



DIRECT FORUM

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VOLUME 18 ISSUE 12

Direct Forum is a free email newsletter containing useful direct marketing tips, news updates and how-to information. It's convenient, informative and I am not trying to sell you anything!

1. Does direct mail work anymore?

2. Video of the month: "We send our support."

Does direct mail work anymore?

The answer is a resounding **"YES!"**

Direct mail is referred to as "salesman in print" for a very specific reason: it allows you to make your pitch or tell your story, long or short.

However, direct mail will only work as hard as you do—if it is done in the proper way, to a good list, with a compelling offer, and with targeted and persuasive creativity.

Having created hundreds of successful direct mail packages for all the companies listed alongside, here are some of the rules that I have learned from others and from my own experience:

1. Get to the point immediately. You must get to the point, and the offer - faster than ever before. People no longer wait patiently for the "punchline".

Here's proof: the classic Wall Street Journal two-page letter, that raised a million dollars for the Wall Street Journal, was finally beaten (after 32 years!) by a simple list of everything you received with your subscription.

Organizations worked for:

- American Express
- Apple Canada
- Amnesty International
- Arthritis Society
- Barnaby Hospital Foundation
- Breakfast for Learning
- CIBC
- Canada Helps
- Canada Post
- Canadian Olympic Foundation
- Canadian Bible Society
- Canadian Liver Foundation
- Cancer Research Society
- Canadian Women's Federation
- Christian Children's Fund of Canada
- Carswll
- CitiBank
- CIBC
- Covenant House Toronto
- Crossroads International
- Crohn's and Colitis Canada

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2. Bullet-proof your INFO. People have very little “disposable attention” today and only spend it on things that really interest them. So, organize the information for them. Lists and bullet points are extremely effective. Side bars work well. So do short sentences, small paragraphs and white space. By the way, these rules also apply to emails. Above all, be clear about exactly what you want them to do—and why they should do it—now.

Example: What catches a reader’s attention?

- The salutation
- A headline or Johnson box
- A captivating first sentence (keep it short; no more than 10 words)
- Underlines: in direct marketing, use sparingly; in viral marketing, underline only words as hyperlinks
- Bolded or italic sentences (use sparingly)
- Bulleted lists
- The closing
- Who signed it or the sender
- The P.S.
- Images (with captions or inserts)
- Free offers
- Things to click on. This applies to the numerous links to the donation page in viral marketing.
- Interactive features: in direct mail use scratch cards, involvement devices, a quiz, etc. In viral marketing use a button to click on to forward to a friend.

- Diabetes Canada
- Easter Seals Ontario
- Heart & Stroke Hamilton Hospital
- Heart & Stroke
- Heart House Hospice
- Hincks-Dellcrest Centre)
- Hostess
- Good Neighbours Club (HAVEN)
- Institute for Advancement in Mental Health (IAM)
- Interval House
- Integra Children’s Mental Health
- IWK Foundation
- Johnson & Johnson
- Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Canada
- Julius Schmidt USA
- Leukemia & Lymphoma Society of Canada
- Osteoporosis Canada
- Owens Corning
- Pfizer
- The Massey Centre for Women
- Make a Wish Canada
- Maple Leaf Food
- National Arts Center Foundation
- Nortel
- Nestle
- Ontario Lottery Corporation
- Plan International Canada
- Prostate Cancer Canada
- Pizza Hut
- Right to Play
- Speedy Glass
- Schnuder Food
- Toyota
- Sanfori
- Royal Conservatory of Music
- Save the Children Canada
- Second Harvest
- Sherway Gardens
- Special Olympics Ontario

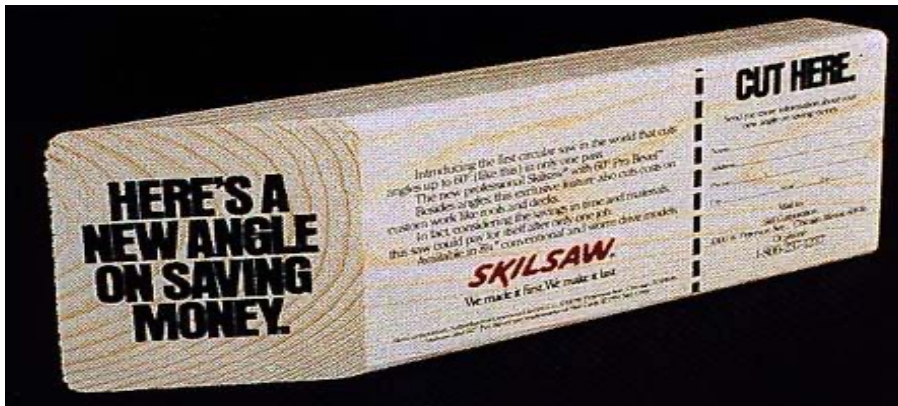
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3. Attraction is not Enough. Once upon a time, a great opening sentence or headline was enough. And of course, you still need one. But today, you don't just need to attract their attention, you need to keep their attention—sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph. Otherwise, people get bored.

This Covenant House letter did that in spades. Email me and I will send you a copy.

4. Direct mail is the only medium I know where you have three dimensions to work with, and no limits on how much information you can provide. It allows people to hold the product or your marketing material in their hands.

Example:



5. E is for Engagement. Without engagement you are not getting that stickiness to hold your reader's attention.

For example: The International Rescue Committee (IRC) raised millions for Refugees. They used videos on their social media sites and on their website and even had links to it in their direct mail material. They were successful in spreading their emergency messaging, resulting in over 7 million views, 57 million impressions, and a 90% awareness.

Here's the VIDEO LINK: https://youtu.be/JfQTFD_5CX8

- Sun Life Canada
- Shades of Hope
- Shoppers Drug Mart
- Starlight Children's Foundation
- Toronto Hydro
- Toronto International Film Festival
- Toronto Zoo
- Tourism Toronto
- Toronto Humane Society
- Tree Canada
- TruPoint Backyards
- University of St. Michael's College
- United Way Montreal
- United Nations Association in Canada
- UNICEF Canada
- UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- Varity BC
- Youth Employment Services
- YMCA Toronto
- YWCA Toronto
- VINCORE
- Wyeth Pharma
- WoodGreen Foundation
- War Child, Canada

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6. Make sure that the width of the letter is designed for optimum legibility

Use wide margins, so readers narrow their focus on the copy. Short columns are easier to scan. Keep your copy width down to sixty characters or less—that's about six inches, maximum. Think paperback novels.

Beyond that width the reader needs to move his head back and forth horizontally, making reading more difficult. It can also literally be a pain in the neck.

7. Add photos to tell a story.

Example: Move the letter to one side and add a sidebar with a testimonial from someone who benefited from your organization's good work. Or add a tear-off column with helpful tips or a schedule of upcoming events.

8. Remember, we are not just selling a product, we are also selling a promise.

Good writing in our business is not academic writing but persuasive writing. Forget what you learned in school about good grammar, direct marketing, or fundraising copy. Your words should sound like someone talking—like a conversation with the reader.

Example: Danny Hatch listed several emotional copy drivers. He said that if your copy isn't dripping with one or more of these, tear it up and start all over again.

Danny Hatch's lists 24 emotions that motivate people to act

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Fear | 13. Health/Physical well-being |
| 2. Greed | 14. Pride/Ego/Stature |
| 3. Lust | 15. Eternal Life |
| 4. Power | 16. Irresistible Bargain |
| 5. Self-improvement | 17. Grief |
| 6. Affirmation/Flattery | 18. Unbounded Pleasure |
| 7. Revenge | 19. Cuddly/Sweet |
| 8. Love | 20. Quick Fix with no work |
| 9. Anger | 21. Conspiracy/Insider Information |
| 10. Physical Hunger/Thirst | 22. Fame/Discovery |
| 11. Envy | 23. Patriotism |
| 12. Guilt | 24. Danger/Safety |

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Today, these copy drivers are considered as neuroscience since they engage the primal brain releasing dopamine or one of the hormones that stimulates interest. Emotions are the biggest factor that make us buy or want a product or donate to a cause.

Five major stimuli

- **“You-centricity”**—“what’s in it for me?”
- **Contrast:** black and white, new versus old. That’s why comparison tables are extremely effective.
- **Texture, tactility.** It’s the only channel we have to awaken one of the senses that isn’t often used: make your readers feel bumpy, lumpy, odd shapes, and all that sort of stuff.
- **Tangibility, touch.** It’s real, it’s physical. It can do things. And in print, we can have things pop up; we can have things unfold. Every time we get that involvement of the real, especially in direct mail or where things are unfolding with pieces and multiple elements—that’s giving us time of consideration.
- **Emotionality happens through story and through picture.**

9. Finally, it’s not just personalization that attracts, it’s relevancy.

Example: The Environmental Defense Fund put together an interesting little quiz called Earth Day Jeopardy. Rather than go on and talk about the issues to their donors, they challenged them to take a few minutes to test their knowledge. It is a great engagement idea with plenty of value. (*See over for the Quiz and its answers*)

The questions and answers of the Quiz

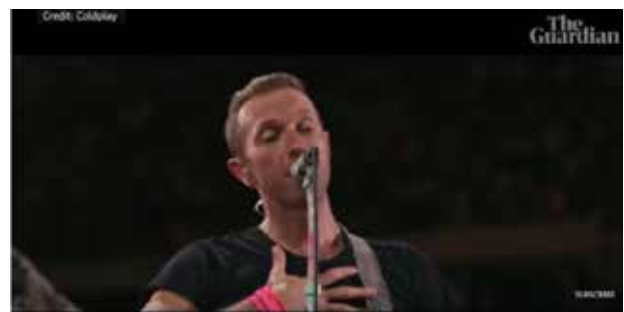
Point Value	The Air	The Water	The land	Earth Day	Energy	The 4 "R"s
200	What is Ozone?	What is oil?	What are polar bears, snow leopard, Giant Panda, Tigers, Monarch Butterflies, Green Sea turtles, etc.?	What is Spring?	What are fossil fuels?	What is reuse?
400	What is carpooling, biking, walking, etc.?	What is the ocean?	What is Carbon Dioxide?	What is April 22nd, 1970?	What are Wind Turbines?	What are reduce, reuse, recycle, rot compost. (reduction, recovery is also acceptable)
600	What are clouds?	What is plastic?	What is Yellowstone?	Who is Gaylord Nelson?	What are incandescent bulbs?	What is 80%?
800	What are Spare the Air Alerts?	What is Greece?	What is 4 acres?	What is 20 million?	What is lighting?	What is 1 million years?
1000	What is the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District)?	What is Sulfur dioxide (or diesel fumes)?	What are Cigarette butts?	What is planting trees (1 million trees for adults)?	What is China?	What is four pounds?

Point Value	The Air	The Water	The Land	Earth Day	Energy	The 4 "R"s
200	This gets holes in it from Aerosol spray cans, air conditioners and refrigerators	This substance got spilled into the water off the coast of California by a tanker and led to the first Earth Day	This is an animal that is endangered because of global warming	Earth Day is also the first day of this	The burning of these types of fuels for energy is a main contributor to Climate Change	Saving a paper bag and using it multiple times to carry groceries is an example of this "R"
400	Instead of driving alone to work or school, we can do this to reduce air pollution	Water eventually runs off to this.	Trees absorb this substance to make oxygen	This is the Date of the first Earth Day	These produce energy by capturing the power of the wind	These are the four R's
600	One type of these is called "cumulus"	This is the most commonly found material picked up at beach cleanups	This is the world's first national park	This Wisconsin senator is credited with organizing the first Earth Day	These kinds of lightbulbs have been replaced by CFL's and LED's	This is the percent of stuff Americans throw away that can be recycled?
800	This system was developed to let Bay Area Residents know when Air quality is forecasted to be unhealthy	This Country has the cleanest coastal waters	This is how many acres of rainforest being cut down every second	This is the number of Americans who participated in the first Earth Day	It is illuminating to learn that the United States uses most of its household energy to power this	This is how long it takes glass to decompose in a landfill
1000	This "Special District" organization was founded in the 1950's to protect Air Quality in the San Francisco Bay Area	This is what causes Acid Rain	This is the most common piece of litter	This is the goal of Earth Day's largest effort called the Canopy project	This is the country that produces the most solar panels in the world	This is the number of pounds of trash the average American generates per day

Another great example: After the recent controversial Supreme Court of the United States decision on abortion, the charity, National Organization for Women (NOW), sent an invitation to their donors to go to a planning meeting in the town right next door. Sometimes charities seem to forget the incredible power to "localize" their brand. This was a great example of doing it right.

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Message of the month: “We send our support” Coldplay performs Iranian protest song “Baraye” in Buenos Aires.



Like many of you, I too am touched by the protests in Iran and have been following what is happening there. One of the protesters, Shervin Hajipour, was imprisoned for just writing a song. In solidarity, Coldplay performed that song in Buenos Aires.

Here's a link to Shervin Hajipour's original version:

https://youtu.be/LY_U5QfeQQc

Here's the link to Coldplay's performance:

<https://youtu.be/a.Jb3uc1D1D8>

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