



Maximizing the Advantages of the USPS Direct Mail Program

In an effort to help businesses reach new prospects, the United States Postal Service (USPS) launched their Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) program in March 2011, and it has grown steadily over the years. The service allows you to focus on your surrounding neighborhoods as a way to expand your customer base. According to the April 2010 BizReport, average consumers spend 85% of their disposable income within five miles of their homes – which means your best customers may be very nearby.

The service's primary benefit for businesses is allowing them to send informational or promotional mail-pieces to every dwelling on a particular carrier route without having to address each piece. This also saves them from having to buy a mailing list. When the program originally launched, the postage per piece was only 14.2 cents. Over the years it has risen to 18.3 cents each, but this is still quite a bit less than other postage options.

How it Works

The Every Door Direct Mail program is designed to allow your business to reach every home on any given carrier route. You simply select the neighborhoods you want to target, and a USPS letter carrier delivers your mail-piece with the day's mail. It is not necessary to know the names or street addresses.

A mailing with these characteristics is very efficient for the USPS to process because it bypasses postage cancellation, address correction, mail sorting steps, and goes straight to the individual letter carrier. As a result, the USPS assigns a very low postage rate to these mailings.

Benefits of EDDM

There are several benefits to an EDDM mailing, especially for business owners with very little time to spend on marketing.

- *No mail list is required.* This saves the cost of acquiring a mail list, the cost of addressing the mail piece, and the cost of maintaining the mail list.
- *Small mailings can be quickly produced.* Most city carrier routes are 400-600 addresses. By eliminating the time to gather a mail list and address the mail piece, and by using digital equipment for printing the mail piece, a small mailing can be in the hands of prospective customers in just a few days.



- *No postage permit is required.* Regular presorted mailings require the use of a permit in order to mail at discounted postage rates. For EDDM, the USPS waives this requirement.
- *The mailing panel can be very small.* Because the mail piece does not go through normal mail processing, there are no requirements for the location and size of the mail panel (the area containing the return address, indicia, and outbound address). Note, however, that there are requirements for the wording of the indicia and the simplified address.
- *The mailing can be directed to dwellings only.* Even though a carrier route or ZIP code may have a mix of dwellings and businesses, it is possible to exclude the businesses from the mailing and send mail only to the dwellings. One limitation of EDDM is that it cannot be used for business delivery only.

Size of an EDDM Mail-Piece

So what size can be used for an EDDM mail piece? The first requirement is that the length of the mail piece must be greater than its height, and its overall measurement cannot be more than 15 inches long and 12 inches high. The next requirement is that the mail piece must be either greater than 10.25 inches

in length or more than 6.25 inches in height. This means a mail piece measuring 8.5" x 11" qualifies for EDDM, as does 6.5" x 9".

It's important to note that all these eligible sizes are what the USPS defines as "Flats" and are larger than what they define as "Letters". This means that some sizes that are typically used for direct mail like 4" x 6" postcards or 4" x 9" brochures do not qualify for the EDDM program.

In order to check the size eligibility of a mail-piece you would like to use, refer to the new Size Checker on the EDDM website at <http://www.usps.com/everydoordirectmail>

Some popular EDDM eligible sizes are:

- 4.25" x 11"
- 6.5" x 9"
- 6.5" x 12"
- 8" x 10"
- 8.5" x 11"
- 9" x 12"

Therefore, the EDDM flat mail requirement does not mean that there is only one size that meets this condition. On the contrary, it opens up a lot of very interesting size possibilities for the direct mail-piece that will:

- make it stand out from the rest of the mail;
- provide more room for the advertising message; and
- still be cost-effective to print.

Uses for EDDM

The USPS designed EDDM for smaller businesses that haven't used direct mail marketing in the past due to the cost. By eliminating the need for a mail list, simplifying mail preparation, and offering a very low postage rate, EDDM is an affordable marketing tool, especially for local businesses offering a product or service that people use regularly and whose customers and prospects come from an area adjacent to the business.

Here are the kinds of businesses most likely to benefit from EDDM:

- fast food, dine-in, and take-out restaurants
- dry cleaners, beauty, and barber shops
- automotive service and repair shops
- drug stores and pharmacies
- clothing and department stores
- banks and real estate firms.

The target audience could be in a residential neighborhood where the convenient location of the business is a selling point, or in a mixed residential and business area for businesses offering services that workers might use before and after work or during lunch.

The EDDM program is often used when the mailing is designed to reach a dwelling unit or business rather than a specific individual. Community newsletters are often distributed by EDDM. For new businesses, EDDM is a great way to notify neighbors of the business's products and services and to extend an invitation to a grand opening. In some instances, EDDM may also be appropriate for political mailings (even though the mail piece will go to all dwellings without knowing whether residents are registered voters).

When it comes to deciding how often to mail, EDDM is no different than any direct mail marketing program. Mailings need to be periodic and ongoing. We suggest mailing every four weeks, and once started, to continue mailing indefinitely. The results of regular, repeat mailings are cumulative – the more you mail, the more likely the recipients will remember your name and utilize your business when they have a need you can fill.

Here are a few ways you can put Every Door Direct Mail to work for you:

- Invite customers to a grand opening or to a newly renovated or expanded space.
- Include special offers or "neighborhood only" deals – make customers feel valued and appreciated.
- Announce events like clearance sales, kids' days, anniversary celebrations, and holiday promotions.
- Publicize your participation in community events, such as sidewalk sales and seasonal activities.
- Highlight your hours of operation, especially if you're extending them for the holidays or a special event.

Design and Printing of EDDM Mail-Pieces

Because EDDM has lots of requirements and restrictions, it's a good idea to use experts like us for design and printing of the mail-piece. We will guide you through a series of questions to help formulate the sales message, with emphasis on the fundamentals of direct mail marketing: an answer to the question *What's in it for me?* from the perspective of the mail-piece recipient; a call to action; a sense of urgency; and an eye-catching design with the proper balance between text, graphics, and white space.

For businesses that regularly mail newsletters or post cards to their customers using standard addressed direct mail, EDDM may be a way to prospect for new customers who are the neighbors of existing customers. With all these possibilities, EDDM is a great marketing tool for many businesses. For more information and to discuss how EDDM might benefit your business or organization, contact us at 513-248-2121.

a vocabulary of the graphic arts

Carrier route: all mail pieces for delivery to the same city route, rural route, highway contract route, post office box, or general delivery unit.

Destination post office: the post office that is the last stop before mail delivery by letter carriers.

EDDM: an acronym for *Every Door Direct Mail*, a direct mail advertising program for businesses from the United States Postal Service.

EDDM BMEU: a version of EDDM that requires a permit and has no limit on the number or size of mailings that can be entered daily.

EDDM Retail: a version of EDDM designed for do-it-yourself mailers. Does not require a mailing permit and allows mail to be entered at the front counter of the destination post office. Limited to one mailing of up to 5000 pieces per destination post office per day.

Flat mail: mail that meets the physical specifications set by the USPS – rectangular in shape, flexible, uniformly thick and with physical dimensions within the minimum and maximum. EDDM specifications differ somewhat from other flat mail. Sometimes called *large envelope*.

Indicia: an alternative way to pay for postage instead of postage stamps or a postage meter. The mailer prints the postage information in a block in the upper right hand corner of the mail-piece. Also called *permit imprint*.

Letter mail: mail that is rectangular; at least 3½ inches high and 5 inches long and 0.007 inches thick; and no more than 6-1/8 inches high and 11½ inches long and ¼ inch thick.

Letter carrier: the USPS employee who delivers mail. The term was created to be a gender-neutral substitute for *mail man*.

Line of travel: the order in which a carrier route is served by the letter carrier; mail-pieces sequenced in delivery order.

Mail panel: the area of a mail-piece containing the outbound address, return address, and postage payment method (postage stamp, meter mark, or indicia).

Marriage mail: two or more messages, perhaps from different businesses, sent to an address as a single mail-piece. Also called *shared mail*.

Permit: permission from the USPS to mail at discounted postage rates.

Saturation mailing: a mailing to at least 90% of the addresses in a carrier route.

Self-mailer: a mail-piece not enclosed in an envelope or other packaging.

Simplified address format: an alternate addressing format that uses *Postal Customer* or *Residential Customer* in place of name and address. Used when distribution is intended for each active address in a carrier route.

Targeted mailing: a mailing directed at a specific group of people based on some attribute they share, such as age, location, or shopping patterns.

T H E I D E A

The Marriage Mail Opportunity

Are you familiar with the term *marriage mail* or *shared mail*? That is a direct mail marketing technique in which businesses team up to present their offers on a single mail-piece. Because EDDM allows for a very large mail-piece, it is possible for several businesses to share the space on a single post card and divide the cost of printing, mail preparation, and postage. While a solo EDDM mailing is a great bargain, a shared mailing is even better.

Some groups that might benefit from marriage mail include:

- tenants of the same shopping center or strip mall
- downtown merchant associations

- business associations like the chamber of commerce
- several non-profit organizations that will be holding events on different days

We have developed an EDDM shared mail program that takes only minutes to explain. For more information or to arrange a sales consultation, contact us at 513-248-2121.

TRICKS & tips

Use Demographics to Get Better Results

Basic demographic targeting can greatly increase the success of a mailing. A targeted mailing will result in higher response rates as well as higher conversion rates. Luxury products, real estate, and insurance services are examples of types of businesses where targeting is most helpful. Demographics are less important for certain types of restaurants and services, but still potentially beneficial.

The USPS now provides demographic information for each carrier route. It is possible to view the following information when you are selecting which routes to target:

- Number of Business and Residential Addresses
- Average Age
- Size of the Household
- Approximate Income

This information can be used to your advantage so that you get the best response possible. For example, a high-end jewelry store, furniture location, or luxury auto dealer could benefit from targeting carrier routes that have an average household income of \$75,000 or more.

Just as with any direct marketing campaign, to whom the mailing is sent accounts for about 60% of its overall effectiveness. By using the new demographic tool to better target your mailing's recipients, you will dramatically increase your response rate. Contact us if you would like help using the online demographic tool and/or deciding which carrier routes will be best for your mailing.



Why should I use TechneGraphics for EDDM when the USPS offers EDDM Retail, the do-it-yourself option?



We can't think of a simpler way to put it than this: we'll do it all, correctly, and on time. We won't let an emergency, or lack of time, or unexpectedly absent employees get in the way of taking your EDDM mailing to the post office on the day you specify. In addition, we'll:

- help you determine which carrier routes to include in the mailing
- verify counts for each carrier route
- make sure the mail-piece complies with all EDDM requirements

- design and print the mail piece
- count and tie bundles and add proper facing slips
- prepare all USPS paperwork
- transport the mailing to the post office

We will charge a fee for the mailing services, but the bulk of your costs will be for printing and postage. For just a little extra cost for mailing services, you can turn your attention to the things that only you can do in your business, and leave the printing and mailing details to us.

questions and answers