

## Why Some People Say Direct Marketing Doesn't Work

It's curious to hear business people so quickly say 'been there, done that, didn't work'. Whether you've had a good run at Direct Marketing or not, you really need to consider some hard truths. The media spend on Direct Marketing in Australia is in excess of \$6 billion! This means the average Australian businesses spends more than 50% of their advertising budget on Direct Marketing. Either a lot of people are deceived, or there's some reason why it works for some and not for others. What's the secret? Why do so many business people say direct marketing doesn't work? How can this be? We thought it might be interesting to find out why a huge number of business people say direct marketing doesn't work. What is it that makes them say 'been there, done that, didn't work'. Over a 6 month period we conducted an anonymous survey of 138 companies who, by running an ad with a coupon response, indicated they wanted our business and wanted us to respond by giving them our name and address. We responded to all sorts of businesses. From clothing to funeral homes, cars, computers, lonely heart clubs, finance companies, religious organizations and more. Before I tell you what we received back from these companies, here's what I would expect from a company who wants my business. [1] A friendly, thankful letter, personally addressed and personally signed. [2] If available, a brochure, or some other form of information. [3] An time limited offer to motivate me to 'act now' [4] A response mechanism such as a coupon or form. [5] A reply paid envelope and/or a web site that I could visit. I would also expect: [1] A response within a reasonable time, say, a week. [2] A 'follow up' of any description, preferably within a week but certainly within a month. Here's what we got: Response Time: \*58% took longer than 7 days to respond \*31% took longer than 21 days to respond \*1 took 45 days, 1 took 52 days, 1 took 56 days, 1 took 63 days and 1 took 84 days! (amazing! why bother?) \*After 6 months, still 18% hadn't responded Follow Up: \*76% of those who did respond, didn't follow up at all. \*5% put us on a mailing list and followed up more than twice (although these were predominantly religious organizations). Personalized: \*50% just sent a brochure. That's it. No letter, no 'how do you do', no thank you for responding. \*Of those who sent a letter, half of them had a standard letter with a printed signature instead of a real one. Unusual: \*Only 4 companies sent something unusual like lollies, a coaster, a tea bag or sample with their response (that's less than 3%!). So what does all this tell you? With incredibly bad follow up disciplines like these, it's no wonder a large number of business owners say 'been there, done that, didn't work'. They just don't care. (Which makes me wonder why they're even in business in the first place). The truth is, they've been there and missed it. A large number of businesses using direct marketing principles seem to have little idea or don't care enough about fulfillment or following through. The end result is a loss, not only for the company who failed, but also for the industry itself. It's not all bad news though. This widespread problem opens up a huge amount of opportunity for those that do it right. So here's the key; If you follow through well, you'll stand out so much, people will find you not only memorable, but almost irresistible. Direct Marketing works. It's something worth considering. Good luck with your next ad campaign.

## About the Author

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