



PRINT MARKETING BEST PRACTICES

Always Have a Compelling Message

Print marketing has a lot of competition. Not just from the more affordable online advertising options out there, but from everything else that shows up in your future client's mailbox the same day as your campaign.

If you're going to spend precious time and marketing dollars on print marketing campaigns, there are a few key points to remember. The first—and arguably most important—is simple: always have a compelling message. A strong, clear, and engaging message can mean the difference between your piece catching the eye of future clients and taking a trip to the recycling bin. Next time you create a print marketing campaign, consider these five best practices for ensuring you have a compelling message.

1. Stick with one main topic.

Target a specific type of consumer with a specific message. Don't waste your time sending out generic mailers. Always remember to speak to a targeted audience and anticipate their real estate needs. Some ideas include providing lists of recent foreclosures, offering local neighborhood information, placing door hangers targeting renters, offering to estimate home values, or sending "just listed" and "just sold" postcards.

Denver real estate agent and ActiveRain blogger Joan Cox says, "I often send a 'just sold' postcard.

We are still enjoying a serious seller's market and could use more listings. I choose a popular and highly desired neighborhood that I have sold homes in and create a call-to-action that would make a seller want to pick up the phone and hire me to list and sell their home!"

Sam Miller with RE/MAX Stars Realty agrees. "Remember that to be successful with print marketing, you need a compelling and consistent message,"

he says. "Know your market and create a message that is specific to that market, instead of just blasting out marketing noise."

2. Keep it simple.

Don't overload your design with too much text or too much information. Simple, clean, and clever works wonders.

"My postcards are simple, jumbo in size, and to the point," says Crofton, Maryland-based agent Beth McCloy, who created a postcard with a picture of a frog and the caption, "Ready for a new pad?" "In addition to the size, quality, and simple nature of the marketing, they made me smile the first time I saw them," she says.

Agent and ActiveRain blogger Barbara Todaro notes that it's crucial to create a postcard "that will catch the recipient's attention long enough to read it and think about it or save it. The postcard cannot be cluttered with words; it must be easy to read...There must be one call-to-action and a powerful message."

3. Demonstrate your value.

“Prospects are all tuned into station ‘WIFM’ (what’s in it for me), so your mailings have to include something of value to them,” says real estate copywriter Marte Cliff.

Instead of making your print marketing piece shine a spotlight on you, focus on what you can do for them—your future clients.

Additionally, show that you value past clients by sending occasional handwritten notes on special occasions. It’s a great way to keep yourself front of mind and make them feel valued and appreciated.

“I send anniversary cards out to clients on the anniversary of their home sale, says Barbara-Jo Roberts Berberi, a Florida real estate agent. “They are always handwritten and I always get a response back. In this day and age, when most things come on the computer, that handwritten note seems to go a long way!”

4. Proofread!

Any time you target leads outside your sphere of influence, it’s your chance to make a great first impression. That’s why it’s crucial that there are no grammatical errors, misspellings, or other oversights in your print pieces. Not only do these types of errors cost you money to fix, they also give a bad first impression to leads, who may think you’re unprofessional, inexperienced, or lacking attention to detail.

Every time you finish creating a new campaign, but before you click “print,” read over every inch of your piece slowly and carefully. Then, ask a colleague or friend to do the same.

5. Think outside the box.

There’s more to print marketing than just postcards, flyers, and door hangers. Agents who have found the most success in print marketing are getting creative with the types of pieces they’re sending, allowing them to stand out in their future clients’ mailboxes.

Kathy Schowe with California Lifestyle Realty creates featured property business cards when she lands a great new listing.

“Each card is double-sided with two of the best photos of the home,” she explains. “I include my contact information, my website, a link to the listing information, and—of course—the address. Sellers are more than happy to pass them out.”

“I tend to spend my money on things that people keep for a certain time,” says Tammy Lankford, a real estate agent based in Lake Sinclair, Georgia. “I do refrigerator calendars annually, and sports schedules. I also do printed waterproof maps people can keep on their boat, with my phone number for waterfront properties.”

Like Kathy and Tammy, spend some time thinking outside the box and coming up with a useful, clever print marketing piece that’s ideal for your local area and the clients you hope to be serving.

With an uncluttered message crafted for a specific, targeted audience, a clear value proposition, an eye for detail, and a flair for the creative, you’ll ensure that the print marketing campaigns you’ve worked hard to create are money well spent.