



Doordrop guide





Contents

| | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| | Acknowledgements | 5 |
| | Introduction | 6 |
| Business practice | | |
| | Compliance | 8 |
| | Doordrops and the DMA Code | 8 |
| | Key legislation | 8 |
| | Industry codes | 8 |
| | Regulatory organisation | 9 |
| | FCA rules for financial services mail | 9 |
| | Penalties | 9 |
| Campaign creation | | |
| | Planning | 11 |
| | 1. Budgeting | 11 |
| | 2. Project schedule | 11 |
| | 3. Gantt chart | 11 |
| | Strategy | 12 |
| | Strategic considerations | 12 |
| | Campaign priorities | 14 |
| | Doordrop goal-setting | 15 |
| | Campaign timing | 17 |
| | Campaign quantities | 17 |
| | Data | 17 |
| | Strategy | 17 |
| | Campaign data | 19 |
| | Targeting | 19 |
| | Sourcing relevant data | 20 |
| | Your Choice and opt out services | 20 |
| | Creative | 21 |
| | Writing the creative brief | 21 |
| | Parts of a doordrop | 21 |
| | Creative opportunities | 22 |
| | Copywriting for doordrops | 25 |
| | Copy checklist | 25 |
| | Design for doordrops | 26 |
| | Design checklist | 26 |



Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Testing and campaign development | 26 |
| Testing creative | 27 |
| The importance of robust test design | 28 |
| Response tracking and measurement | 28 |
| Benchmarking | 29 |
| Environmentally responsible campaigns | 30 |
| Environmentally responsible print design | 30 |
| Recyclability: paper and materials | 30 |
| Recyclability: ink and finishes | 31 |
| Proofing and proof-reading | 31 |
| Recycling statements | 32 |
| Recycling logos | 32 |
| Mailing house environmental management | 32 |
| Distribution | 33 |
| | |
| Campaign delivery | |
| | |
| Printing | 35 |
| Key printing decisions | 35 |
| Materials | 35 |
| Standard paper sizes | 35 |
| Standard envelope sizes | 35 |
| Laser sheet sizes | 36 |
| Printing methods | 36 |
| If using envelopes | 37 |
| Enclosing | 38 |
| One-piece doordrops | 39 |
| Production process | 40 |
| Production schedule and lead times | 40 |
| Quality management | 42 |
| Scuffing | 45 |
| Ordering of materials | 45 |
| Wastage | 47 |
| Storage | 48 |
| Ownership of production assets | 49 |
| Distribution | 50 |
| Delivery methods | 50 |
| Distribution channels | 50 |
| Coverage | 51 |



Contents

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| UK postcodes (Universe) | 51 |
| Distribution contracts | 51 |
| Handover to distributor | 52 |
| Quality control services | 53 |
| Backchecking | 53 |
| Independent validation and research | 53 |
| Fulfilment | 55 |
| Campaign measurement | 56 |
| Considerations | 56 |
| What you can measure | 56 |
| Measurement mechanisms | 57 |
| Other factors | 58 |

Glossary

| | |
|-----------------|-----------|
| Glossary | 60 |
|-----------------|-----------|



Acknowledgements

The DMA would like to acknowledge the contributions to this guide of:

Nick Brown, Newsquest Direct

Chris Coward, Local World

Mark Davies, Whistl

Amanda Griffiths, Royal Mail MarketReach

Ian Lacey, The Insert House

Lorraine Nolan, Manning Gottlieb OMD

Christian Petersen, Royal Mail MarketReach

Phil Ricketts, Royal Mail MarketReach

Mark Young, The Leaflet Company



Introduction

Whether you are a local authority, charitable organisation or consumer-focused business, a door drop can be an extremely effective and impactful method of reaching and communicating with your target audience – which is why some 80% of the UK's top advertisers use the medium.

Door drop campaigns make an immediate impression, generate rapid and measurable response and build positive brand perception over the long term.

They can achieve cost effective market coverage without duplication of recipient and permit activity to be focused specifically on households who fit the demographic profile of your target audience.

The flexibility of door drop marketing allows for activity to be targeted as accurately as a single street, or as broadly as every UK address.

It is a proven medium which works as part of integrated broadcast media campaigns, part of the offline mix which often helps to drive online response.

Typical strategic and tactical uses of the channel include:

- To advertise products and services
- To generate product trials
- To drive retail or web traffic
- To highlight seasonal sales and promotions
- To build cost effective brand awareness
- To secure consumer response and build customer databases
- To disseminate information

Door drops offer a unique opportunity to deliver a hard hitting message and call to action; this can be especially effective as part of an integrated marketing strategy. Distribution can be easily co-ordinated to run alongside complementary advertising campaigns on radio, television or in print. Door drops can also be used as a follow-up mechanism to reinforce or build on a single campaign message across multiple media to achieve high levels of consumer recall and response.

Unlike some other media, marketing material delivered via door drops benefit from delivery directly into the home.

- Door drops put you directly in control of the targeting
- There is sometimes a set circulation figure in other printed channels, whereas you can select the quantity you wish to distribute with door drops
- Door drops offer colourful and stimulating messages on the householder's doormat, which can be easily seen and acted on.



Business practice



Compliance

All marketers must comply with the law, and this guide focuses on best practice requirements that exceed the letter of the law. For the most part this guide does not repeat what the law and other legal guidance documents say about door drops. It assumes that you are already aware of and compliant with the law relating to one-to-one marketing, as well as the DMA Code.

Doordrops and the DMA Code

The DMA Code is the standard to which all DMA members, their suppliers and clients must agree to follow.

The DMA Code is about much more than mere compliance. Rather, it is about delivering one-to-one marketing that is an exchange of value between your company, looking to prosper, and your customer, looking to benefit.

Marketing honestly and fairly, putting your customer first, will also make you a better and more valued marketer.

Key legislation

There are a wealth of legislative and best practice requirements of which you must be aware. The two key pieces of legislation governing one-to-one marketing are:

Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA)

Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (PECR)

Industry codes

Door drops are subject to requirements from a number of industry bodies, particularly:

DMA Code

DMA members must comply with the DMA Code.

Non-members are strongly advised to comply with the Code as it is a useful summary of the legal and best practice requirements for one-to-one marketers.

The Code is adjudicated by the Direct Marketing Commission (DMC).

The CAP Code

The British Code of Advertising, Sales Promotion and Direct Marketing (CAP Code), which is enforced by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA).



Regulatory organisation

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

Regarding data protection and privacy issues.

FCA rules for financial services mail

If your door drop relates to an investment product that falls within the scope of the *Financial Services and Markets Act 2000*, then the creative agency and mailing house must ensure that:

- The client is properly authorised under the Act by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA):

fca.org.uk

- The final copy has been signed off by a responsible official of the client

Failure to do either could result in the agency or mailing house committing the criminal offence of publishing an unauthorised advertisement.

Penalties

Penalties for compliance failure include fines and sanctions under legislation and various industry codes.

To find out the latest information on penalties and sanctions, including examples of companies that have been penalised, visit:

ico.org.uk/



Campaign creation



Planning

1. Budgeting

Maintain overall financial control.

- **Budget thoroughly**

Ensure that it covers:

- All aspects of the marketing activities planned – development, printing and delivery
- The outcomes you expect from those activities (forecast)

2. Project schedule

Your project schedule should show what is happening and when throughout your project –who is responsible for approving and delivering each element.

- **Work backwards from your deadline**

Start with your deadline – the absolute point at which your campaign must be delivered – and fill in the preceding stages from last backwards to first, allowing proper time for each element.

This will flag any time constraints or scheduling problems that you might face at the outset and allow you to agree solutions with relevant members of your project team.

- **Allow margins for error**

Despite the best-laid plans, the number of different elements involved in producing a campaign makes it almost inevitable that something will be delayed, often for reasons beyond anyone's control.

If you are in charge of the project calendar, make sure that you build in a useful margin at each stage to help soak up delays. Missed deadlines can have serious knock-on effects throughout the rest of your project.

- **Keep your calendar up to date**

Think of your calendar as a living document, constantly updated to reveal opportunities and threats to your promotional schedule.

3. Gantt chart

Your Gantt chart represents your project schedule visually, showing:

- **The start and finish dates of each of the required elements in your project or campaign**
- **Resource needed at any given point in a campaign**
- **Dependencies – any tasks that cannot be undertaken until previous tasks have been completed**

To complete a campaign successfully, manage these project dependencies carefully.

For example:

- You cannot deliver your door drop until you have produced all separate elements of the piece
- You cannot design your door drop until you have defined your strategy



Strategy

Strategic considerations

Door drops should be used as part of your brand's targeted, carefully timed multi-channel campaign and how your customer navigates it.

Recent research into consumer relationships with printed communications revealed a number of insights to help inform your door drop strategies.

- **Consider the role of door drops in your customer journey**

Door drop campaigns make an immediate impact, able to generate rapid, measurable responses and to build positive brand perceptions over the long term.

They can achieve cost effective coverage of your target market without duplication of recipient and focused specifically on households who fit the demographics you want.

The flexibility of door drop marketing can be targeted as accurately a single street, or as broadly as every UK address.

It is a proven medium which works well in integrated media campaigns – part of the offline mix that helps to drive online response.

You should use door drops inventively to make them successful for you. Typical strategic and tactical uses of the channel include:

- To advertise products and services
- To generate product trials
- To drive retail or web traffic
- To highlight seasonal sales and promotions
- To build cost effective brand awareness
- To secure consumer response and build customer databases
- To disseminate information

- **Consider your brand values and feel**

Part of the strength of a door drop is down to its tangibility and ability to drive an emotional response.

Touching and feeling the brand in your hand has been shown to generate a stronger engagement and a more emotional reaction.

People project physical production values onto brand values – if they think your door drop looks and feels 'quality' then they will assume the same of your brand.

- **Consider your message**

Consumers get many messages every day in many media. You want yours to stand out and get a response.

Start by defining the single most important message you want to give your audience. While you may have a number of things you want to say, simpler is always better. Focus on a single main message.

A simple structure to develop a message is;

- Main message
- Support points – the key facts that explain why your main message is important or relevant



Campaign creation



- What next/call-to-action – what you want your customer to do as a result of your door drop and how they can take a next step (such as a reply form, email address, phone number, online visit – or to save your door drop for reference)

- **Consider the longevity of your communication**

Mail stays in your customer's home and often moves around – from doorstep to kitchen table, mantelpiece, bedroom, lounge, study and beyond. With this level of staying power, you need to think about how long you want your message to last.

- If your offer has a timescale, make it clear when your customer must respond
- If you want your door drop to be kept, make it something your customer will truly value and possibly want to display on a memo board, stick on the refrigerator or save in their 'things I need to do' pile

This may also affect the type of message you create. Quality and production values will be particularly important if you want your message to be saved – does it look good enough to be kept on view? Will it stand up to being read, moved around, handled, used to write on and so on?

- **Consider the decision you are asking your customer to make**

- How much time will your customer need to fully understand, investigate and decide upon your offer?
- Are they likely to need to discuss the offer with others?
- Is it a decision they will need an extended period of time to consider?

- **Understand the strengths of door drops**

A door drop gives you the opportunity and space to communicate with authority and substance.

Classic scenarios that benefit from door drops include:

- Local offers – whether for a small business, restaurant or a nearby supermarket
- Home-based products and services – door drops go straight into the home to reach your customer where and when they consider work on their home
- Personal interests and services – when making personal decisions, messages from charities, financial services and lifestyle brands can reach your customer in their home and have an impact

- **Consider how your door drop will work alongside other channels**

Print and digital work in complementary ways. Printed communications are shown to be highly effective at driving digital behaviour.

Consider how your door drop can be used to boost other marketing channels, or how it can benefit from coordination with your other promotional activity to create a rewarding customer journey.

For example, as a direct result of receiving mail:

- 92% have gone to online or digital activity
- 87% have been persuaded to make online purchases
- 86% have communicated with a business online
- 54% have taken to social media
- 43% have downloaded something

- **Consider your short and long term objectives**

It is important to balance both short and long-term strategies. Efforts to deliver only short-term benefits will not drive your long-term growth and profitability.

While short-term goals are clearly important in today's world, it is vital that you develop a balanced mix of



short-term activation and long-term brand building activities and can clearly identify how your door drop activity will support both.

Campaign priorities

The key influences on a successful campaign, in order of their significance, are:

- **Customer targeting**

Unless you are speaking to the right customers, everything else is irrelevant. Even if your door drop is untargeted, make sure that you understand the demographics of the area to which you are delivering that message. The message should suit the audience so you do not waste money and resources reaching out to people who are unlikely customers.

Make sure that you know exactly who your best customers are: where they live; what their profile is; how they behave; their marketing preferences. And be able to provide the rest of your campaign team with this information.

See the DMA Data guide for more in-depth advice on how to get to know your customer and make sure that you have the right data, correctly prepared, as a platform for your successful campaign.

- Who should you be targeting? Where? Why?

- **Offer**

Do not flatter yourself that your customer will naturally be interested in your brand. You must be certain that your offer has genuine value to your customer. Otherwise your door drop will be thrown away as 'junk mail' and your money wasted.

- **Timing**

The right offer to the right person will go unnoticed if you do not deliver it at the right time. Whether the right time of the year, day of the week or another point in their customer journey.

Certain times of the week, month or year may be best suited to your message. Delivery near the weekend may help local take-away menus. January may be ideal for local gym offers. Springtime may suit those selling homes.

Door drop delivery services allow you to be precise with your door drops. For example, allowing you to deliver a special offer on a Friday for your customer to redeem that weekend.

- When is the right moment to catch your customer's attention?

- **Creative**

Once you are sure that you have identified your perfect customer, offer and moment of communication, you can begin to make that offer stand out. Engage, capture your customer's imagination and drive response.

Door drops offer an inexhaustible range of creative opportunities across design, format and the five senses. See the Creative section below for more ideas.

- How can you deliver your message in the most compelling manner?

- **Response**

Ensure that your call-to-action is appropriate to your goals. For example, a website address to find further information, a QR code to trigger a digital brand experience or a reply envelope to encourage direct sales or subscriptions.

- How can you make it as easy and rewarding as possible for your customer to respond?



Doordrop goal-setting

- **Set channel-specific role**

As with any medium, shape your activity so its unique strengths contribute to your overall campaign. For example, you might decide that your door drop is a good way to generate initial brand awareness, so deliver it early in your campaign.

Consider:

- What does your business want to achieve?
- Will your door drop increase revenue, customers or return on investment?
- Will its success be measured in isolation or as part of a broader campaign? How will you measure the performance of your door drop activity either alone or amongst other media?

- **Use printed formats to build awareness**

Print is a proven direct response medium, and you should take advantage of what it has to offer. Print has aesthetic, tactile and durable qualities to build a richer brand experience that can enhance your activity through other channels.

For example, Friends of the Earth door dropped a printed 'Bee saver' kit, including a bee species identification chart, to introduce and explain their fundraising campaign.

Print offers an opportunity to present your brand, product or campaign information, which in turn helps to lay the groundwork for follow-up activity.

- **Mix up your goals**

Do not attempt to drive the same response from your customer with each successive door drop. Over the course of a campaign, consider driving a carefully calculated mix of brand-building and immediate response, deeper campaign information and time-sensitive offers.

- **Calculate your break-even point**

Use your campaign budget and your average customer value to calculate how much you can spend per mailer and when you expect to gain positive ROI.

- **Design all activity as part of a long-term plan**

Your door drop will deliver best results if you design it with a other media in mind.

Map your customer journey out over a full year (or other lifecycle appropriate to your business) – and integrate your door drop activity with your marketing across other channels.

This will allow you to develop a more effective, sophisticated customer journey and take advantage of opportunities such as specific buying points throughout the year.

Defining objectives: get SMART

- Marketing goals should always be SMART

Specific

Measurable

Achievable (or aspirational)

Realistic

Time-related (or timely)

For example, your SMART marketing objective might be:

- Recruit 10,000 new customers over the next six months at a cost per acquisition of £40



General objectives

- **Door drops are likely to be more useful when:**
 - You want to reach many households
 - You can identify regional, neighbourhood or even postcode-level audiences
 - You have a home-based message
 - You have information you want your customer to spend time with and consider more deeply
 - You have a relevant offer
- **Door drops support:**
 - Brand development: communicating brand values directly to customers
 - Transactional marketing: immediacy enables businesses to increase sales volumes fast
- **Door drops deliver**
 - Increased customer value: by increasing sales activity through long-term engagement
 - Amplification benefits: where door drops are used in conjunction with other media, such as TV, there is a reciprocal lift in response and awareness

Choosing performance indicators

Setting goals is essential to achieving a successful campaign. To understand the success of your campaign, make sure you track indicators that relate directly to your goals.

- **Basic performance indicators**
 - Total cost
 - Total door drop volume
 - Number of enquiries, registrations or leads
 - Number of sales
 - Web traffic (click-throughs, social media activity)
 - Phone calls
 - Footfall
 - Total income (one-off, or over an agreed time period: one year, three years and so on)
- **Complex performance indicators**

Calculate more complex indicators by combining two or more basic indicators, such as:

 - Response rate (RR%) = Number of responses/number of contacts
 - Conversion rate (CR%) = Number of sales/number of responses
 - Cost per response (CPR) = Total campaign cost/number of responses
 - Cost per lead/enquiry = Total campaign cost/number of leads/enquiries
 - Cost per sale = Total campaign cost/number of sales
 - Average sale value = Total income/number of sales

- **Return on investment**

ROI is used to assess the effectiveness of marketing spend.

Use ROI to evaluate individual campaigns, compare campaigns and compare the results of different marketing activities – for example, door drop versus email marketing.



Campaign timing

- **Plan timing thoroughly**

Irrespective of whether the audience for your campaign is national, regional or local, planning is an essential pre-requisite.

Timing can be crucial for the success for your campaign. Take factors such as seasonality (Christmas, school terms, etc) into consideration.

Door drop specialists can advise you on peak booking times.

Campaign quantities

Defining your campaign quantities will depend on several factors, including:

- **Your campaign goals**

Your quantities should be defined by your campaign goals, such as sales targets or target market share, and based on a realistic forecast of response rates.

For example, if your industry door drop benchmark is a 3% response rate, and your conversion rate from initial enquiry to sale is 10%, then you can expect to need to deliver 10,000 door drops to gain 30 new customers.

- **Your budget and creative ambitions**

Depending on how you wish to pitch your brand and your offer, you might choose to send a large volume of inexpensive door drops, or a much smaller number of premium drops.

For example, winners in the door drop category at the 2015 DMA Awards ranged from The Royal British Legion, which reminded people about those local residents who died during World War One, to Sky's acquisition campaign that teased its exclusive content, offering the 'Whole story for half price'.

- **Precision of targeting**

The better you can refine your targeting to the most relevant areas, streets, businesses or even properties, the less wastage you will need to build into your quantities.

Check that your distributor is able to target as precisely as you need.

Data

Strategy

Using first-rate data is your greatest opportunity to increase the profitability of your door drops. Be imaginative with how you source and how you use your data so you can reach your customer with the right message at the right time and in the right way. Ensure that your door drop is useful and welcomed. Further advice can be found in the DMA Data guide and the DMA GDPR resources including the Consent and Legitimate Interests guide.

Conversely, your effort and spend will be wasted if you do not select the right recipients, or if you pitch your message in the wrong way.

Data should be viewed as the accumulation of information in order to know your customer better. Then you will better know when, how and where to reach them, and with what offer. Without knowing these things, your campaign will be at a disadvantage.



To create the most sophisticated, accurate and productive foundation for your campaign, complete the following tasks:

- **Customer analysis**

Analyse customer data (but at an anonymised non-personal level) to define the characteristics of your target audience.

- **Profiling**

Create detailed profiles of your different customer types. Make these as thorough as possible, including relevant factors such as:

- **Demographic**

- **Age**

- **Interests, daily routines, ambitions, life goals**

- **Purchasing history and shopping behaviour**

- **Marketing preferences**

(Do they visit shops but purchase online? Do they research online before heading in-store? Are they mobile savvy? Do they prefer to be sent product information in print or directed to it online?)

- **Lifestage**

(Single, married, children, retired, unemployed, empty-nester, etc...)

- **Use of technology**

(Smartphone user? social media user? Prefers desktop to smartphone, etc...)

- **Other relevant or complementary products your customer will typically own? Or rival products?**

- **Accommodation**

(Tenant, first-time buyer, second home owner, family house owner, downsizer, etc...)

- **Geodemographic information**

The same customer profile may respond differently according to where they live and work, so understand regional factors and trends.

- **Market analysis**

Understand how your brand and offer fit into your customer's perception of the market.

For example, your strategy (and your customer's reaction to you) will be heavily influenced by whether you are the market leader, local leader, challenger brand or start-up.

When assessing competition, do not just look at other companies that produce a rival service. Also consider other demands on your customer's attention and wallet. For example, if you sell insurance then you will be in competition with your customer's lifestyle – their temptation to spend disposable income on enjoying life now. Understanding this interplay allows you to do address it.

- **Research**

Consider using market research to learn about your customer's view of the world and the opportunities for your offer.

Research can give you real insight into how your customer thinks and acts: what they think of the category or the market; what behaviours drive their consideration and purchase; how important is an offer is to their purchase decision and so on.

- **Propensity modelling**

Propensity modelling scores your prospects against several different criteria, and helps you understand who is most likely to respond to your offer or make a purchase. You can then identify and concentrate your campaign on these segments.



- **Econometric modelling**

Econometric modelling allows you to separate the effects of multiple promotions in a multi-channel campaign. For example, weighting the impact of advertising mail, email, TV and search marketing within a single multi-media campaign.

- **Targeting and segmentation**

With the right customer profiling and the right data, targeting and segmentation will be the logical next step, and should prove indispensable to organise your campaign and get the right offer to the right demographic.

- **Further information**

See general guidance on all of these aspects in the *DMA Data guide*.

Campaign data

Always consider your door drop as part of a meaningful, useful one-to-one relationship with each individual customer – not just as a numbers game.

- **Start with high-quality, precise data**

Rather than delivering your door drop to every house, consider finding and using data to target particular areas or streets that are most likely to generate a positive response.

If you have no personal data on your customers, it's still possible to target your message based on factors such as location, type of house, whether they have a garden, local events and so on.

This will reduce the proportion of door drops that will be unappreciated and therefore wasted, and allow you to concentrate on those more likely to receive your message positively.

For example, if you sell picnic paraphernalia and there is a big local fête happening, you might produce a door drop promoting picnic food, sunhats, flowers and so on - relevant products or services.

- **Define targeting levels**

Different geographic areas will have different concentrations of your target audience. Rank areas by potential value and identify the cut-off point at which the percentage of good prospects is too low to make your campaign either successful or appropriate.

Define your targeting rules based on factors such as:

- The relevance of your message. For example, an offer for a local supermarket might appeal to a wide range of demographics, but the promotion of a more specialist product or service will need to be more carefully targeted
- Regional attributes such as drive time, housing stock, age or economic profile
- ROI per item, and forecast by audience
- The availability of higher concentrations of good prospects. If there are enough areas with a high percentage of potential customers, you might be able to achieve your campaign goals and keep a low tolerance for mis-targeted drops
- Any customer irritation or brand damage could come from marketing too much to the wrong people

- **Set realistic targets**

In practice it is relatively difficult to achieve near-100% penetration of households in a target area. Some households may have opted out of receiving door drops, for example. Allow for a margin of undeliverable addresses when setting your quantities and targets.

- **Check distributor's delivery levels**

Check what percentage of households your distributor is able to deliver to within your target area, and work with them to set realistic goals.



Targeting

Door drops are one of the most precisely targetable and accountable media available.

Different messages can be sent to different geographical areas and customised to match the relevant demographic audience. Take advantage of the opportunity to hone your message, improve your response rates and reduce wastage.

Make profiles of your existing customers, or define your target market and identify areas with the characteristics you want.

- **Key targeting systems used to target door drops:**

- **Geography**

- TV regions
- Radio catchments
- Government boundaries
- Sub-sector
- Bespoke catchment

- **Consumer classifications**

- Acorn –by CACI
- Cameo –by CallCredit
- Mosaic –by Experian
- Personix –by Acxiom

- **Gravity models**

- Grocery catchments
- Retail centre catchments
- Leisure catchments

- **Census counts**

- Age
- Ethnic origin
- Social grade
- Occupation
- Family composition



Sourcing relevant data

Royal Mail and other data suppliers offer various files that could dramatically improve your door drop targeting and so relevance, response and ROI.

Data suppliers can also help you build a bespoke list to support your specific goals.

Find a data supplier

Visit the DMA member directory to find a list of reputable data suppliers:

http://dma.org.uk/connect/connect_type/organisation/group_type/2/group_2/38

Your Choice and opt out services

- *Your Choice* by the DMA allows householders to opt-out of receiving unwanted unaddressed mail. For further details of the *Your Choice* service, visit: dma.org.uk/sectors/d2d-choice.asp
- Other suppliers offer their own consumer opt out services. Ask your service provider to understand how they incorporate consumer opt out requests into their delivery services.

Creative

Writing the creative brief

A great brief is essential if you want to create great work.

Your brief should include:

- Clear project goals
- Definition of the creative need
- The scope and limits of the project
- What is to be done
- The project budget
- Include anything to feed the creative solution, such as product information, competitor information, specific requirements, other marketing activity around the brand or product particularly relating to how your advertising mail piece will fit with other activity and previous activity, and the broader brand and product strategies and positioning

The creative response will articulate HOW your goals will be achieved.

Parts of a door drop

A door drop can be anything from a simple leaflet to luxury pack – it all depends on your budget, goals and imagination.

Standard parts of a printed communication may include:



- **Leaflet/insertion**

Your door drop is likely, but doesn't have to be, a leaflet. It may include something that your customer might stick on the fridge, pass on to someone else or otherwise use separately to your letter. Leaflets with multiple pages give you the chance to include additional product or service information and justifications for any purchase decision.

- **Outer envelope**

The first thing that your target will see. Your envelope must stand out from the rest of the mail enough to encourage someone to open it. Relevance is how to stop your customer discarding it unopened.

- **Letter**

A direct communication to your target. This is for your strongest sales argument. The part of your door drop that persuades.

The sales letter replaces any conversation you might have with your customer if you could be there in person or spoke to them over the phone.

The best sales letters work because they focus relentlessly on the needs and motivations of the reader – not those of the product manager, managing director or copywriter.

- **Call to action**

Consider your call to action carefully. You might ask your customer to go online to find out more information, send something back via a return envelope, or take a voucher into a local store.

Make sure that your call to action is simple, logical, positive and rewarding. And that it is realistic – for example, that you have provided an appropriate timeframe in which to redeem a voucher.

- **Reply device**

Typically, a reply device could be a pre-paid envelope, card, voucher or similar for your customer to use or post back to you.

This is the most functional element in a pack but can be crucial to the success or failure of the pack as a whole.

Creative opportunities

The art of selling is a mixture of creating desire and overcoming objections, fears and doubts. A door drop offers a myriad of creative opportunities to help you achieve all of this in a compelling way.

- **Doormat impact**

Use colour, copy, images, font, size and format to capture your customer's attention

- **Keep your brand paramount**

Brand recognition should be almost instantaneous on both the front and back of your door drop, as the item can land either way up on the doormat.

- **Do one job at a time**

Do not try to force your door drop to do too many things. Do one thing well. Considering the ease and effectiveness of using door drops to drive people online or in-store, design it as a single step in your customer's journey and ensure that it sets up the next step as successfully as possible.

- **Start simple and stay relevant**

Amidst the creative opportunities available to you in door drops, always ensure that your message is both clear and relevant.

The right message to the right person at the right time will always win. Make sure you get the substance right before you get carried away with style.

Your creative does not need to be wacky or expensively produced to work – just relevant and appropriate.



- **Tell a story**

Door drops give you the space to grab your customer's attention and tell a, finely-tuned and engagingly-presented story. This is its stand-out strength.

People are hard-wired to want and respond to stories. People need stories in order to give themselves and others a real, emotionally-rewarding reason to buy.

Use door drops to interest your customer with your most compelling brand or product story, such as:

- Where does your product come from?
- Who invented it?
- How long has it been around?
- What makes it different?
- What kind of company makes it?

- **Aim to stand out creatively**

Think about how you can reward your customer with a really engaging, entertaining creative experience.

- **Be useful**

Most well-received marketing is often not perceived as marketing at all. Rather, your customer is delighted to receive something that has a real practical or entertainment value.

For example, your door drop might be a calendar, restaurant guide, activity pack or useful homecare information – something that positions your brand as a trusted adviser.

- **Use its physical attributes**

A door drop is an exciting and unusual channel because of its physical attributes, and the way it can 'live' anywhere your customer chooses to take it, whether around or outside their house.

Be imaginative and consider the opportunities. Can you tell your customer where, how and when to use your door drop for maximum effect? Perhaps giving it a useful function, rather than something to be read-and-recycled?

For example, you might send something that is useful when stuck on their fridge, placed in their wardrobe, displayed in their workplace, kept in their wallet, redeemed on their way to work or shared once they get to work.

- **Use special offers**

Door drops are traditionally successful when they include special offers.

Think about including a voucher that can be redeemed in-store, or a discount code to be used online.

Make your offer time-limited to provoke action.

- **Reward and inform**

Customers respond positively to information that is relevant and useful to them.

In research, customers welcome mail that is informative (76%) or includes a special offer (75%). They are also particularly positive towards printed communications from companies they already shop with (61%).

(Source: BMRB 2010)

- **Make your doordrop worth keeping**

26% of customers sometimes keep advertising mail for future reference and a door drop can be equally as useful to keep.

(Source: DMA infographic [From letterbox to inbox](#), 2013)

This longevity is particular to printed media, and could be useful to consider when you define your goals and



Campaign creation



performance measures, as responses can sometimes occur weeks or months later.

Think about how you can make your door drop feel like something that should be kept, not thrown away.

For example, Booths Supermarkets delivered a door drop comprised of a luxury cookbook. But they only delivered it to streets where every single house was a target customer, and then only to people who answered the door in person. This allowed them to use a door drop as a premium, personal and profitable campaign that elevated brand perception and awareness more effectively than an untargeted leaflet drop would have done.

- **Use all five senses**

Consider the touch, smell, taste and even sounds possible with your door drop as well as the obvious visual opportunities. For example:

- **Touch**

Use of different paper textures or media to achieve particular effects.

- **Taste**

Include food product samples or promotional sweets.

- **Smell**

Use a scratch-and-sniff or peel-off patch to for smells or to trigger memories.

- **Sound**

You can now include a radio frequency chip in a printed piece so your customer can tune in to those sounds designed for them. You might find this appropriate when promoting a premium product to a very precisely targeted, high-value audience.

- **Video**

Video packs that play a sound a video showreel are dropping in price. They remain a premium product, but are becoming increasingly accessible.

- **Sight**

The design of your door drop will be vital if it is to be read in the first place. Make sure you use an experienced designer to make your item stand out, appeal and inspire your customer to take action.

Consider whether a more tactile, more costly, but brilliantly finished door drop might give a greater return compared to a cheaper product with less impact.

- **Stay on brand**

If your customer believes in your organisation but receives a substandard door drop, it could damage their perception of your brand. Stay on brand for your customer to trust you.

- **Always consider brand-building aspects**

Whilst door drops are effective at driving direct response, a good response rate can still be in single figures. Consider the job your door drop will perform for those customers who, for whatever reason, decide not to take your offer.

Make sure you consider longer-term goals such as brand-building and awareness, and understand that a door drop seen today can have a real positive or negative effect on a purchasing decision made much later, perhaps online or in-store.

- **Test and learn**

Never stop testing. What works for one campaign might not be as effective for the next, particularly if you target the same customers.

Only test one variant at a time to avoid clouding results.

Test different factors over time including creative approaches, formats and other important elements.

Eye-tracking research may show how customers engage with your design



- **Understand production opportunities**

Existing and emerging production methods can unlock creative opportunities.

For example, it might be equally efficient to print your door drop in full colour as monochrome. Always ask your production team what's possible.

- **Consult your mailing house**

Your mailing house can help to make your door drops as exciting and rewarding as possible. They see thousands of different door drop ideas every year and will be able to improve your campaign.

Consult early in the creative process to find out what opportunities exist. Whilst your door drop should still be led by the idea not the execution, an unusual technique might help turn a good idea into a truly brilliant execution.

Extra features are likely to increase the cost of your door drop – but it might not be as prohibitive as you think. Always ask before ruling out a good idea – and consider production cost against any anticipated increase in ROI that you think a more creative approach might bring, especially if you are able to target very precisely.

- **Take practical limitations into account**

Whilst design possibilities are endless, you will need to work with your production and delivery partners to understand all practical requirements and limitations before you complete your design.

- **Consider delivery**

Whether you decide to deliver your door drop on its own (a solus), or with other marketers' material, can have important design and price ramifications.

Recall and impact will be partially dependent on these delivery choices.

If you want a design that is larger or heavier than standard formats, tell you distributor so you can understand their limitations.

Copywriting for doordrops

Central elements in your door drop will be attention-grabbing headlines, sales letters and calls-to-action. Writing letters for door drops is often described as a cross between art and science. The following guidelines will help.

Copy checklist

- **Focus on relevance**

Understand what interests your audience, what is relevant to them. Write from their perspective, not yours. Make your letter as long as it needs to be. Write as much as you need to. Then stop.

- **Put your best offer first**

Make your main offer clear in the headline. Use the word 'You'. Try not to use 'we', 'our' or 'us', which do not address your customer's needs.

- **Sell the benefits**

Bring to life the outcomes of buying your product or service. Focus on the benefits it offers, not just the features.

- **Highlight key information**

Use bold, italics, underlining or even highlight text to make the benefits stand out.

- **Craft your call-to-action**

End your letter with a call to action such as 'buy online today' or 'ring me now'. Make clear what your prospect needs to do now, and repeat it at appropriate points during your letter.



- **Use postscripts**
Use a P.S. to repeat your offer, main benefit or proposition. People scanning your letter will almost always read the headline and the P.S. first.
- **Be conversational, relaxed**
Use natural language. Start sentences with 'and' if it works. Use abbreviations like 'let's', 'don't', 'can't' and 'shouldn't', which make your letter seem friendlier. Write like you would to a friend with good news.
- **Maintain brand tone and voice**
Ensure that your concept and tone are consistent with those used in the other elements of your campaign.
- **Critique your work thoroughly and honestly**
Read your letter aloud. If it sounds pompous or stilted, revise it.
- **Ask other people to critique your copy**
Listen to feedback. Remember that you write to be persuasive and relevant for your customer. The fresh perspective of others is as important as your own.
- **Get everything sense-checked and proof-read.**
The occasional mistake is inevitable. Make sure someone who understands the project and has an impeccable eye for proof-reading checks your copy. It will save you time, embarrassment and money.
- **Develop a proven working process**
If you create multiple subtle variations of your mailer, complete one before producing the others. As changes and amends are made, it is much more time-consuming and error-prone to try to apply them across several versions. Get as much of your copy and design agreed as possible before producing iterations.

Design for doordrops

The most important single rule for door drop design is that it is there to support the copy and to encourage your customer to read all the way through.

Design checklist

- **Entice your customer to read**
Consider how you can use an interesting image, design or format to encourage your customer to pick up the door drop, read it and feel they can trust it.
- **Make your copy easy to scan, skim and read**
The average reader scans first, then skims, then reads.
Make sure your design highlights key points that will encourage your customer to read the whole letter.
Emphasise important elements, such as the call to action and response mechanisms.
- **Avoid elements that make your copy hard to read**
Avoid confusing elements such as decorative typefaces, reversing out (ie. white on black), low-contrast colour combinations, centred type and so on.
- **Be relevant**
Remember that success is less about standing out and more about being relevant and timely. Present a compelling offer at the moment your customer is in the right place to consider and appreciate it.
- **Consult your production team or door drop supplier**
Make sure to develop your design in consultation with your production team so that it can be realised exactly how you wish.



See the *Production* section of this guide for more detailed guidance.

- **Get feedback from others**

Ask for objective opinions from others – some who know your product and some who do not. Your door drop supplier will have experience of working with many brands and will be able to give you practical guidance and support.

- **Always get your artwork proofed before printing**

Always get someone with fresh eyes to check your final artwork thoroughly before you send it to production – reprints are hugely costly, wasteful and embarrassing!

Testing and campaign development

Successful door drop campaigns rely on testing and analysis.

1. Start with an idea or a concept to test
2. Analyse the results
3. Use analysis to identify what has worked and what has not
4. Improve execution
5. Test revised approach
6. Repeat your testing cycle again

Testing creative

Testing involves comparing different marketing approaches to identify the one that generates the best return.

Differences between variables may be **large**, such as two completely different versions of a door drop, or small, such as different versions of a headline.

- **Test the big things first**

Consider testing several different approaches at the start of a campaign, when you have little insight as to which approach will work best.

The most important things to test, initially, are likely to be:

- Concept
- Offer

- **Refine treatment subsequently**

Once you are confident you have found the right campaign and offer for the right customers, begin to test refinements to your door drop, particularly:

- Creative messaging and execution
- Response mechanism

- **Use a 'control' version**

Designate one approach as your preferred or 'control' treatment. Use this as your benchmark, against which to test other iterations.

Choose your control to be the version you consider to perform the best, based on the experience of you and your team.



- **The golden rule: never test more than one thing at a time**

Only change one thing at a time. Otherwise you will struggle to measure what has caused the changes that you see. Test your most important, fundamental hypotheses first.

- **Test rationally, not randomly**

Do not run tests for the sake of it. Have a strong, rational hypothesis for why a new version might improve your results. Make sure that the test isolates and measures the impact of this change.

For example, if your call-to-action is in red text because you believe it will stand out and increase a sense of urgency, then test this. You might introduce an image with a person in it on the grounds that it will encourage empathy and so a friendlier feel.

- **Find easy wins**

Look for easy wins by testing alternative elements within a standard door drop, such as headlines or introductory paragraphs, BEFORE you decide to completely rework the item.

- **Test against other marketing channels**

In multi-channel campaigns, assessing the impact of each channel is essential to campaign performance analysis.

Make sure you understand how your customer navigates the various media you use, and determine how much of your final transaction value can be attributed to door drops versus your other media channels.

Build multivariate testing models so that you can identify customers who, for example, have seen your door drop before responding online, or explore what happens if you do not use a door drop in a certain area.

Use classic regression analysis to add value to your door drop testing.

The importance of robust test design

- **Conduct all testing in accordance with basic statistical principles**

- Each sample (cell) must be drawn RANDOMLY from your target audience. This means every potential test recipient has an equal chance of selection. If your selection is not random, results will be skewed and your results unreliable
- Each cell must be large enough to provide a meaningful result. Set your test cell size depending on the response level you expect. If you anticipate a lower response, you will need a larger cell size to deliver meaningful results compared to a higher response rate

Response tracking and measurement

- **Devise a suitable tracking method**

Response tracking is the process of allocating responses to specific marketing activities.

At its simplest, you can insert a code to accompany the response. This way you can marry the code to the person, and start to find patterns in the returns. Anything that identifies the testing segment is the bare minimum for response analysis.

- **Plan data capture thoroughly before testing**

Determine how you will capture response information to ensure you collect the insight you need.

- **Use appropriate data capture methods**

- **Physical response capture**

At its most basic, this is a postcard or another physical response that your customer brings back to you, for example by mail, in-store or to an event. Make sure you know the respective code to show which audience has responded.



Campaign creation



- **Online or by phone**

Capture responses by asking your customer to hand over the response code digitally, by hand or verbally.

- **Optical character reading**

The response carries a code, such as bar code or QR code, that can be scanned in-store or by your response handling team.

- **Matchback**

Responses are captured and matched to your database using software to compare names and addresses to understand whether the response is from a new or existing customer.

- **Inference**

You might use inference – the assumption that if a particular customer received a specific door drop and subsequently bought the product promoted. Inference would link the door drop to the purchase.

- **Track uplift in other media**

Track changes in website and social traffic, physical footfall, enquiries and sales. This builds a picture of your campaign impact.

Door drops are often kept by customers, and responses may be generated months after your campaign has completed. Consider how to measure this behaviour. Only analysing short-term response data could result in incorrect channel attribution.

- **Measure in real-time**

You no longer need to wait until a campaign is over to measure results. Real-time data can help you assess and alter your campaign as it happens, just as you would in a digital medium.

- **Weigh longer-term response factors**

Whilst your door drop will drive immediate responses, you should also test and measure the longer-term effects of your door drop on your brand and business.

Door drops have a long-tail effect. Your item might be kept by your customer for use months later, used when they are ready to buy.

Measure:

- Long-term impact on sales of door drops
- Brand impact of door drops – take brand metrics before and after your campaign

Benchmarking

Benchmarking will help measure the things you are doing well, and those you are doing not so well.

Benchmarking compares your door drop processes and performance to known best practice results from your own organisation or industry, or from appropriate other industries.

- **Use benchmarking to guide your business**

Businesses that benchmark know where they need to invest to improve results.

Your results will be more than keeping score. Use these results as signposts to continuous improvement and bottom-line success.

- **Benchmark in context**

Use your marketing results to understand how your business is doing in context, including:

- **Other channels**

Compare your door drop results with other channels that share similar objectives



Campaign creation



- **Competitors**
Compare with similar products, audiences and channels
- **Historical data**
How your business performed previously
- **Benchmarking methods**
You can benchmark using a range of methods, such as:
 - Formal audit
 - Estimate how other businesses perform
 - Market research to determine average and extreme performance levels for your particular product type, customer base, region, business size or other factors aligned to your business goals
 - Set achievable best practice targets for each indicator in your business sector
- **Benchmarking measures**
Key measures you should consider benchmarking include:
 - Response rate
 - Cost per sale
 - Conversion rate



Environmentally responsible campaigns

Environmentally responsible print design

- **Target as precisely as possible**
Excellent targeting drives environmental and commercial performance.
Mis-targeted door drops are inevitably a waste.
Work hard with data to keep mis-targeted door drops to a minimum.
- **Consult your door drop or print specialist**
Select the print options with the least environmental impact for your campaign.
- **Use design to minimise wastage**
Choose the minimum page size and page numbers for your communication.
Test different formats and paginations to find the greatest efficiency.
- **Avoid excess packaging**
Avoid excessive packaging, although it's important to keep your messages safe from damage.
- **Use efficient formats**
Choose efficient formats for printing, minimising 'trimming' waste at source.
- **Avoid ink-heavy designs**
Try communications that minimise the use of ink.
Using less ink is not only more environmentally friendly, it also means using less energy.
- **Encourage customer to re-use**
Even better than asking your customer to recycle is to create a door drop that they will pass on to others.
WaterAid do this, asking their supporters to share after reading.
- **Encourage recycling**
Ensure that your door drops always carry a message and/or logos encouraging your customer to recycle.

Recyclability: paper and materials

- **Use recyclable materials**
Select materials that can be easily recycled at the kerbside by the majority of UK local authorities.
- **Avoid mixing materials**
Use single materials so the item can be placed into one household recycling container.
Mixed materials are more difficult to sort and recycle and are more likely to end up in landfill, even if the component materials could be individually recyclable.
- **Only use certified sustainable paper mills**
Source all paper from paper mills that operate an environmental management system to BS EN ISO 14001 and/or Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) standards.
- **Only use non-chlorinated bleaching methods**
Use paper that has been bleaching using non-chlorinated methods.



Specified for use are:

- Elemental Chlorine Free (ECF)
- Processed Chlorine Free (PCF)
- Total Chlorine Free (TCF) – including oxidising and reductive bleaching
- **Use recycled paper**
Any paper that you use, including envelopes, contents and inserts, should contain:
 - Recycled fibre from recovered waste paper
AND/OR
 - Virgin fibre sourced from a forest certification scheme approved by Central Point of Expertise on Timber Procurement (CPET)

For more information on CPET, visit:

www.cpet.org.uk/

- **Ensure wrapping meets OPRL**
Do not use plastic envelopes or polywraps that do not meet the requirements of the On Pack Recycling Label (OPRL) scheme, and display the OPRL logo.
- **Do not use rubber-based adhesives**
Avoid using rubber-based adhesives in any part of your door drop.

Recyclability: ink and finishes

- **Lamination**
Printed pieces should not use laminate finishes.
- **UV finishes**
Printed pieces should not use ultra-violet finishes.

Proofing and proof-reading

One major cause of reprints is small but crucial mistakes or typos in the content. A re-print of your project will eat heavily into your ROI and is also extremely wasteful.

- **Use professional proofreaders**
Ensure that you have a proofer who understands the content of your door drop – and then use a professional proofreader or sub-editor before you go to print.

It may seem like an additional expense but typos and factual errors occur during the pressure of campaign development. Proofreading is a very small investment compared to the cost, delays, trouble and environmental cost of re-printing.
- **Ensure rigorous production proofing**
Your production supplier should have rigorous proofing processes at every stage to ensure that everything is exactly as you want it to be.

You must make sure that you have someone, preferably more than one person, who is knowledgeable, available to proof your door drop whenever asked and who is responsible for the accuracy of the final product.



Recycling statements

- **Include a recycling statement on all printed marketing**

Display the 'Recycle Now' logo and/or statement to encourage your customer to recycle.

The following are examples of statements that could be included on printed communications:

'Reusing is even better than recycling. Please pass me on to someone else once you've read me. Thank you!'

'I'm on a mission to spread the word about [benefit] – please pass me on to someone else once you've read me.'

'Please recycle this communication when you have finished with it.'

'Please recycle me.'

'Read, Respond, Recycle!'

Recycling logos

- **Use a recycling logo on printed materials**

There are multiple campaigns to promote recycling in the United Kingdom.

Use logos commonly associated with recycling to increase the chances of your door drop being recycled.

These logos can be used on their own without any additional message.

- **Recycle Now**

Recycle Now encourages more people to recycle more things more often, and to understand the positive benefits of these actions.

For further information, visit:

www.recyclenow.com

- **Downloadable logos**

partners.wrap.org.uk

- **Zero Waste Scotland**

Zero Waste Scotland promotes the reduction, reuse and recycling of household waste in Scotland.

For further information, visit:

www.zerowastescotland.org.uk

- **Waste Awareness Wales**

Waste Awareness Wales provides information to the public about managing resources more sustainably and reducing waste.

For further information, visit:

www.wasteawarenesswales.org.uk

Mailing house environmental management

Your mailing house should maintain an Environmental Management System (EMS) that broadly conforms to the ISO14001 standard, including:

- **Documentation**

Documentation setting out your commitment to environmental management.

- **Baselines**

Your baselines for environmental performance.



- **Compliance controls**
Identification of appropriate environmental legislation and other environmental requirements.
Documentation describing the controls that you have in place to ensure compliance with these.
- **Targets**
Environmental objectives, targets and programmes.
- **Checks**
Regular and systematic checks of compliance and performance against targets, and implementation of appropriate corrective action.
- **Reviews**
Review of commitments and targets by senior management of the organisation.
- **Meet all environmental responsibilities**
Supply of services that meet all the requirements under the *Recyclability, Procurement and use of paper products* and *Inks and finishes* sections above.
- **Sub-contractor controls**
Appropriate controls to ensure that sub-contractors fully meet the specifications of your scheme and provide auditable evidence that the provision of their services is fully compliant.
- **Sub-contractor compliance**
All print preparation and mailing house activities outsourced to external suppliers should be placed with suppliers that have ISO14001 certification.

Distribution

Many door drop suppliers, such as Royal Mail, offer sustainable door drop services, which provide advice and guidance on creating sustainable door drop items and carbon offsetting.



Campaign delivery



Printing

Key printing decisions

- **Paper quality**
You need to consider the type of paper you will use – its weight, finish (coated or non-coated) and overall quality and feel.
- **Paper size**
Flat size (pre-printed) and finished size.
- **Finishing required**
Including folding die-cuts, perforations, gluing, lamination, saddle stitching and other processes.
- **Colours**
The number of colours you select will influence both cost and final result.

You can select from single, two-colour, full colour or special colours such as metallic, spot or fluorescent, as well as varying colours for front and back covers of a brochure.
- **Proofing**
A small error in production can force a costly, wasteful re-print, causing delays and compromising your campaign ROI.

Make sure that you are fully involved and available to your production team at every stage. If something is not right you must change it as soon as possible or costs will escalate.

Materials

- **Consider materials thoroughly at design stage**
All machines will have a preferred material specification of size, paper weight, tolerances, type of envelopes and so on.

In all circumstances check with your production suppliers before you commit to your design.

Standard paper sizes

- **Paper sheets**
 - A6 105mm x 148mm
 - A5 148mm x 210mm
 - A4 210mm x 297mm
 - A3 297mm x 420mm

Standard envelope sizes

- **Wallets**
 - C6 114mm x 162mm
 - Oversize C5 162mm x 238mm
 - C5 162mm x 229mm
 - C4 229mm x 324mm
 - Oversize DL 114mm x 229mm
 - DL 110mm x 220mm



Laser sheet sizes

- **Laser printing (standard/common specifications)**

| Maximum sheet size | | Min/max paper weights |
|--------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Flat sheet | A4: 216mm x 355mm | |
| | A3: 363mm x 432mm | 80gsm - 200 gsm |
| Continuous fanfold | 355mm (drop) 457mm (width) | 70/80gsm - 160gsm |
| Reel to reel | Unlimited x 457mm wide | 70/80gsm - 160gsm |

Printing methods

Different projects will suit different printing methods or may require a combination of techniques.

Discuss these options with your chosen supplier at an early stage in planning so you can get your campaign development and scheduling right.

As with most other machine processes, different printers have a preferred range of specifications.

Apart from paper size, such things as direction of grain, weight of paper, surface and porosity are all important. Pre-print process used may also be critical, particularly if other special processes are involved, such as scratch-off panels. Some can print on the reverse of the page in the same pass and some can print in multi-colours.

Some key options are:

- **Litho**

Lithographic (litho) printing is high-quality printing and particularly efficient for higher-volume runs of 500 or more identical pieces.

- **Digital**

Digital printing offers you the chance to tailor printed items. For example, a national brand could include a local map showing the customer's nearest branch; add customisation, such as branch telephone numbers or regional offers; or even dynamically tailor a campaign using completely different content according to potential geodemographical customer preferences.

- **Laser**

Laser printers create an image on the paper in a manner similar to photocopiers.

There is a wide range of such printers available, using either flat sheet, fanfold or reels of stationery.

Laser printers often print a full page of text at a time, irrespective of how much information the page contains. It is common for a page to contain some preprint and for laser text to fit in and be 'justified' within the preprint. However, this is by no means the only technique available and clients are advised to discuss their requirements with their supplier at an early stage.

- **Sheet-fed or continuous**

Sheet-fed printers work with standard-sized individual sheets of paper, whilst continuous-feed machines print onto a roll of paper that is subsequently guillotined to size.

Each method has its advantages of speed, economy and creative opportunity.

Make sure that you understand the options at planning stage so that you can define the right balance between creativity, economy, speed, potential regulatory requirements and any other aspects of your campaign.



If using envelopes

There are several key considerations around your choice of envelope that can influence other aspects of your door drop.

- **Plan early**

Plan the envelopes you wish to use along with the rest of the creative to make best use of creative opportunities.

- **Be creative**

The envelope is the first thing your customer will see, representing an important creative opportunity:

- How can you make packaging as appealing as the content within?
- How can you increase the number of customers who open your door drop?
- How should your brand be identified and represented?

- **Avoid production issues**

There are various production considerations that you should plan around. Consult with your mailing house or door drop supplier during the design stage to ensure you can achieve what you want within budget.

For example:

- Will the envelope successfully hold the content – including any inserts?
- Will the envelope meet your distribution budget?
- Will you need a window envelope?
- Is it better to use an off-the-shelf envelope or a bespoke one?
- Will you be printing onto the envelope – and what requirements does this add?
- How will you enclose the envelopes?

- **Design and production considerations**

- Select envelope paper stock that will stand up to the rigours of the process, from enclosing to doormat, considering the size and weight of the contents
- When using window envelopes, make sure you have the right content, for example 'The Occupier', can be clearly seen even if the contents move up or down or to one side
- Expect to pay only for the number of envelopes you receive. However, when getting envelopes specially manufactured, allow for a tolerance of +/- 10% the quantity you order

- **Client responsibilities**

The client is responsible for ensuring that:

- Sufficient envelopes are ordered to meet the minimum mailing requirements. Considering the manufacturer's tolerance, set-up possible spoilage factors, plus a further allowance if overprinting stock envelopes
- All dimensions of the envelopes ordered are correct and have been accepted by the mailing house
- Sufficient time for the manufacturing process
- Proof copies sent and checked, and to pay the costs of proofing
- The surface and texture of envelopes can be overprinted with the process chosen, to the level of quality required and that advice is taken from the manufacturer if necessary
- Size, shape and design of the chosen envelope is within your distributor's service tolerance

Should production difficulties occur as a result of the client not observing the above, then the client should be



responsible for any delays and/or additional costs that may occur.

- **Envelope manufacturer responsibilities**

The manufacturer is responsible for:

- Providing technical advice to the client, if requested, and for advising the client of any incompatibilities, inconsistencies or other manufacturing problems that may arise as a result of the client's instructions
- Delivering the agreed minimum quantity of finished envelopes, after taking account of industry agreed variations
- Ensuring that all finished envelopes are boxed, or palletised if of sufficient quantity; that palletised material is secured; and that contents are identified and quantified
- At no extra charge, make good any shortfall on agreed minimum quantities or on material found to be faulty during later processes

Enclosing

- **Machine enclosing**

Machine enclosing allows huge volumes of door drops to be enclosed easily and efficiently at high speed.

Work with your mailing house to ensure that your door drop fits the requirements of their enclosing machinery.

- **Hand enclosing**

Hand enclosing techniques tend to be used for items that will not go through enclosing machinery, or that involve the enclosing of bulky or variable items, or for particularly small batches such as re-makes of items that were removed from the main production run due to issues with quality or addressing.

Hand enclosing may be carried out on-site or through a managed team of homeworkers as long as there are confidentiality and process agreements in place.

- **Polywrapping**

Most considerations for conventional paper enclosing also apply to polythene enclosing. Frequently, the same supplier will offer both services.

There are, however, some additional considerations:

- Orientation of inserts – landscape or portrait?
- What effect will the final fold have?
- Will cross or reverse hoppers be required?
- Is reverse seal required?
- What weight and type of film will be used?
- What are the sealing requirements?
- Is the film to be printed? If it is, then will this be through continuous print or registered print?
- Who supplies the film?
- Who supplies the origination?

Discuss your project with your mailing house or door drop supplier at an early stage to identify your best option.

It is the client's responsibility to ensure that all materials conform to an agreed technical specification and to accept any additional cost that may be caused by non-conformity.

Where the client has contracted supply to the mailing house, the responsibilities fall to the mailing house.



One-piece door drops

One-piece mailers are printed on a single sheet of paper and then folded and glued – forming a letter and envelope in one, typically sealed using a tear-off strip.

These can offer efficiencies and creative benefits for suitable mailings:

- **Creative possibilities**

Because the mailer is folded from one sheet, even the envelope is fully printable in full colour.

- **Helps personalisation and relevance**

Every part of a one-piece mailer can be customised, from the envelope to the specific content, offers and information within.

Work with your mailing house to explore possibilities to improve the relevance and ultimately the ROI of your door drop such as adding more precise local information or offers to each batch.

- **Environmentally efficient**

Without the need for separate envelopes, plastic windows, staples or other materials, one-piece mailers can be more environmentally sustainable to manufacture, and can be more easily recycled.

- **Speed of production**

Produced in one process, one-piece mailers can lead to more efficient production.



Production process

When planning your door drop campaign, take into account the equipment that your chosen mailing house uses and make sure that it is capable of handling your project in the way you plan. Do this at an early stage, before you finalise designs.

Your mailing house may need or wish to subcontract some processes so make sure that you understand and approve this during contract negotiations.

Production schedule and lead times

- **Agree schedule**

Agree a mailing schedule with your supplier that allows time for all processes to take place consecutively and logically.

- **Allow margins for each process**

As some processes operate faster than others, take care when using an overlapping timetable to ensure that one process is not out of step with the others.

Build a margin for error into timings and manage stakeholder expectations. You do not want to rush production to meet deadlines.

- **Allow sufficient print drying time**

Give enough time in your schedule for the pre-print to dry properly, and make a special note where you need infra-red (IR) drying.

In addition to a natural +/- 5% tolerance in production quantities, make allowances for set-up, samples made ready, AB samples, seed names and other process steps.

- **Allow extra time for non-standard production**

Allow plenty of additional time for special production features such as extra finishing, unusual materials, non-standard sizes, additional pack contents and so on.

Client responsibilities

- **Agree realistic schedules**

Make sure that all timescales in your schedule are realistic and achievable. Get your mailing house and other suppliers to confirm they can meet your schedule.

- **Agree technical specifications**

Agree all technical specifications for materials with your mailing house.

- **Supply documentation on time**

Supply all necessary reports, labels and documentation, including a distribution plan/schedule, to support the distribution in good time. Unless you have contracted this responsibility to your door drop partner or mailing house.

- **Provide samples**

Give trim and folding guides, sample enclosing packs and any other instructions needed to your mailing house so it can fulfil its obligations in good time, and so it can advise and evaluate the project.

- **Consult delivery provider**

Before going to production, give your delivery provider a sample of your proposed design to check that it meets their requirements and can be correctly and efficiently delivered.

- **Sign off production samples promptly**

Check and sign off first samples in good time for production to continue as scheduled. Assume any costs if



delays in signing off cause machine downtime.

- **Advise about treatment of overs**

Give instructions on the disposal of overs and the costs associated with their storage or disposal, including the provision of a purchase order to cover the costs.

- **Accept appropriate costs**

Accept any additional costs or delays that might result if you are responsible for late or incorrect deliveries of materials or mailing components.

Accept any additional costs you might incur through using unapproved or damaged materials against best advice.

Accept the costs associated with the recreation of spoils, including any extra postage charges on late recreations.

Door drop supplier/ mailing house responsibilities

- **Examine and approve project elements**

Examine your client's proposed mailing components and how suitable they are to the equipment, and advise on its suitability.

- **Check deliveries**

Check, as far as possible, the accuracy of delivered materials and advise your client of any discrepancies. Ensure that supporting evidence is available.

- **Support schedules**

Maintain agreed production schedules, subject to full compliance by other parties and other contractual disclaimers.

Try to retrieve late production, especially where the situation is due to your failings or those of third parties.

- **Provide production samples**

Provide samples of first-off production to your client for approval, working to examples provided by them.

Make sure that production quality is aligned to approved samples.

- **Complete distribution documentation**

Complete and submit all necessary documentation to the chosen distribution partner.

Label bags, cages and any other containers with details of their contents in line with the distribution partner's specifications.

- **Comply with project release conditions**

Release the door drops only at the time and under the conditions stipulated by your client.

Sign release instructions where required.

- **Provide reporting**

Ensure your client receives proper digital or paper proofs of distribution where available.

Provide daily and/or periodic production statistics.

- **Process spoils promptly**

Recreate and re-process spoils within timescales that minimise any additional costs for processing.

- **Deal with overs**

Give your client a count of overs within seven days of the campaign end.

Deal with overs in accordance with your client's instructions, including confidential destruction if requested.

- **Transport mailing securely**

Arrange suitable and secure transportation of the mailing to any other mailing site, sub-contractor or homemaker's residence, if required.



Quality management

Set-up, proofing and spoils all play a part in mailing house operations.

Give stock levels, timings, recreation and costs particular attention during your negotiations for mailing house services.

Set-up

- **Provide necessary documents**
Deliver all documentation alongside the addressed material.
Give your mailing house all necessary documents, such as bag labels.
- **Label boxes informatively**
The mailing house should expect to receive addressed material boxed, labelled and identified correctly.
Mark all boxes with first and last reference numbers and total quantity.
It is not possible for the checking of 'in box' details, unless first and last figures indicate some anomaly.
- **Check all boxes**
Deliveries should be checked for continuity of boxes, contiguous ranges of sequence number and total quantity.

Proofing

- **Always get proofs**
You should always get proofs from your printer to check that the output is what you expect.
Use the proofing stage to understand and fine-tune how the piece has translated from virtual design to physical product, as well as checking the production quality.
- **Allow proofing time in schedule**
Allow for both materials and time to be used in proofing your output.
- **Expect two stages of proofing**
Proofing will normally consist of two stages:
 - **White paper proofs or PDFs**
For checking text and general positioning.
 - **Printed proofs on finished stationery**
For final positioning, in situ – and for accuracy..
- **Get appropriate stakeholders to sign-off**
At each proofing stage, make sure that all appropriate personnel, including the creative team, have the opportunity to thoroughly examine, adjust and approve proofs before signing off.
- **Expect amends to be charged**
The cost of proofing is normally on a 'per page' basis, although your contract might allow some proofing and amends within the price.
Author's corrections are usually charged extra, but setting errors by your supplier should be corrected and re-proofed at no extra cost.
- **Submit artwork as you want it to be produced**
Although artwork can be re-sized and altered by your printer, it is much better to submit it exactly as you intend it to be produced.
Help your supplier to work with confidence by submitting artwork as 'copy to size', in position, on plain paper.



Samples and testing

- **Provide supplier with samples**

Provide your supplier with pre-print stationery for testing purposes which should be similar to the stationery you wish to use for your project.

Your supplier should then approve the material or flag if the material is unsuitable.

- **Ensure consistency and quality**

Once approved, the party responsible for ordering should make sure that all subsequent deliveries are of the same specification.

- **Note limitations of white paper testing**

White paper testing does not always indicate the overall suitability of the paper, especially where moisture may be added by subsequent colour printing.

- **Provide dummy mailing pack**

Provide your printer with a dummy door drop in order to give them the chance to test it and feedback their comments.

If your printer raises any concerns, work with them and take their advice to find a solution.

If you proceed with your original design against your printer's advice, be prepared to accept any financial, quality, timing or other consequences.

Sign-off and approval

- **Understand your sign-off responsibilities**

You, as the client, should sign off first samples before your printer can begin production, but you may delegate this responsibility to a mailing house representative.

But in either case you must accept responsibility for the output as long as it has been produced in accordance with the sample.

Wastage and spoilage

- **Expect some spoils**

There will be a small percentage of pieces that will be 'spoiled' during production, perhaps through a fault with the materials, or a system glitch.

Understand the acceptable failure rate to which your supplier operates, and ensure this is agreed in your contract.

- **Decide whether to recreate spoils**

You can have spoiled pieces recreated or you can decide it is not worth the expense of recreating them and accept that a few of your door drops will not go out.

If you need the recreation of spoils, arrange this with your mailing house in advance and make sure this is covered in your contract.

Quality control and storage

- **Delivery-checking methods**

There are various methods to check the correct delivery of materials. Choose the method that suits your needs:

- **100% checking**

Check all materials thoroughly.

- **Partial checking**



Campaign delivery



Check a representative selection of materials.

- **Weight checking**

Checking quantities delivered is a labour intensive process, so it is often more efficient to check by weight.

- **Sign unchecked**

Irrespective of the checking level you need, it is normal to sign for deliveries as 'unchecked' on initial receipt and carry out checking later.

- **Understand costs of different checking services**

Expect print suppliers to charge for their time if you want them to check stock deliveries on your behalf. So budget more for 100% checking versus partial checking or weight checking.

- **Expect supplier to report**

Expect your supplier to report back to you after checking, according to your requirements with evidence, such as photographs, of any damage.

If your supplier has taken responsibility for 100% checking and has signed off your materials as complete, they should accept responsibility and make up any shortfall if they have missed any errors.

- **The supplier of your materials should ensure the following:**

- All materials printed with a unique identity code and are free from defects at time of delivery
- All materials labelled with the identity code and quantity and packed securely on pallets capable of being stacked two high
- Pallets do not contain mixed materials
- Boxes are palletised (unless very small quantities) and pallets shrink-wrapped or packaged to meet the delivery company's specifications
- Each pallet should have a pallet card attached that shows, as a minimum:
 - Identity code
 - Description
 - Name of client
 - Number of boxes
 - Total quantity
- Deliveries should be accompanied by a delivery note that shows, as a minimum:
 - Name of client
 - Number of pallets
 - Identity of materials
 - Total quantity
 - Supplier's job number, if available
- Where a supplier uses a pre-booking delivery system, printers and hauliers are advised to use it
- Goods should be insured during transit

- **Have appropriate insurance**

Make sure that your goods are adequately insured whilst on your supplier's premises – whether under your policy or your supplier's.

- **Fit delivery schedule to production schedule**



Wherever possible, arrange deliveries to coincide with your production requirements.

Make sure deliveries are scheduled where repeat deliveries are required throughout a longer campaign.

Scuffing

Door drops are physical, and there will be occasional indentations or marking of items as they pass through machinery.

This applies particularly with unwrapped items that have been produced through digital print.

- **Protect against scuffing**

Consider wrapping your digitally printed items or use an ultra violet (UV) or water-based gloss coating applied to the non-address side of the finished piece. These coatings enhance wear resistance.

Ordering of materials

Where the client contracts the supplier to supply stationery and/or otherwise control the project, certain client responsibilities will pass to the supplier.

Such arrangements should be clearly defined and agreed at the negotiation/contract stage.

Client responsibilities:

- **Overall coordination**

Co-ordinate the supply of text, data, files, stationery and other materials between printers, list owners, data processors and any other parties involved.

- **Arrangement of schedules**

Allow enough time for all operations to take place sequentially and logically.

- **Obtain supplier contracts**

Ensure all parties have agreed to your realistic timescales and have contractual arrangements in place.

- **Get supplier sign-offs**

Obtain your printer's approval for stationery and other materials to be used, as well as their confirmation of test file formats, proposed page layouts and all other page presentation requirements such as fonts, page orientation and so on.

- **Hold suppliers accountable**

Make sure your printer meets the quality of product and service agreed in your contract.

- **Manage specification changes**

Advise all parties immediately of any changes to specifications of files, text, stationery and so on. Obtain approval from all parties that such changes are possible within the timescale.

- **Make sure suppliers co-operate**

Wherever possible, give each party's job number to the other members to improve communication and collaboration.

- **Oversee materials supply**

Make sure that print materials are available in sufficient quantity, boxed, palletised and identified or in protected reels, and that there are enough extra materials to cover spoils and wastage.

- **Take your supplier's advice**

Listen to your supplier's advice. Take responsibility for any negative consequences if you decide to act against it.



Campaign delivery



Be prepared to cover any additional costs that may result.

- **Provide all information on-schedule**

Give text for setting, signatures for digitisation or pre-print, page layouts, font identities and any other information necessary for your printer to prepare the job.

- **Respond to proofs promptly**

Check, approve, correct or sign off proofs with the minimum of delay.

Give enough time for this to take place, particularly if there are corrections and re-proofs needed.

Return signed-off proofs using a safe method.

- **Define sample requirements**

Define the type and quantities of live samples you wish your supplier to provide, and cover the costs of producing such samples.

- **Define post-job requirements**

Tell your printer how they should dispose of overs and return your data, and agree their costs for fulfilling these instructions.

Supplier responsibilities:

- **Agree schedules**

Confirm acceptance of proposed schedules, subject to adherence by other parties.

Define options in the event of late production and additional costs involved if this lateness is caused by another party.

- **Provide technical information and advice**

When requested, give your client information on materials, production methods, preferred layouts and any other necessary advice and information.

- **Meet timescales**

Plan your production carefully, but with a margin for error, to ensure you meet your client's deadlines.

- **Test materials**

Test how suitable stationery is and advise your client of the results.

Accept responsibility for the performance of stationery once you have approved it, provided that it is identical in every respect to the test sample.

- **Store materials appropriately**

Store all stationery delivered in a safe, protective environment.

Check delivery quantities and quality to the extent specified by your client.

Advise your client of any apparent shortages, changes to specification or other problems – and provide evidence, such as a photograph or sample, where appropriate.

- **Provide proofs and apply amends**

Provide all required proofs on white paper and, after approval, on live stationery.

Carry out any corrections requested and re-submit for approval.

Bear the cost if re-proofing is through your error.

- **Use proofs in quality control**

Use signed-off, live proofs as samples against live-run samples during quality control

- **Use identification numbers**



Print a sequence number on each item to help checking and identification.

- **Check pre-print**
Check, as far as possible, the quality of pre-print and advise your client of any problems.
- **Maintain thorough quality control**
Carry out quality control checks at frequent intervals. Correct and replace any items found to be faulty and document this process.
- **Ensure data security**
Ensure the confidentiality and security of your client's files, data and other materials whilst on your premises.
- **Take responsibility for errors**
Correct any errors that are your responsibility or your fault.
- **Pack finished output securely**
Securely pack, box, palletise and shrink wrap all finished collateral.
- **Label finished product correctly**
Identify each box of finished collateral that shows:
 - Name of client
 - Job name and number
 - First and last sequence numbers
 - Name of mailing house
 - Name of your organisation
- **Include appropriate documentation**
Include despatch documentation that shows:
 - Name of client
 - Addressee
 - Number of pallets and/or boxes
 - Total quantity
 - Include any associated reports, Mailsort labels and so on
 - Completed postal dockets or Royal Mail *E*Pro* number
- **Dispose of project assets appropriately**
Dispose of overs and return files, data and so on in accordance with your client's instructions.
Arrange provision of a certificate of destruction if requested.

Wastage

- **Allow for wastage**
All paper handling production processes involve a degree of spoilage due to malfunctions of one kind or another. Printers supply materials to an industry standard margin, usually of 5% more or less than the quantity ordered. In some cases this margin might be greater, such as four-colour overprinting which can be up to 10%.
- **Allow appropriate margins for wastage**
Spoils are inevitable, and you will need extra materials to re-print these items if you require it. The margins your suppliers work to will influence the quantity of materials you need to in order to achieve your



required number of door drops.

If you do not need perfection, weigh up the expense of extra materials and recreation of spoils against the potential rewards of sending out these door drops. It might cost more than you can expect to earn back.

- **Consult with your printer**

Ask your printer for advice on wastage.

Different factors within your production choices will influence how much wastage you can expect. You can make choices to minimise it.

For example:

- Good quality materials tend to cause fewer spoils than cheaper materials
- Standard materials and production methods are more efficient than non-standard ones
- Larger runs should have a smaller amount of wastage than small runs
- Make allowance for set-up and proofing, in particular where a number of mailing 'cells' or test groups are involved

Storage

- **Understand storage provisions**

Storage is important. Material that has been badly stored can absorb moisture or dry out too much, making it unlikely to run well, if at all.

- **Reasonable free storage**

It is reasonable for suppliers to store material for up to one week before the start of a project and for up to one month following the final completion of the job.

Outside these periods, the supplier is entitled to charge storage at their usual commercial rates.

Client responsibilities

- **Arrange deliveries**

Arrange the delivery of materials to minimise your supplier's storage costs.

- **Set policy for overs**

When the campaign ends, listen to your supplier's advice and give disposal instructions as quickly as possible.

Pay the full cost of disposal and/or transportation of overs.

Pay any agreed storage charges.

- **Pack materials correctly**

Package materials safely so they are not in any way hazardous to health.

Supplier responsibilities

- **Check materials supplied**

Report to your client, within 24 hours, with details of all materials you receive.

- **Handle overs as agreed**

Report to your client within seven days of the completion of a job with a count of overs, and seek disposal or storage instructions.

Arrange secure destruction of overs, if requested, and submit a copy of the destruction certificate to your client.



- **Agree invoicing arrangements**

Invoice your client at times and rates agreed for storage and/or destruction of materials.

Ownership of production assets

- **Direct supplier owns production assets**

Where a supplier prints on behalf of a client, the supplier should own films, plates and other production materials, but be used solely for that client's purposes.

- **Contractor retains ownership**

The ownership of such items in a subcontract situation, however, is different.

Where the main contractor subcontracts to a secondary supplier, it is reasonable to view the secondary supplier as an employee of the main contractor.

Consequently, ownership of production assets should be retained by the main contractor.

It's therefore important to ensure that the subcontract is as sound as the main contract for intellectual property rights.



Distribution

Delivery methods

There are two main methods of distribution.

Weigh this choice up carefully and make the right decision to fulfil your campaign goals.

- **Solus**

A solus delivery is when your door drop is delivered on its own.

Solus delivery will cost more, but your door drop will stand-out, and can potentially choose a delivery time that better suits your customer.

- **Shared**

A shared delivery is when your door drop is delivered at the same time as other door drops.

The main advantage of shared delivery is that it is likely to be cheaper, with delivery costs split between multiple advertisers.

Your door drop may not stand out amongst the others, but DMA research shows that items are often put to one side and read by the customer at their own convenience.

Royal Mail's Door to Door service offers you the choice of delivering your door drop bundled with your customer's daily post. This approach has its own nuances for you to consider.

Your choice of delivery might have a bearing on your design decisions as well as your budget and ROI forecasts.

Distribution channels

The way your consumer receives your information will be critical to the success of your campaign. There are a range of different distribution methods available, some of which may be more suitable, depending on the objectives of your activity so guidance should be sought from a DMA door drop practitioner.

Free weekly newspaper distribution network

This way, leaflets are delivered via a trusted local medium, the free newspaper, which is delivered weekly via a locally managed and supervised distribution network.

Distribution can be targeted to postcode sectors and individual rounds. Shared distribution with other brands can be highly cost effective, sharing the cost of delivery across more than one client.

Distribution generally occurs in the latter part of the week and items can also be booked for distribution on different day to the newspaper to achieve greater stand-out, but the cost will be higher.

Royal Mail Door To Door

Delivered by uniformed postal staff, Royal Mail distributes non-competing door drop items to each household weekly. As the items arrive with the daily post they can benefit from the attention this environment receives.

As most households receive post, this is the only method of distribution which can reach up to 100% of households within every postcode sector, up to 29 million addresses.



Independent Distribution Networks

This method gives the option of sending your item either shared alongside other clients, or on its own. These teams can be the only option in some areas if there is no free newspaper coverage, or if Royal Mail is fully booked or already has a competing item booked in that area.

Well-established distribution companies offer the flexibility needed if items are too large or bulky for distribution via free newspaper or Royal Mail.

Coverage

- **Select the most appropriate distributor**

Select the right distribution method to suit your campaign.

For example, one distributor might not be able to reach 100% of your intended audience, but might be able to reach a certain portion of it much more effectively or at a better price.

- **Consider coverage offered**

Sector coverage of the above three distribution methods varies:

- Royal Mail 9,325 sectors 27 million households + 2 million businesses 100% coverage
- Free Newspapers 3,695 sectors 7.7 million households 27% coverage
- Independent teams The UK is served by a number of independent local and national operators that provide alternative distribution options on a flexible geographic basis

UK postcodes (Universe)

Most door drop targeting and distribution is based on the postcode, but smaller units of are becoming available.

For example, if a full postcode is SL6 7QY:

- Area SL = 200,000 households
- District 6 = 9000 households
- Sector 7 = 2500 households
- Postcode QY = 15 households

- **Check distributor's ability to deliver**

Once you have found distributor, double-check that they have the required resources and structure in place to deliver your campaign on time and at the volumes and level of targeting that you need.

Confirm these needs in a written, signed contract.

Distribution contracts

- **Always get a written contract before your project starts**

Make sure that your potential distributor is able to provide you with written details of the contract and that it covers all the key points of your agreement.

Carefully check your supplier's terms and conditions to ensure that they are suitable and acceptable.

- **Ask for references**

When dealing with a new supplier, ask for references that you can check.



Handover to distributor

Make sure that you consult with your chosen company early in your campaign development, at concept or creative development stage, to make sure you design and produce your door drop to meet your delivery requirements.

For Royal Mail's *Door to Door Handover Guide*, see:

www.royalmail.com/business/sites/default/files/Royal-Mail-Door-to-Door-User-and-Handover-Guide-January-2015.pdf



Quality control services

Quality control and delivery validation methods vary between distributors. Ask your potential distributor what, if any, delivery checks or tracking services are included in the contract price, as well as how and when this will be reported back to you.

- **For example, certificates of completion provided by a distributor may not include delivery validation. Many suppliers will also have limited time periods from which to receive evidence of non-delivery, so ensure you are clear about these prior to your campaign commencing.**

Backchecking

- **Establish delivery checks/reporting**

Some distributors offer a form of delivery checking as standard. This is where the distribution company employs an independent checker to see whether delivery has taken place (or, more accurately, whether the householder recalls having received the item).

This is called 'backchecking'.

The sample size and checking method for deliveries will vary between suppliers. Some suppliers operate electronic tracking systems as an alternative to delivery checks.

Independent validation and research

- **Validate campaign success**

Consider using an independent, specialist research company to validate the success of your campaign and provide confirmation of delivery.

Research can take the form of face-to-face or telephone backchecking.

Most free newspaper circulation is verified by Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) certification and forms the primary standard of backchecking for free newspapers. Appointing an independent validation company is the responsibility of the client.

- **Select campaign factors to research**

In addition to calculating delivery levels, these companies can assess the impact of your campaign on your target market and against competitors.

Select factors to measure that directly relate to your campaign goals.

Key factors to research might include:

- Cut-through
- Readership
- Retention
- Motivation

- **Research for the future as well as the past**

As well as research to gauge the success of your existing campaign, consider how the questions you ask can help you improve future campaigns.

For example, as well as finding out how many customers retained your door drop for future reference, try to understand why they decided to keep it and what about the item itself won their attention and trust.



Campaign delivery



- **Use a DMA member research company**

Your research company will need to contact your customers. As well as looking out for your customers' interests, remember that this company can have either a positive or negative effect on your brand reputation according to how they conduct themselves.

Only use a company that adheres to DMA guidelines, procedures and rules.

- **Consider using consultancy services**

Your research company may well also offer consultancy services to help you maximise campaign returns.



Campaign response



Fulfilment

When you plan your campaign, consider what action your customer should take and make sure that you have the resources and processes in place to handle this response. The last thing you want is to generate a huge response from your customers only to upset them by failing to deliver what they order.

For example, if you expect an uplift in sales, you need to ensure you have enough stock to meet a surge in orders, and in a timely, efficient, high-quality manner.

- **Prepare throughout your organisation**

Some key preparations might be:

- Ensure you hold sufficient stock to meet your anticipated increase in demand
- Pre-produce follow-up materials
- Update your website to be relevant, accurate and consistent with look and content of your marketing
- Set up and test analytics on your online profiles, site and specific campaign landing pages
- Ensure that you have a robust payment processing system in place
- Increase and brief your call centre team (or create one)
- Increase your after-sales service capability
- Ensure that your supply chain can support higher demand on a continuous basis

- **Provide for data handling**

Whatever response you ask your customer to make, whether online or offline, you will have to amend your data records as a result.

For example, you will need to update your CRM database with new interactions and purchases for each customer.

Make sure that you have the data processing team, tools and reporting in place to handle this comfortably.

- **Consider third-party services**

You might be able to handle every aspect of your campaign fulfilment in-house, but suppliers can help with extra expertise and flexibility.

- **Ensure that you have planned complex responses**

Be careful not to underestimate the complexity of responses. Different customers order different combinations of products, services and information via different channels, payment methods and with different delivery needs.

Brief your whole team so that everyone knows how to act in any given situation.



Campaign measurement

Considerations

- **Match measurement goals to campaign goals**

Whilst it is possible (and tempting) to measure many aspects of your campaign, make sure that the information you gather and report shows you how well your business goals are met.

For example, web traffic should be an important measure if you give people an online response mechanism, but footfall is more important if you are promoting an in-store offer.

- **Gain insights to improve future campaigns**

Plan ahead as much as possible to understand your door drop's performance over the long term, not just within a particular drop.

Use each campaign to benchmark effectiveness and compare the success of different variables such as format, customer lifecycle and response mechanisms.

- **Direct response rates**

Door drop is increasing in prominence as a brand-building channel, but it will always excel at driving direct response.

Make sure you are correctly set up to measure and handle this response before you launch your campaign. Do not invest all your efforts into getting your door drop delivered only to find out later that your website analytics were not working correctly or your supply chain is not meeting an increased demand for the product you promote.

What you can measure

- **ROI**

Measure the ROI of your campaign as you would any other, setting campaign cost against revenue generated.

- Cost of campaign. Include response handling, supporting website work, and so on
- Sales revenue. Calculate this over a certain period of time after your campaign, or using customer lifetime value

- **Brand perception**

There are various ways you can gain insight into the success of your mailing, including:

- Customer survey
- Online search terms
- Search marketing advert performance
- Social media monitoring
- Feedback from inbound calls

- **Quality of data and targeting**

Assess the quality of your targeting through measures including:

- Response rates versus expectations, industry standards, previous campaigns and between different areas
- Number of complaints
- Sales figures and uplift in other media – such as footfall, web traffic or inbound enquiries



- **Quality of different prospects**

Analyse the ROI of different customer segments using measures including:

- Response rates from different segments
- Geographic response rates
- Types of product sold – for example, if you have delivered a catalogue you can measure sales of men's or women's clothes against other data you hold, such as household income or age
- Analysis of response against any other data – for example, income groups or proximity to store
- Sales records – details gathered from customers at the till
- Follow-up call success rates
- Different sales values between segments

- **Creative impact**

Assess your door drop's success using measures including:

- A/B testing
- Response rates compared to benchmarks
- Feedback from follow-up calls and inbound calls
- Social media monitoring
- Continued stream of responses over time. If customers liked your door drop enough to retain it for future use.

- **Customer behaviour and preferences**

Analyse customer behaviour using measures including:

- Comparing response rates for different calls-to-action
- Comparing different response mechanisms, for example phone versus email versus personalised website (Personalised URL/PURL) responses
- Spread of responses over time
- Changes in response from previous campaigns
- Online behaviour – especially if tracked using PURLs, QR codes or dedicated URLs
- Tracking customer journeys from response through to purchase

Measurement mechanisms

Measuring response

Build mechanisms into your mailing campaign to give you a clear measure of response, such as:

- Trackable promotional code, such as a QR code or online discount code
- Dedicated URL or PURL
- Dedicated phone number
- Dedicated email address
- Extra sales over full campaign cycle



Measuring brand awareness

There are many ways you can measure brand awareness generated by your mailing campaign, including:

- Social media activity
- Changes in online or search marketing performance
- Pre- and post-research measures that explore areas such as brand perception
- Differences in results from different geographic areas, demographic groups, customer segments
- Response rates versus a control group that did not receive your campaign

Other factors

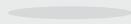
- **Other factors to take into account**

When you report on your door drop performance, make sure you take into account other factors that might have influenced your results and make allowances.

For example:

- Period of time – keep in mind that response can be stretched over a long period
- External factors, such as the weather or major sporting events, that might have affected response
- Delivery timing – day, week, month, year
- Point within your customer journey
- Level of creative investment
- Quality of targeting

a-z



Glossary

**Batch control**

Control data that describes groups of data in summary.

Bleed

Printing to the edge of the page.

Body copy

Main copy area.

Böwe(ing)

Finishing of continuous computer stationery using Böwe machinery. Böwe is a proprietary name.

BPI

Bytes per inch. A measurement of the density with which data is recorded on a computer tape.

BRE

Business reply envelope.

Bursting

Act of separating continuous stationery.

Business reply licence

Licence issued by the Post Office to use business reply facilities (also see BRE + BRC).

Chromalin

A photographically produced colour proof.

Concertina fold

Folding that resembles a concertina.

Continuous stationery

Paper produced in a roll or fanfold presentation with sprocket guide holes for use on a computer printer.

Copy

Text contained in marketing materials.

Cross

Folds that are at right angles to the direction of the feed.

CTP

Computer to plate, digital artwork transferred straight to the printing plate.

Data processing

A series of systematic operations performed on data by a computer.

Demand feed

Variable multiple sheets enclosed as required per record.

De-duplication/de-dupe

The matching and elimination of identified or near identical names and addresses from a single computer file or two separate files.

Digital proofs

A proof produced by a digital printer representing the image to be produced.

Dummy

An example of the size, shape, form and general style of a piece of printing.

Duplex enclosure

Laser printing both sides of the sheet item in an advertising mail package.

**End fold**

A folded or saddle stitched booklet that has an additional folded edge on the short side.

Fan fold

A fold that gives the same effect as a fan.

Folding guide

Printed marks on stationery indicating the fold lines to the clerical staff or folding machine operator.

Gatefold

A fold that turns in on itself from both edges towards the centre, like a double LP.

GSM

Grammes per square metre. The metric term to evaluate paper weights.

Gutter

A gap between two printed sections on the same sheet.

Homeworker

Production employee who undertakes work at home. Often used for work that is non-machinable.

Household distribution

A type of service where literature is delivered by hand rather than stamped or franked and sent through the post. Also known as door-to-door or house-to-house.

Impact printing

Printing characters in the manner of a typewriter using a hammer system.

Inner/inner envelope

An envelope included in a mailing for use by the recipient.

Key coding

Where a reference code of either numbers, letters, colours or other markings are printed onto a response device to identify the source of enquiry.

Laser (printing)

The main technique used for the production of personalised letters. It relies on a laser beam ionising the paper to attract carbon molecules.

Leading edge/lay edge

The edge of a sheet or folded sheet or booklet that goes first into the processing machine

Litho (lithographic printing)

A printing process where an image transfers from plate to paper via an intermediate cylinder.

Machinable envelopes

Envelopes designed to be run on an automatic enclosing machine.

Make ready

Setting up a machine before production can commence.

Merge-purge

The de-duplication process, often undertaken by a data processor, which aims to match name and address records in order to find and remove duplicates.

Merger

Attachment to a finishing machine, such as a continuous stationery burster or guillotine, that merges two separate forms (sheets) together to make one entity.

**OCR**

Optical character reading recognition. The interpretation of characters by a computer, which scans the text and translates this into electronic data

Offset (offset litho)

A method of printing from etched plates using ink and water. The image transfers from plate to blanket to paper

OMR

Optical mark reading. Use of marks such as dots or bars that, when positioned on a sheet of paper, break a light contact and indicate a certain function to the machine.

Outer

The container for a mailing piece, for example, an outer envelope, polybag or wrapper.

Outworker

See *Homeworker*.

Overs

The material left over unused once a production job has completed.

PAF®

Postcode Address File. A Royal Mail product that lists all domestic and business addresses known to the Post Office.

Pantone

International colour matching system embracing a range of printing and Graphic art products.

Perforation

The punctuation of paper by dots or strip holes arranged in continuous lines at close intervals for tearing-off, for example for a voucher or response slip

Picking line

Picking bins/shelves into a continuous line, either straight or curved, in code or product reference sequence

Plate in

Lithographic printing an image is etched onto metal (or sometimes plastic) plates.

Pocket

Normally applied to envelopes and indicates that the flap is on the short edge.

Polylope

A polythene mailing bag sealed by a gummed flap.

Polywrap

Items enclosed and wrapped in polythene on a machine

Postcode

The code provided by the Royal Mail to describe a small group of addresses (typically 12) that are usually in the same street.

The first part is called the *outward code*, describing the broader location, and the second the *inward code*.

Premise code

The last two digits of the Royal Mail barcode indicating house number or name

Proof

A printed sample of work, to be checked for errors in reproduction that need to be corrected prior to printing.

Reel

Fed machines that accept reels of paper or polythene, rather than flat sheet or fan fold.

**ROI**

Return on investment. The amount of money you get back from your campaign relative to the amount you spent on it.

RPE

Reply-paid envelope.

Scamp

An idea that had been drawn up roughly. Also known as a 'rough' or 'scats'.

Selectivity

The selection of variable inserts on an enclosing machine to match the appropriate record.

SEP

Sample envelope pack provided for approval prior to enclosing job.

Sheet fed

If paper or other material is cut into flat sheets, the subsequent processing is carried out by feeding these sheets individually.

Spot gumming

The application of a spot of glue/gum that only lightly attaches one piece of material to another, often to facilitate removal.

Station

Points on an enclosing or filling machine that can accept material.

Stuffer

A promotional piece of literature normally supplementary to the bulk of the promotional package.

Visual

Layout, indicating the position of illustrations, headlines and so on, usually in colour.

Wallet/wallet envelope

A type of envelope whose flap lies on the long edge.

Window envelope

Envelope that has a portion cut-out to reveal the name and address (or other information) printed on the enclosed material.

Z-fold

A two-way fold that looks like the letter 'Z'. Also known as a zig-zag fold

Zip envelopes

Envelopes opened by perforated flap mechanism..

