

## **Is It Smart to Send a Mailer Before Cold Calling?** by *Valerie Schlitt, President of VSA, Inc.*

Everyone asks, "Should I send something to my prospects before calling them?"

My answer is most frequently: NO!

But, sometimes, it's YES!



### **There are multiple reasons why, for the most part, we do not recommend mailers before B2B calling campaigns:**

- It's almost impossible to know exactly who your decision maker is from a purchased mailing list, which is what most people use. That's why most mailers get thrown away, or emails are unopened. They're sent to the wrong person. If the decision maker doesn't read the mailer, it's almost the same as not sending the mailer in the first place, not to mention time and money you've spent.
- Besides, a single mailer is rarely effective. To make a message really effective, send four, five or six mailers or emails in advance of the calling campaign. Better yet, try targeting multiple people in the company so you're sure to reach the decision maker. Most companies only send a single mailer, which is just not enough.
- For most products and services, even a series of mailers or emails does not enhance the results of a cold calling campaign. If a decision maker needs a certain product or service, he/she will respond just as readily to a phone call or voice message. Our experience shows that sending mailers in advance does not increase the number of decision makers who talk to us, return our calls, or take the next step in the sales process.

So, in our opinion, in virtually every case, sending information by mail or email before a cold calling campaign does not enhance results and is a drain on your marketing investment.

### **But, as always, there are very rare times where rules should be broken. When you have all the "right stuff" mailers can significantly boost results of a calling campaign. Here is when mailers are effective:**

- You are willing to invest time and money preparing your audience for the calling campaign.
- You will send multiple (not just one) mailers and/or emails.
- You know how to reach your decision maker(s) - or you are willing to spend the time to do your research. You must target the right people!
- Your product/service solves a near universal need. (This excludes products/services that are purchased infrequently or are needed by only a narrow slice of the market.)
- Your product/service is very unique, and highly competitive - but your prospects are probably unaware of how great it is.

- You can present the information succinctly, so decision makers can glance at it and understand quickly.
- You know when your prospects are likely to make decisions (e.g. when their current contracts are renewing, or when budgets are created), so you know when to send messages.

In instances when all the right stuff is in place, you will see dramatically higher results from your calling campaign if it is preceded by a series of emails/mailers. I highly recommend a mailing campaign in these cases.

You see, it all comes down to targeting the right decision makers with a message that is meaningful to them. That only works in rare situations where your product/service is almost universally beneficial, you can reach decision makers, and have the budget to do so repeatedly.

**So, is it ever a bad idea to send a mailer in advance? No, if you have the budget, it's not harmful.**

Let's summarize. Sending emails or mailers in advance of a calling campaign is normally not helpful at all - and is probably a waste of money and time.

But, in very specific cases when you have all the right stuff, you should absolutely send multiple emails and/or mailers as a precursor to your calling campaign. You will really help your results.

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