

From:

WAY West of Jewfish Creek

Dear Friend & Subscriber,

I am now about to talk to you on the subject of direct mail like nobody has ever talked to you before.

Listen: Last month I promised you that this month I was going to reveal unto you 20-ways to increase the response of your direct mail without changing a word of your copy.

I am now about to keep that promise.

First of all, my ideas on increasing your direct mail response without changing the verbiage of your sales efforts are based on four main concepts.

- #1 Nobody will respond to your mail unless they read your mail.
- #2 Nobody will read your mail unless they open your mail.
- #3 Nobody will open your mail unless the post office delivers your mail.
- #4 The post office will not deliver your mail unless your mail is delivered to the post office.

What's that? You say all this is obvious? You say your mail is already being delivered to the post office and being delivered by the post office and being opened and read by all your prospects? You say you've got all this elementary stuff covered?

Surely you jest.

Let me tell you what in reality is happening to a lot of your mail. First, all the mail you are paying to have printed and assembled is not always being delivered to the post office by your lettershop. Why? The answer is simple. You see, it is much more profitable for your lettershop to assemble only 90% of your mail than it is to assemble 100% of your mail.

Of course, you don't believe this is happening, do you? I mean, after all, your lettershop gets a receipt from the post office for the number of pieces of mail it delivers to the loading dock, doesn't it? And that receipt is given to you, isn't it?

And receipts don't lie, do they? Especially ones that are signed by an employee of the almighty U.S. Federal Government, right?

Be serious. Try and picture this scene in your mind. I want you to imagine a guy named Jose who works on the loading dock of a big city Post Office. I want you to know a little about this guy. I want you to know that he has six

kids and a nagging wife, a seven-year-old car that needs a valve job, a drawer full of overdue bills, worries about how he's going to swing Christmas and also, the hots for a little co-worker named "Roundheels" Rhonda.

Now ol' Rhonda isn't too particular about her gentleman friends as long as they come equipped with a well-stocked personal pharmacy.

So anyway, our guy Jose has all this on his mind when the truck from Larcenous Lettershop drives up and out pops the owner, Mr. Ferdinand Letscrewem. Ferdy then walks up to Jose (who he's known for years) and starts up a conversation:

Ferdy: *"How's it goin, Jose? Getting any action lately?"*

Jose: *"Not much man. Just the ol' lady. I'd sure like to get next to Roundheels again but you know Rhonda... no blow, no show."*

Ferdy: *"Oh yeah. Say that reminds me. I got a little something for you. It's Peruvian flake, man. Root canal quality!"*

Jose: *"Hey man, you're O.K.! You just saved my cojones from early retirement!"*

Ferdy: *"Glad to do it, man. Hey listen, I gotta get a receipt for this mail. I don't know how it's gonna weigh out but it's supposed to be about 100,000 pieces and that's what I need a receipt for, you dig?"*

Jose: *"No worries, good buddy. Just have your men put the stuff on the cart over there and I'll get the paperwork for you right away."*

And so it goes. What happens is ol' Mr. Letscrewem delivers 90,000 pieces of mail to the post office and gets a receipt which he gives to you for 100,000 pieces. And why are the principals in this dreary little drama unafraid of repercussions? Quite simple: You see, both of these guys know that since your mail is "junk mail" nobody will be the wiser if all of it is not delivered.

Let's face it, how will you ever know?

So anyway, let us continue our story. You now have 90,000 pieces of mail sitting on a post office dock that eventually (after a long, long time) gets sorted and delivered to the loading docks of the other post offices, from which it is supposed to be delivered to all your prospects. And then, after another long, long while, some lazy mental midget finally ends up with your mail in his mail sack and he starts going about his daily rounds. After an

hour or so he gets tired. The mail sack is getting heavy. And besides, he's getting sick of looking at all that junk mail. Not only that, his customers hate to receive it. He hears it everyday: "Hey man, why don't you bring me some good news? How about a big lottery check or something instead of all this junk?"

And so, every once in a while, guess what our mental midget decides to do? You're right, every once in a while he decides to throw your mail away!

Much, Much, Much,
Much More Often
Than You Would Ever Believe!

And why not? It's junk, isn't it? Nobody's going to miss it, are they? Throwing this stuff away is doing everybody a big favor, right?

And so, about 17% (minimum) of all your mail that is correctly addressed never gets delivered simply because it gets thrown away. And, of course, since you are mailing bulk, your mail also never gets forwarded to those folks who have moved which on any given list at any given time is about 7% of the total.

Let's see now. So far, 10% didn't get delivered to the post office, 24% didn't get delivered by the post office and now (finally) we've got approximately 66,000 pieces of mail (out of the 100,000 that we've paid for) that has actually been delivered.

So what happens next? I'm glad you asked. What happens next is that at least of your 66,000 pieces of mail that did manage to get delivered gets immediately thrown away.

Here is something I want to burn into your mind. I want you to remember it and remember it well. I also want you to remember that it was me, Sir Gary of Halbert, who first told you that...

Most Of The People
In America Sort
Through Their Mail
While Standing Over
A Waste Basket!

But, of course, as one of my subscribers, you already knew that, didn't you? Whatever. O.K. now, we've got 33,000 letters (out of 100,000) that have actually been delivered to the post office, delivered by the post office and opened by our prospects.

Hooray. Hooray.

But wait. We started cheering too soon.

Why? Because now, perhaps another 20% of our remaining mail gets thrown away as soon as it was opened. Darn it anyway. Here we get 33,000 people to open our mail and 6,000 or 7,000 of those folks said "Oh yuck!" when they saw

that bewildering collection of brochures, order cards, yes-no stamps and so forth.

But hey, we have gotten about 26,000 folks to at least read our letters. And that's not bad, right?

Actually, it's not. What the hell, if every one of those 26,000 people order, we'll be figuring on getting a 26% response and gosh, that's not bad at all.

But, of course, all 26,000 of those who do read our mail do not order. Some of them who read our letters don't order because they don't believe what they are reading. But don't worry, we can fix that. At least, on a percentage basis, we can fix a lot of it!

And now, we are left with those folks who don't order because they don't want what we're selling and I'll accept that.

Or because they don't want to pay our price and I'll accept that.

Or because they are short of cash and I'll accept that.

But I won't accept, and neither should you, not getting orders because my letters were not delivered, opened or read.

So let's stop sniveling and start curing these problems. Are you ready? Good. Here then, after another atrociously long preamble, are 20-ways to improve your response without changing a word of your copy.

#1 Deliver your mail to the post office yourself.

Want to try a really instructive split-run test? Do this: If you mail say, 100,000 pieces per month, send half of your work to Lettershop A and the other half to Lettershop B. Tell Lettershop A to proceed as usual and deliver your mail to the post office and make sure they obtain and give to you a mailing receipt. Then, have Lettershop B deliver the mail to you and then you deliver the mail to another post office and you get the receipt. Continue doing this every month for a year. Guess what will happen? Lo and behold, you are going to discover that, over the course of a year, Lettershop B dramatically outpulls Lettershop A.

Isn't that curious? Let's press on.

#2 Start using live stamps on your envelopes instead of using a postage meter or a printed indicia.

#3 Start using direct impression addressing (heat transfer, AD MARK, laser, etc.) instead of labels.

#4 Remove your company name from your corner card.

#5 Get rid of all teaser copy on your envelope.

#6 Print the word "RUSH" in red on your envelopes.

Let's pause for the cause here a moment. All of those last five suggestions are designed to make your mail look more like first class mail and, as we all know, first class mail (or mail that looks like first class) is more likely to get first class treatment.

From your lettershop.

From your post office.

From your customer.

It's all a matter of respect. Did you know that the post office is about to bar the use of those fake Federal Express type envelopes because those envelopes have been fooling postal employees? True. Those envelopes (even when mailed bulk rate) get a very prompt delivery and sometimes the postman even asks his customers to sign for them. And, did you know that first class mail (or mail that looks like first class) even gets more respect (and less trashing) from your lettershop?

Enough about envelopes. Let's talk about your sales letter.

#7 Re-type it and use wider margins and more subheads. Also, make certain things stand out by showcasing them in bold, like I'm doing in this letter.

Do all this to provide "eye relief." To make your sales message more inviting and less formidable when your prospect first sees your letter.

#8 Throw away your brochure or hide it in a plain white envelope so your prospect doesn't see it as soon as he opens your envelope. Ditto with your order coupons.

You already know why; it's to avoid the "Oh Yuck!" reaction.

#9 Change your 10-day or 30-day or 60-day guarantee to a full 1-year guarantee.

Did you know that the longer the customer has to request a refund the less likely he is to do so? Yea, verily, it is true. You see, if you offer a 10-day guarantee your customers will be very conscious of it and the refund deadline will be in the forefront of their beady little minds.

No good. Give 'em time to forget about getting a refund. Give 'em a year.

By the way, the longer the guarantee period, the higher your response rate will be too.

- #10 Put a photo of the author of your letters on your letterhead. For some reason this usually increases response. I think it does so because it tends to "personalize" your letter and, also, I think people like to have a mental picture of the person with whom they are dealing.
- #11 Print your order card on yellow stock instead of whatever other color you are now using. The reason? Simple - yellow and black is the easiest-to-read color combination when it comes to print. This is especially important on order cards since many of them contain relatively small type.
- #12 Call Bill Royal (804-648-4168) and tell him you are one of my subscribers and ask him to send you samples of the new envelopes he has designed. He's the guy who originally designed those envelopes the post office wants to outlaw and he's come up with some new ones that are real "high impact" beauties. By the way, remind him of those young girls he promised to fix me up with if I got him any new business.
- #13 Put your phone number in the body copy of all your letters and invite your customers to call you if they have any questions.

This makes the prospects feel like it is safe to order. Like they can "reach out and touch you" if necessary. And, of course, the safer they feel, the more likely they are to order.

By the way do not use an 800 number for this purpose, use your "real" number.

And while I'm at it...

- #14 Stop using an 800 service and starting taking your call-in orders yourself.

Listen: If you do this and you do it right and if you write a little "script" that teaches your employees how to "bump up" call-in orders, your gross will immediately jump 20% and your net by 40% or so.

Plus, it will make your 800 service (if you still use them at all) a little nervous and they will start doing a better job for you.

#15 If your package weighs an ounce or less and your unit of sale is \$39.95 or more stop mailing bulk and start mailing first class.

When you do this, you will get a higher response and a much faster rate (isn't cash-flow important to you?) of response. Plus when you mail first class you can start to...

#16 KEEP A DAILY LOG OF YOUR NIXIES.

Now wait a minute. How in the world can keeping a daily log of your nixies improve your response rate? I dunno, really. All I know is that when you keep a "nixie log" (and when you make sure your list broker and all list owners know you are doing so) you will, after a while, tend to start getting lists that are cleaner and more responsive. Also, keeping a nixie log will do wonders when it comes to raising your consciousness level and sharpening up your mind. In addition, it will improve your vision by taking some of the stars out of your eyes.

Try it.

#17 Start renting more responsive mailing lists.

Start fighting for hotline names. Start networking (isn't that a dandy buzzword?) with five list brokers instead of just one. In fact, why not contact 10 or 20 or 30 or 40? And while I'm at it, why don't you contact the list owners and ask them if you can pay extra to get the hottest segments of their lists like the multi-buyers, the hotline names, the big ticket buyers and so on?

#18 Always test by mailing first class even if you are going to roll out using bulk!

Time is money. You can read first class results much faster. In fact you'll know how good your mailing is going to be within 12-days of your drop date. And hear this: The sooner you know what's likely to happen, the more able you will be to stop what's likely to happen from happening or, if you prefer, the more likely you will be to make what's likely to happen, happen.

#19 "Double team" everything you do!

Use more than one lettershop. Use more than one list broker. Use more than one printer. Use more than one copywriter. And believe it or not,

#20 Always mail at more than one post office!

Some post offices are "black holes" where advertising mail routinely gets lost.

Spread your business around and let everybody know you are doing so. Keep everybody on their toes. Make sure your mail gets accounted for and is treated with respect from go to woe.

And now, for the most important suggestion of all.

#21 SEND GARY HALBERT YOUR CONTROL PACKAGE AND ASK HIM FOR A FREE CRITIQUE.

I'm serious. If you subscribe to this newsletter, one of the perks is a free critique of your ads and letters. I'm happy to do this because:

A. It keeps me sharp

B. It helps me make new friends

C. It sometimes gets me into profitable business relationships and, of course, I like to do it because, let's face it...

I'm A Prince
Of A Guy!

Sincerely,



Gary C. Halbert
In-Print Salesman

P.S. Next month's newsletter is going to be special. When you read it you are going to think you died and went to direct-marketing heaven. You are going to learn how (and, I'm not kidding) to use direct response to make bundles of money and improve your sex life at the exact same time.

Stay close to your mail box.

P.S.#2 You might also try getting a celebrity to sign your letters (ask me how) or maybe using multiple stamps instead of just one, or, if you are going after a really big sale, you might try sending telegrams instead of letters, or how about including a free standing "polaroid" of whatever you're selling? Say, have you tried attaching something like a penny to the top of your letters and then telephoning your customers a few days later and "referencing" the attachment like this?:

"Mrs. Jones? Listen. This is Mr. Smith at ABC Widget Company. Did you get the letter I just sent you? You'll remember it if you did; it had a penny attached to the first page. You do remember? Good. Look, the reason I'm calling is because..."

Try this. If you do it right it will multiply your sales by 500%!