

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!

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## **Pushing the Envelope: The power of involvement**

Words, whether on a piece of paper or on a computer screen, have the power to move people to donate money to a cause. Yes, the pen is mightier than the sword, but you can push the envelope even further by using an involvement device that will often give direct mail an added advantage.

This is a trap that a lot of people new to direct marketing fall into. They think that 99% of their effort should be spent on crafting the letter. You have to recognize that a direct mail package is a lot more than just the letter. It's

also the envelope that pulls the person in and other elements such as a lift-note or buck slip. You have to use the whole package.

Even the inclusion of "Yes" or "No" stickers has helped me boost response.

Remember the old saying:

**Tell me and I'll forget  
Show me and I'll remember  
Involve me and I'll understand**

An "involvement device" is anything that will encourage your prospect to spend just an extra few seconds with your

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direct mail package. And if they do interact with it, chances are they are more likely to remember it.

Direct mail is the only medium I know where you have three dimensions to work with. The very tactile nature of direct mail allows people to actually hold your material in their hands and react or interact with it. This is one of the biggest advantages that direct mail has over any other form of communication.

Being an art director as well as a writer, I am always tempted to first find the perfect visual involvement device to capture the essence of a charity's message before I move to finding the best solution in words.

A tactile or 3-dimensional piece lures your reader into becoming further involved with the package.

My friend Michael Johnson of HJC New Media refers to this involvement device as a “McGuffen” — using a powerful additional element to dramatically

conjure up the right kind of imagery to help drive a story.

One way I have done this is by using a real Band-Aid that falls out in the reader's lap when they open an envelope that reads: ***“Bandages are not enough.”*** That helped me talk about the outrage of partner abuse.



Or I have mailed a piece of cardboard in an envelope that said: ***“Refugees deserve a better shelter than this”*** to conjure up the homelessness plight of refugees for

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## UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees.)



I have even mailed a package of sugar to explain the epidemic of diabetes in our children; a toothbrush to show that people fleeing from domestic abuse don't even have time to pack their basic necessities; and even a Holiday Card that asked donors not to keep it but to sign it and return it with their gift. All these packages met with great success.

Many Companies use the mail to get their product directly into

the hands of their best customers by sending them a sample.

Sampling can be a highly effective and persuasive technique for generating sales. In a survey by the US Postal Service, 61% of consumers said that sampling a product is the most effective way to get them to try a brand, and 81% indicated they would try a sample they received from a brand.

Offering a tangible object works well as illustrated when Obama used the “birther controversy” started by Donald Trump to his own advantage for his 2012 reelection. He sent emails that said: ***“Donate \$20 or more today and we’ll send you a reprint of the President’s birth certificate.”***

**So think about using an involvement device in your next Direct mail campaign; you will be surprised by the result.**

**Stuck for an idea? Just call or email me.** (My information is on page 7)

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# Millennials and the mail

Tech-savvy may be the defining trait of Millennials — more than 80% say they sleep with a cell phone.

**I should know, because as a professor I have been teaching young people for a long time.**

**And each class starts with me telling them to shut down their phones and laptops.**

What I have learned about Millennials is that they are suspicious of mass media.

In some regards, they do not view big business, PR and advertising favorably, even though my entire class is in advertising and direct marketing.

But ask one if they like to get mail. You might be surprised by the answer.

According to one study by the US Postal Service, Millennials said 75% of the mail they receive is valuable and 73% of them have used direct mail coupons.

Millennials can be resistant to traditional mass-market communications.



They're looking for something they deem credible.

Peer-to-peer influence works best — creating a buzz within this demographic — and that can be done through a variety of ways.

Top of that list: Integrated Campaigns are almost a must, say experts.

They present an opportunity for brands to broaden their reach with a direct mail package that engages this digital audience.

Millennials love to share messages and offers with friends.

Integrated marketing messages fit right in with the Millennials' habit of multitasking across various electronic devices.

They have grown up doing one thing while simultaneously listening to their MP3 player, looking at their e-reader and sending text messages to their friends.

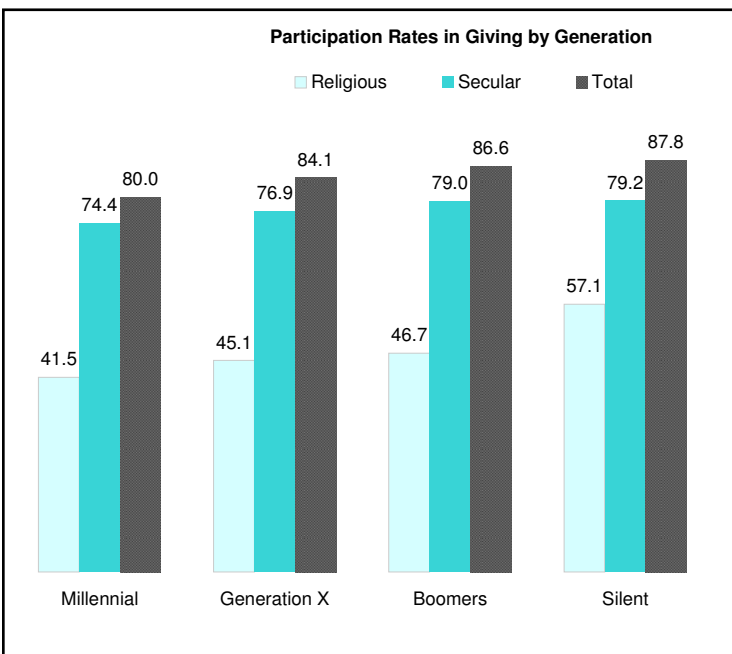
**It is just who they are.**

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**I have also learned that Millennials can be your next great donors, because they are motivated by a desire to make the world a better place. (Bernie Sander proved that.)**

Here’s a chart from the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University that shows their donor activity:



A survey that asked these donors about their motivations for charitable giving found four factors that stand out as being most important for them:

- Providing for the basic needs of the very poor;
- Giving the poor a way to help themselves;
- Desire to make the world a better place to live;
- Those with more have a responsibility to help those with less.

**My tips on reaching Millennials**

They are much more likely to become engaged through the use of PURLs, QR codes or even the request to call.

They love to share. They won’t hesitate to provide a wealth of information and refer others as well.

However, relevancy and personalization are vital — they need to see how your product, service or charity directly relates to them and why it matters.

**Now, it’s your turn.**

**Do you have a success story to share about reaching Millennials through an integrated marketing campaign?**

**Please send it to me. I would love to feature and share it with you all in my next Newsletter.**

# A PSAs that's relevant to Millennials



Several countries have imposed hefty penalties when people text messages, or use their phones while driving.

There is a very good reason for this—these activities divide the driver's attention. It takes only a few seconds to get distracted and that can have serious consequences.

Here's a powerful video called: **Wait for it... this could change your life. | @SummerBreak 4**

**It gets this message across.**

Here's the link:

<https://youtu.be/E9swS1Vl6Ok>

Its been viewed by over 1,363,409

people and growing and has ton's of comments from teenagers — all worth reading.

**Finally, I would also like to share an email from my proof-reader that said:**

**“I have learned a lesson—I only put on my daily makeup *after* I read your newsletter. In every one there is something poignant enough to bring me to tears. It is too easy to get caught up in our frantic modern lives and not take time to really feel. Thanks for always reining me back in!”**

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