

solutions

Think Outside the Box

Move Beyond Sales Promotions with These Successful Marketing Strategies

When marketers think about 1:1 personalization and variable data printing (VDP), they think about increased response rates and higher per-order values. Certainly, these are important benefits, but VDP can have benefits far beyond direct sales. While many of these “non-sales” applications are powerful, they are often overlooked. Putting them into your toolbox could give you a plethora of new bottom-line-boosting solutions. In the next few issues, we’ll look at examples of VDP applications used for non-direct sales in a variety of vertical markets. In this issue, we’ll examine campaigns within the government and education industries. *Examples are drawn from the Print on Demand Initiative’s case study database (www.podi.org).*

Improving Readability

In response to customer feedback, the California Franchise Tax Board (FTB) redesigned and added highlight color to many of its forms, including information requests and bills. By combining personalized messaging with highlight color, the forms became much easier for recipients to understand. Variable fields included amount owed, due date, and personalized text explaining exactly what was expected of each customer. As a result, the Tax Board saw a tenfold increase in compliance, and its collections accelerated by three days, on average.

Reducing Attrition

Slippery Rock University wanted to develop relationships with incoming students and minimize the chance that once accepted, those students would choose to go to a different university. To that end, it created a personalized invitation to its freshman orientation program. The cover contained the student’s name and a welcoming message. The student reservation form was pre-filled with his or her name, address, and other key information, including possible major. 84% of students and 92% of parents said that the personalized invitation positively influenced the student’s desire to attend the school.

Reducing Costs

The Quincy, MA, public schools wanted to eliminate their inventory of pre-printed forms, including quarterly grade reporting, interim grade reporting, and high school scheduling. So it transitioned to a print-on-demand environment—with a twist. Now its forms are created on demand, with the student information pre-filled. Variable information includes student name, subject, ID number, date, grade, teacher name, and course information. Inventory and obsolescence are eliminated, and the personalization means less manual work—which in turn leads to a more productive workforce.



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Increasing Enrollment

Northern Arizona University wanted to increase enrollment, so it created a survey to establish the demographics and interests of prospective students: a personalized postcard, including personalized graphics and messaging, and sent it to targeted student groups. The communication's front side featured variable headline text and images; the flipside contained a personalized greeting and message. The university's enrollment increased by 4%—or more than 500 students.

Small Investment, Big Impact

None of these applications involve direct sales, per se. But as the aforementioned examples illustrate, they can have a major bearing on the bottom line. Imagine the impact of an increase in 500 tuition-paying students or a tenfold increase in on-time bill payments. Clearly, these applications can result in tangible—and often substantial—financial benefits. And with our highly respected VDP specialists and on-site digital printing, bindery and fulfillment capabilities, **TanaSeybert** can help you exploit VDP to its fullest.

Maximizing Your ROI With 1:1 Print Marketing

When marketers first experiment with 1:1 print marketing and VDP, one of the common mistakes they make is employing marketing strategies they initially formulated for traditional media—but personalized. The result is often a disaster. The campaign is overly expensive, and the return on investment (ROI) isn't what they had expected. What are they doing wrong? Simply put, there are few instances in which you want to personalize a mailing to your *entire* database. Effective personalization starts with a good data cut. There is no question that, on a per-piece basis, 1:1 print marketing is more expensive than traditional print marketing. So you don't want to waste this investment on elements of your database that aren't likely to provide a good return.

So what does constitute an efficient data cut? Consider these examples:

- When a convenience store chain paired with a soft drink manufacturer to promote a new sports drink, it personalized the mailing based on information culled from its loyalty program. But instead of targeting every member with a personalized communication, it sent mailers only to those fitting a specific profile.
- A shoe manufacturer wanted to move its inventory of odd-sized shoes, so it paired with a retailer to send personalized mailers—not to its entire database, but only to customers with a specific range of shoe sizes.
- In an effort to boost donations, a non-profit organization personalized a mailing—again, not to its entire donor base, but only those individuals who had donated over a certain amount during the prior 12 months.

By starting with a smart data cut, then combining it with effective personalization techniques, you can consistently make equivalent (if not lower) investments than when using traditional print—and generate greater revenues.

Here's how it works: By mailing to a smaller target audience (say, 25% of the original database), the print program can actually cost the same or less than a traditional mailing. But combined with the relevance and appeal created by personalization, each donor tends to donate (or spend) more on average.

Although this might sound like little more than fanciful marketing theory, case studies from around the industry reflect the reality of this practice. So yes, VDP does cost more on a per-piece basis—but when you look at it from the perspective of ROI, these applications can actually cost less and bring in more.

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TanaSeybert is the exclusive print vendor for Conformer products in the New York area. For more information, contact us at info@tanaseybert.com.

