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Hi, . Here are your Articles for September 4, 2013.

Careful Planning Results in Successful Mailings

Your organization probably spends vast amounts of time and money producing direct mail campaigns to raise funds. Those costs are justified if you get the response you're seeking.

One way to maximize the effectiveness of direct mail is to become savvy about mailing list purchases. Reaching people in the right target market and reaching them in sufficient numbers is what list selection is all about. Here are some essential steps to find the right list for your group.

Step 1. Form an audience profile. Ask the following questions:

- Who is likely to donate to your group?
- Should you pitch to businesses or households?
- What's the benefit to the donor?
- What is the best geographical market?
- Can your organization get donations nationwide or should you keep fund-raising efforts local or regional?

Limited Use

People talk about *purchasing* mailing lists, but in fact, lists are only rented for limited usage. List owners "seed" the lists with a few dummy names at their own addresses to prevent organizations from using the lists more than the agreed-upon number of times.

Step 2. Use a list broker. Perhaps you could effectively promote a Senior Health Fair by buying a single list from AARP. But it may make more sense to use a broker who:

- Has access to almost any list on the market.
- Looks at your target profile and finds lists that make the best match.
- Provides resources from the planning stages through the mailing and evaluation of the results. These services shouldn't cost anything: broker's fees come from a 20 percent discount off the list price.

Step 3. Choose the right broker. Your organization needs one who:

- Has experience with not-for-profit groups.
- Can cite case studies of direct mail campaigns for other not-for-profits, including similar organizations.
- Knows what works and what doesn't from practical experience.
- Uses "profiling," which can turn up surprising matches. For example, to solicit support for a classical music radio show, the broker might suggest a list of vitamin purchasers.

Step 4. Discuss the lists. Make sure you:

- Ask how fresh the list is because it's hard to reach a moving target. The fact is 17 percent of Americans move every year. Your chief concern is actually reaching the people in your audience.
- Avoid 'bargain' lists. Many are derived from phone books and numerous listings are outdated even before the phone book is published.

Personal Info
Configure Niche Content
Saved Articles
Refer Colleague
Calculators
Unsubscribe
Feedback

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- Verify that lists will be processed through the National Change of Address program that updates addresses of everyone who has provided information to the post office.

Details, Details: Check the list against your "house list." Your own database of contacts is a valuable asset, and every mailing has the potential to either enhance or diminish your organization's image. If you skip this step, you'll be sending duplicate mailings, which some members will interpret as sloppy or wasteful behavior. It's a small detail, but one that's worth the effort.

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