are those who are most likely to be attracted to your offer once inside. So make your strongest proposition on the envelope itself with a single-minded, benefit-led headline... on both sides, don't forget the reverse of the envelope.

"Buy Now With Nothing To Pay Until Next Year"
"The world's sharpest knife. Unbluntable. Only £9.99."
"Discover the Secret of Younger Looking Skin"

Overcoming inertia

However compelling the headline you also need to overcome inertia, so give recipients reasons to open your envelope immediately. For example:

- If your product or service includes an offer, give it a deadline
- If your prices are only valid for a while, or if your stocks are limited, say so
- Use an extra window to give the reader a glimpse of the offer or benefit, tempting them to open

Breaking The 30-Second Barrier

Most of your recipients will spend no more than thirty seconds 'scanning' the inside of the pack and assessing your offer.



In that short space of time they will decide if it's relevant, and whether they can afford it, or want it enough to consider your offer in more detail.

It is at this 'briefly considered' stage that you will see the biggest 'fall out' of readership - anything from 30% to 70%

Get them nodding

You should try to create a high nod factor rating for your pack... a series of small yes's which create the climate for a big yes (committing to buy) later.

"Yes, I'd like to buy now and pay nothing until next year... yes, I would like the world's sharpest knife for £9.99... yes, I would like the secret to younger looking skin."

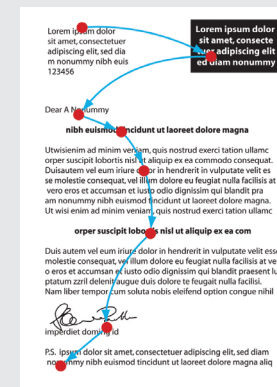
Increase interest in the pack

Another technique for extending the amount of time spent reading the pack is to include extra inserts, especially small, simple flyers that focus on one aspect of your offer.

Allow for different reading sequences

Although over half of your readers will go to the letter first, just under half will start elsewhere, and may never get to the letter. So it is a good idea to repeat and restate the key benefit messages in several places.

Accommodate Scan Reading



Would your offer be fully explained with this reading sequence?

In order to maximise the number of readers breaking the 30-second barrier you must design your pack to accommodate scan reading. For example:

- People naturally fix on pictures, captions, headlines and sub-heads, panels of bullet points and graphic devices such as 'Johnson boxes'
- People 'zoom in' on personalised text such as use of their name or parts of their address
- People commonly read the opening paragraph and then 'skip' via the sub-heads down to the signature (who is writing to me?) and the PS

Now Persuade Me



At this point, you've almost certainly lost half of your readers. The good news is that the readers you have got left are interested. Now you have to persuade them. You need to expand on each of your key benefits, as your reader is seeking more detailed information.

Overcoming objections

Your readers have different needs and concerns. Your job is to present the most compelling case to act. That means thinking like a salesperson, addressing all of the possible information needs, and overcoming all the possible objections one by one.

Use confidence boosters

Testimonials help overcome objections, because they are credible. Q & A panels also work, because they articulate the reader's concerns. Guarantees, explanatory copy about craftsmanship or quality control, and company history sections can all reassure the potential customer, too.

THE CONFIDENCE BOOSTER CHECKLIST	
Testimonials	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Independent statements (Press, Industry Bodies)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Guarantees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Money back disclaimers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Frequently Asked Questions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Send no money now messages	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Step-by-step guides (to responding)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Contact details - telephone number, address, website	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Official accreditation, membership bodies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The 'don't say no' device

This usually takes the form of a small extra flyer, containing a sincere, compelling message from a senior manager in the organisation. It may focus on one specific benefit or summarise all of the reasons to take up the offer, but it reads in a non-promotional way, taking a 'What have you got to lose?' approach. We've rarely known this device to fail to uplift response.

The End Game

Effectively, the recipients who remain at this point are all set to accept your offer... you have persuaded them to say YES. But it is a qualified yes. The direct marketer's greatest enemy, INERTIA, begins to take a hold! Here are a few simple ways to get things moving.



Create a sense of urgency

Talk about the immediate benefits of the product, then imply a future loss of advantage or unavailability... 'Stocks Limited'.



Justify the price

Must every possible benefit and stack them up against the price. If possible, use price guarantees, or promises, especially one that increases the urgency such as 'Prices fixed until...'

Use a deadline

Having flagged the offer on the outer envelope, you can now use it as a device for stimulating action. Try offering an extra incentive for responding within 7, 14 or 21 days. Or, to really 'turn the screws', why not make the offer one that deteriorates over time, such as a descending discount?

You can even send a follow-up mailing, extending the deadline 'by special arrangement'. Many direct marketers find 2, 3 or even 4 follow-ups worthwhile.

The point of sale

Even at this late stage you haven't finished losing potential customers. There are three major reasons why:

1. Difficulty finding the offer online or website confusion
2. Lack of availability of customer's preferred payment method
3. Aborted calls and abandoned baskets online

Make it easy!

- Don't make the response mechanic the last thing you consider!
- Include step-by-step instructions and easy-to-follow examples
- On your website, make the offer prominent and provide clear navigation from the home page - don't assume everyone will use your 'offer url'
- Offer the widest possible range of payment options

Great results
always start with
a **conversation.**

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