Talon Mailing & Marketing, Inc.
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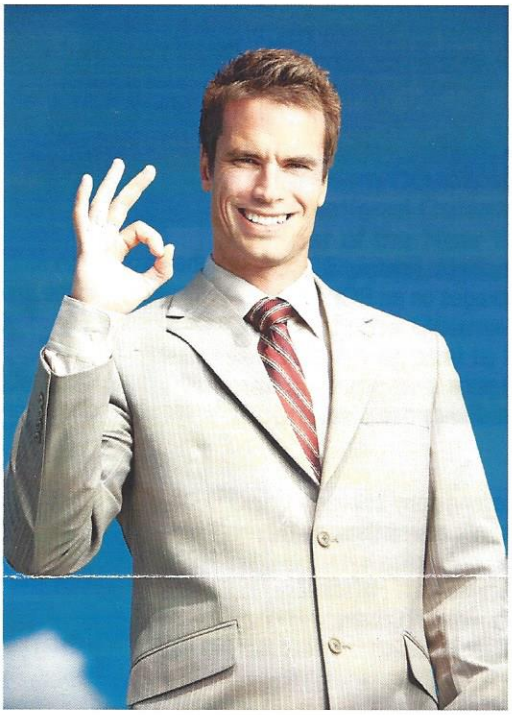
THE TALON MAILING & MARKETING NEWSLETTER

October 2008

Talon Announces "Zero-Wait Time" NCOA Processing.

By Michael Borkan.

As the post office mandates NCOA processing for first class and standard class mailings, Talon will make sure an NCOA won't delay your project.



Beginning November 23, 2008, to dramatically reduce undeliverable mail and save money, the U.S. Post Office is requiring the following:

In order for mailers to take advantage of barcoding and sortation postage discounts, **one of the following three processes must be used** on their mailing list:

1) NCOA Processing
2) Address Change Service
3) FASTforward Processing

The post office will be phasing out FASTforward processing since it is very similar to NCOA but does not contain changes beyond 18 months.

Address Change Service can be costly and does not save printing and postage costs prior to a mailing.

Experts in our industry believe NCOA will be a mailer's best choice for conforming to the new requirements.

An NCOA is a process where we compare each record on your mailing list with the Post Office's National Change of Address File. Anyone that has moved within four years will be found and their old address will be changed to their new address. Talon will correct the address before the mailing and then send the address changes to clients so they can update their mailing list.

Performing an NCOA will reduce undeliverable mail and help to clean the mailing list. Why is this so important? If seven percent of your list moves each year that means a list that has not been cleaned in two years would contain almost 15% undeliverable mail. If the list has not been cleaned in four years it could contain 28% or more undeliverables.

The National Change of Address File is comprised of 160 million records so performing this service traditionally required 24 - 48 hours. Talon will now perform the NCOA service at the same time we zip+4, address correct, eliminate duplicate records and sort your mailing lists for postal discounts. This is the full four year file, which means that any move within the last 48 months will be updated.

The Post Office is requiring that an NCOA be performed on mailing lists no more than 95 days prior to the mailing in order to receive postage automation and sortation discounts.

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If you are not receiving our monthly electronic newsletter you are missing out on Marketing News, Direct Mail Information and Tips, Prize Giveaways and lots of fun stuff. Email Michael Borkan at mb@talon-mailing.com to receive our free monthly e-mail newsletters.

What Works Best: A Letter, Self-Mailer, or Postcard?

By Robert W. Bly.

In his book ***Secrets of Successful Direct Mail*** (Bottom Line Books), the late mail order consultant Dick Benson says: "Self-mailers almost never work."

"Testing has consistently proven a one-page letter with a compelling offer outperforms a glossy mailer [in business-to-business lead generation] by 100 percent," says Liz Taylor of Liz Taylor Marketing.

And in a recent issue of his e-newsletter, copywriter Alan Sharpe says, "In business-to-business direct mail lead generation, letters invariably out pull self-mailers, including postcards."

As a copywriter, I've always been prejudiced in favor of sales letters, because it's my favorite form to write.

But obviously, a sales letter is not always better than a postcard or other self-mailer -- and in recent years, I've come to love postcards for the results they can produce for marketers on a budget.

Consider subscription promotion for magazines, where double postcards and vouchers routinely outperform traditional letter packages on an ROI basis.

For more than a decade, Medical Economics tested all sorts of letter packages against a snap-pack control for ***Physician's Desk Reference***. None of them could beat the self-mailer.

And look at the outrageous success of the magalog – a long-copy self-mailer format – in selling nutritional supplements and consumer newsletters.

The copywriters I talked to were split. A few, like Ivan Levison and Herschell Gordon Lewis, praised self-mailers and said they can work well. Others, such as Sharpe and Jeffrey Dobkin, are clearly fans of sales letters.

"On a dollar-for-dollar basis, self-mailers can outperform a closed-face envelope in b-to-b mailings," says copywriter Herschell Gordon Lewis.

"No, you can't get mailed credit card information. But more and more, when the pitch is for a phone call or online response, a quick look gets read where a classic mailing seems ponderous.

"Closed-face means either a two-way match-up or an unimprinted response device, both of which kick costs upward. Windows scream, 'This is a bulk mailing.'"

"The great advantage of the self-mailer is that it's cheap," says Ivan Levison, a copywriter specializing in software. "It's also easy for the prospect to unfold a self-mailer. There's no envelope to tear open, so you know that you stand a good chance of getting the reader into your message.

"The self-mailer is a good choice for making noisy announcements, which is why retailers use them at sales time. If you have a simple, clear story to tell, a self-mailer can make a great deal of sense."

A lot of copywriters, ad agencies, and marketing consultants like packages better than self-mailers because they can charge the client more for them, and because they find writing and designing letter packages more fun and rewarding creatively. Not a good reason to use them, of course, as Jeffrey Dobkin admits.

"When clients ask me what is the most effective piece we can send I always say a letter," says Dobkin. "And it's not just because letters are my specialty

or that I charge so much for them. I do think letters are the most effective you can be with the understanding that this is in most instances. There are exceptions.

"A personal-looking letter is almost always opened. I like the teaser 'Gift Certificate Enclosed' on anything that looks commercial: the open rate is exceptional."

"In certain situations, letters may outperform self-mailers," says copywriter Joan Damico. "In business-to-business direct mail, getting through the corporate mail room may be better served with a #10 letter package.

"It also depends on what stage in the buying cycle the prospect is receiving the mailing. A prospect in the awareness phase may respond better to a colorful self-mailer, while a customer in the loyalty phase may respond better to a #10 letter package."

Here are a few rules of thumb that can help you select the right format – traditional letter package, self-mailer, or postcard – for your next mailing:

- Postcards can work well when the primary response you seek is a visit to a Web URL or a call to your toll-free number.
- When your story is detailed and complex, a traditional letter package is likely to work best.
- Study your market. See what formats are being used in your competitors' controls. Use the same formats for your mailings – at least to begin with.
- When you are generating leads with a free bait piece offer – such as a white paper, catalog, or brochure – use a one-page letter in an envelope with a business reply card.

Of course, the ultimate strategy for format selection is to split test -- and let consumers vote with their responses.

About the author:

Robert W. Bly is a freelance copywriter and the author of more than 60 books including The Copywriter's Handbook (Henry Holt & Co.). His e-mail address is rwbly@bly.com and his Web site address is www.bly.com.

Win Islanders vs. Rangers Tickets.

Monday 10/27/08, 7 PM. Nassau Coliseum.

Call Michael Borkan at 631-667-5500 x 11 to enter a drawing to win two tickets. These seats are center ice, the best seats in the house. Contest is only open to subscribers of this newsletter.

New Clients at Talon:

DARNAUER GROUP, LLC
Strategic Marketing & Public Relations

Shedd
The World's Aquarium

Talon welcomes the following new clients this month to our growing roster of customers:

- Darnauer Group
- Good Samaritan Mission
- Shedd Aquarium
- Great American Jewelry

Barack Obama's Direct Mail Troubles.

The example below shows how to waste money and ruin a direct mail campaign.

John Kiernan is a former North Hempstead town supervisor and a Republican leader for 32 years. Recently he was surprised when he received a direct mail piece from Obama with a note telling him, "In the final 100 days of this campaign, we need your energy, wisdom and experience more than ever." Also in the letter was a request to send a check to elect Democrats to Congress so that Barack Obama could change public policy.

The day after John Kiernan's letter arrives, his wife receives a letter from Obama asking her to send money to the Democratic National Committee. Mr. Kiernan's wife has been a member of the New York State Republican Committee for about 25 years, representing the 17th Assembly District.

Obviously the Obama campaign is throwing away money by sending an appeal to Mr. and Mrs. Kiernan. Obama's direct mail staff probably used the wrong mailing list or should have suppressed from their mailing active Republican party members.

Don't make the same mistake! Talon can help you mail smarter and boost your response rate by using suppression lists so you can avoid the same mistakes the Obama campaign made. Other helpful services include duplicate elimination, deceased suppression and National Change of Address. Call us today to learn how to mail smarter.

Grow Your Company With Talon.

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- Data Entry
- Merge/Purge Dupe Elim
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- E-Mail Campaigns
- List Maintenance
- List Rental Fulfillment
- Mailing Services
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In This Issue Prepared For Anthony Quaranta:

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Anthony,
Talon uses Intelligent Mail Barcodes for postage savings and delivery tracking!

Anthony Quaranta
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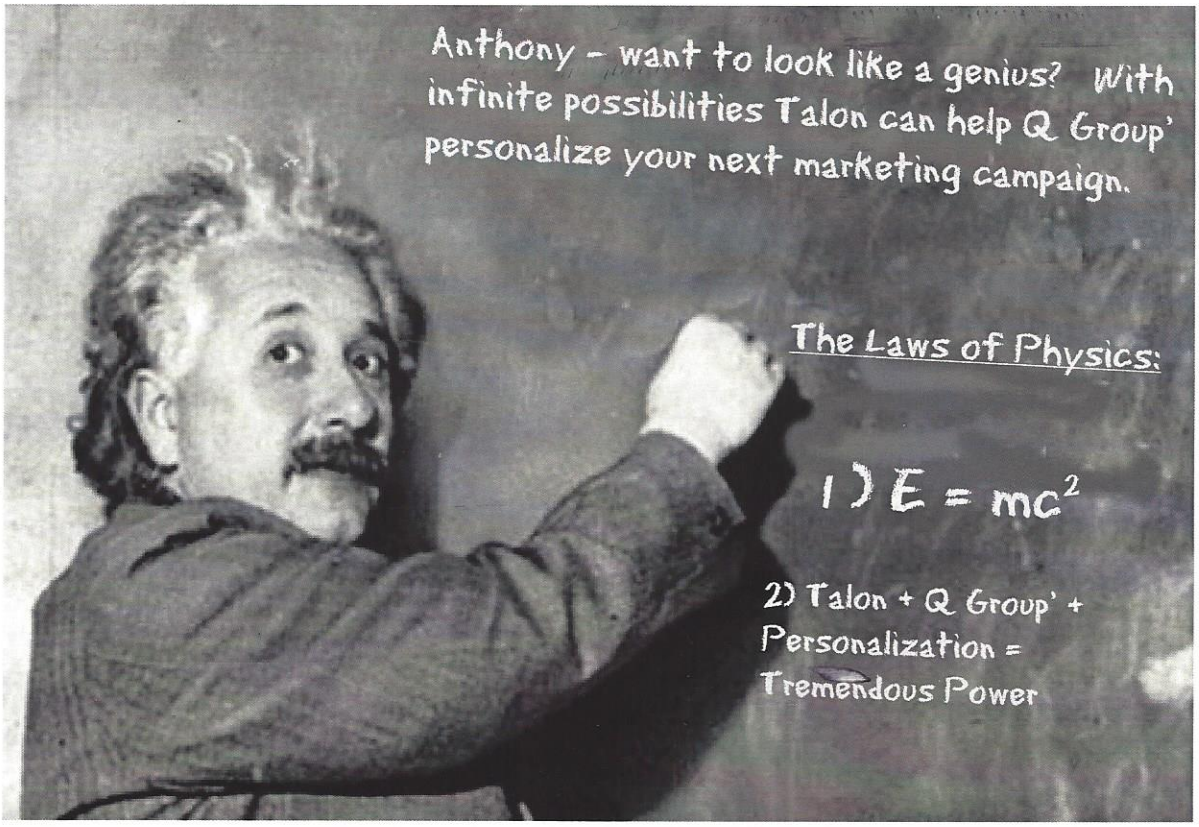
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