

THE OFFER SHOULD . . .



- Attract Attention
- Build Interest
- Create Excitement
- Be Believable
- Be Relevant to the Product
- Seem Exclusive (could be composed from components of competitors)
- Not Be Limited to the Previous Suggestions (think also of recognition, status, love, solace, power; appeal to fear, greed, comfort, beauty)
- Be Simple and Easy to Explain and Understand
- For Non-Profits appeal to guilt by tugging at heart strings and hinting at immortality
- Consider what the competition does - does it work?

Sample Offers

• Guarantees:

- Make them as strong as can be afforded. Strong guarantees set one apart from the competition. (Lands End, LL Bean - 100 percent money back guarantee during life of the product)

• Product or Service:

- Ideally something generally unavailable in stores. For example coffee is available in stores but specialty coffee is not

• A Better Price:

- Straightforward amount or FREE!
- Free Information; follow up with information **and** product or service offer

• Merchandise:

- Free trial
- No risk trial with money back guarantee
- Discount
- Special sale
- Two-for-one deal
- Regular version at one price with deluxe version with (gold stamped with customer's name for example), at a higher price (up-sell)
- Premium (prize/award) with purchase or reply

• Sense of Urgency Time Limits (must be very prominent):

- Order must be received by mm/dd/yy or within x# of days (Make offer good enough so people would feel left out without it)
- Time not too short or people won't have time to order; not too long or inertia will set in
- Study competitors time lines

• Payment Terms:

- Delayed payments
- Extended payments
- Installment payments
- Payment options: Bill me, COD, Credit card, personal check or money order
- Pay no Tax
- Pay no interest until MM/DD/YY

• Incentives:

- Free premiums
- Second item at half price

- Use specific numbers when possible instead of percentages or "half" off

Powerful Attention-Grabbing Words:

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| • You | • Announcing |
| • Save | • Safe |
| • Free | • Learn |
| • Exclusive | • Trust |
| • New | • Profits |
| • Special | • Introducing |
| • Secret | • Love |
| • Satisfy | • Results |
| • Discover | • Immediately |
| • Good News | • Guarantee |
| • Sale | • Protect |
| • Limited Time Offer | • Proven |
| • Misunderstood | • Now |



8 STEPS TO EFFECTIVE OFFERS FOR DIRECT MAIL

Every direct mail package you drop in the mail should contain an offer. The offer is the incentive or reward that motivates prospects to respond to your mailing, either with an order or with a request for more information. “Subscribe to Hook, Line and Sinker today and save 45% off the newsstand price” is an example of an offer. To be effective, your offers must pass eight tests.

Test 1. Is your offer specific?

“Visit our website for more information” is not an offer. Your offer must be specific and tangible.

Test 2. Is your offer exclusive?

Are you making your offer only to a select few (and making them feel that they are an exclusive bunch), or are you making your offer to everyone and his dog? For example, is your mailing envelope addressed to “Occupant”?

Test 3. Is your offer valuable?

Will your prospects perceive your offer to be of value to them? Your offer may be inexpensive for you to offer, but it must have high perceived value to your potential customers. For example, a \$100 gift card to The Home Depot has high perceived value to your prospects, but is inexpensive for you to offer if it lands you a sale worth \$5,000.

Test 4. Is your offer unique?

Is the deal you are offering only available through your business?

Test 5. Is your offer useful?

Your offer can be exclusive but useless (an engraved pet rock). Or unique and useless (a bag of dust from Mars). Make sure your offer helps your prospects save money, save time, do their jobs better or is something else just as helpful.

Test 6. Is your offer relevant?

You could offer a 40% volume discount on laptop computers to both travelling salespeople and to computer retailers. Both groups buy laptops, both groups appreciate a discount, but only one group buys in volume.

Test 7. Is your offer plausible?

Some offers are too good to be true. Others are silly. Consider an offer from a spammer, offering one million email addresses in electronic format for only \$240. “Order now. Quantities are limited,” — right.

Test 8. Is your offer easy to acquire?

The harder you make it for your prospects to obtain your offer, the lower your response rates will be. So make your order forms clear, simple and short, your toll-free phone number obvious on the page, and your conditions of purchase few.