

# The Method Marketer's Direct Marketing Checklist

[Download this](#) and apply it to every promotion you undertake.

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## All Media

**1.** Does your message employ at least one (preferably several) of the seven key copy drivers—the emotional hot buttons that make people act:

Fear - Greed - Guilt - Anger - Exclusivity - Salvation - Flattery?  
\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_ No

**2.** Does your copy contain some or all of the 13 most powerful and evocative words in the English language:

You - Save - Money - Guarantee - Love - Results -  
Proven - Safety - Easy - New - Health - Discovery - Free?  
\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_ No

**3.** Since "you" is the subject of every sales effort, is your promotion about "you"—as opposed to "we," "us" or "our"?

\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_ No

**4.** *"The prospect doesn't give a damn about you, your company or your product. All that matters is, 'What's in it for me?'"* —Bob Hacker

Are you emphasizing your product and what it will do for the prospect rather than yourself and your company?

\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_ No

**5.** *"Probably well over half our buying choices are based on emotion."*  
—Jack Maxson

*"When emotion and reason come into conflict, emotion always wins."*  
—John J. Flieder

Is your sales pitch emotional (rather than analytical and rational)?

\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_ No

**6.** *"People want quarter-inch holes, not quarter-inch drills."* —MBA Magazine

Does your sales pitch highlight benefits (e.g., you get quarter-inch holes)—as opposed to features (e.g., buy a drill)?

Yes  No

**7.** *"Your job is to sell, not entertain."* —Jack Maxson

*"Cute and clever simply don't work."* —Nigel Rowe

Is your presentation cute, clever and entertaining?

Yes  No

**8.** Do you make an offer?

Yes  No

**9.** *"You cannot sell two things at once."* —Dick Benson

Are you giving the prospect too many choices?

Yes  No

**10.** *"The right offer should be so attractive that only a lunatic would say, 'No.'"* —Claude Hopkins

*"If you want to dramatically increase your results, dramatically improve your offer."* —Axel Andersson

Is your offer the very strongest one you can field?

Yes  No

**11.** Does your company name and address, 800 number and hyperlink appear somewhere on every piece in the promotion?

Yes  No

**12.** Do you include a guarantee of satisfaction backed up with the real signature of a real person?

Yes  No

**13.** Do you have a deadline date that is so far in the future it loses urgency or so near to the drop date that if the mailing is delayed your promotion is chopped liver?

Yes  No

**14.** Do you include testimonials from happy customers or donors?  
 Yes  No

**15.** Is your offer so simple an idiot can understand it?  
 Yes  No

**16.** Do you make it easy to respond?  
 Yes  No

**17.** Has your paranoid legal department destroyed the flow of the argument with disclaimers and footnotes in gray sans serif mousetype and/or a bunch of the following in superscript: \* †™ © 1 2 3 ?  
 Yes  No

**18.** Before going live, have you handed your promotion off to a half dozen strangers—who have no skin in the game—to make sure the whole thing makes sense, tracks, and the ordering mechanism is smooth and easy?  
 Yes  No

**19.** Can customers respond in the manner most convenient to them: mail, phone, fax, e-mail or via your Web site?  
 Yes  No

**20.** Does your response link address take the customer to your general homepage, as opposed to a special satellite page that directly relates to the specific offer?  
 Yes  No

**21.** Did you add a variety of “seed” addresses to see how the piece looks when delivered—and when it arrives?  
 Yes  No

**22.** Have you personally dialed the telephone number in your ad (website/letter, etc) to make sure it is correct?  
 Yes  No

**23.** Will the phone be answered no later than the second ring?  
 Yes  No

**24.** Did you provide customer service (or order intake) with copies of sales piece (brochures, print ads, outer Envelope, etc.) so they know what specific offer/product the caller talking about—as well as actual product samples (if available)—so they can answer questions?

Yes  No

**25.** Do you have a fail-safe system in place that enables you to measure responses by source and determine return on investment?

Yes  No

**26.** Are you able to fulfill orders immediately?

Yes  No

**27.** Are absolutely foolproof instructions included with the shipment?

Yes  No

**28.** *"The sale begins when the customer says 'yes.'"* —Bill Christensen  
Does your fulfillment material resell the product and reassure the customer that buying it from you was a really smart decision?

Yes  No

**29.** Does your fulfillment material make the customer feel good about doing business with you? Does it contain a phone number in case the customer has a question?

Yes  No

**30.** Is the product or service ready to use immediately for instant gratification? In other words, can the customer wear it, eat it, start reading or listening to it, hang it on the wall, sit in it, or plug it in and have it do its thing the moment it's unwrapped?

Yes  No

**31.** Do you make it easy to return the merchandise?

Yes  No

**32.** If the promotional effort is successful, can you turn on a dime and roll it out immediately to new prospects?

Yes  No

**33.** Is 20 percent of your marketing budget allocated for testing?

Yes  No

## Direct Mail

**34.** All of the above plus:

**35.** *"A letter should look and feel like a letter."* —Dick Benson

Does your letter look and feel like a letter?

Yes  No

**36.** If the letter is personalized, does the typeface in the personalization (date, name, address, salutation) match the typeface in the body of the letter?

Yes  No

**37.** Does the signature look real (as opposed to a computer-generated font) and printed in blue or black ink (as opposed to red)?

Yes  No

**38.** Are all the elements in the mailing small enough to fit in the envelope and folded so they're machine-insertable?

Yes  No

**39.** Have you checked the key coding, so that you can track the order back to the original source of the name and thus determine ROI list-by-list?

Yes  No

**40.** Have you given the lettershop detailed instructions—and a sample dummy of the mailing—so no question exists about how every element is folded, which order it's inserted and which side faces the envelope flap?

Yes  No

**41.** Has a USPS expert analyzed your entire mailing to guarantee that you're taking advantage of all possible merge/purge and CASS (Coding Accuracy Support Systems) technology and presort postal discounts down to carrier route sort?

Yes  No

**42.** Have you checked with your local postmaster to be sure the thing is indeed mailable?

Yes  No

**43.** Have you cleared the mail date with all the list owners from whom you're renting names?

Yes  No

**44.** Are the permit numbers on your outgoing indicia and incoming business reply mail correct?

Yes  No

**45.** Is the address on your business reply mail correct?

Yes  No

**46.** Do you have postage money for the mailing on deposit with your lettershop or the USPS?

Yes  No

**47.** Do you have money deposited in your USPS Business Reply account?

Yes  No

### **Space (Off-the-Page) Advertising**

**48.** All of the above plus:

**49.** *"I've never bought an ad at full rate in my life."* —Iris Shokoff

Do you have a professional media buyer negotiating the best rates?

Yes  No

**50.** Does the publication have a history of success with direct response advertisers, and have your competitors advertised there?

Yes  No

**51.** If your ad is running in a niche publication (as opposed to general interest), have you versionalized the headline and copy to appeal to that specific readership?

Yes  No

**52.** Is the order coupon on the lower outside corner of the ad (as opposed to the gutter, the top or worse, in the center)?

Yes  No

**53.** Is the coupon square or rectangular as opposed to a triangle, rhomboid, circle, or some other weird and disconcerting shape?

Yes  No

**54.** Are the reply address, phone number, e-mail address and Web address on the order coupon as well as in the ad itself?

Yes  No

**55.** Is there room on the coupon to legibly write a credit card account number?

Yes  No

### **Catalog**

**56.** All of the above plus:

**57:** Have you included an order form?

Yes  No

### **E-mail/E-commerce**

**58.** All of the above plus:

**59.** Is the subject line of your e-mail no more than 35-40 characters max?

Yes  No

**60.** Is the subject line of your e-mail a grabber—irresistible?

Yes  No

**61.** Will your subject line get past spam filters?

Yes  No

**62.** Remembering that you're one click from oblivion, is your landing page powerful, to the point, easy to navigate, and not wordy or boring?

Yes  No

**63.** Do distractions exist on your landing page that could take the customer's mind off the business at hand (e.g., Investor Relations, Press Office, About Us, Site Security, etc.)?

Yes  No

### **Broadcast—DRTV**

**64.** All of the above plus:

**65.** Are your 800 numbers and Web reply address prominently displayed in large type at the bottom of the screen throughout the commercial?

Yes  No

**66.** Have you alerted your inbound telemarketing operation as to the precise times that your commercials are running and provided a response estimate?

Yes  No

**67.** Have you made arrangements to handle overflow calls during spike periods?

Yes  No

**NOTE:** What have I missed? E-mail your suggestions to [dennyhatch@yahoo.com](mailto:dennyhatch@yahoo.com)

Thank you.