



# solutions

## A Tale of Two Campaigns

When we think about variable data printing (VDP) and how it is utilized in direct marketing, we tend to weigh the impact of data on the success of the campaign—as well we should. The temptation, however, is to *overemphasize* data to the exclusion of other considerations. For direct marketing campaigns, the results can be devastating.

When one mortgage company decided to begin using VDP, for example, it created a snazzy campaign featuring a take-off on the popular television commercial slogan, “It’s not delivery—it’s DiGiorno!” They created a postcard featuring the image of dollar bills emerging from a pizza slice and the headline, “It’s not delivery! It’s DeCaprio Financial!” (*Note: DeCaprio Financial is not the company’s real name.*) The postcard’s flip side listed details regarding special mortgage rates. The program bombed.

The company’s marketing services provider suggested changing the message, but not the personalization. Their revised headline communicated a simple, direct message: “We deliver the best mortgage in town!” The new postcard employed the same imagery, the same copy and the same level of personalization, but with a different hook. Response rates tripled.

Another marketing provider learned a similar lesson. It launched a direct marketing campaign using personal URLs (PURLs). The client had a great offer, a clean postcard design and a compelling call to action—“come to your personalized Web site to learn more about the product and have a chance to win a \$2,500 prize.” Within just a few days, the response rate topped 10%.

Buoyed by this success, the marketing provider pitched a similar campaign to a different client, expecting comparable results. This client, however, insisted on a cluttered design and a message that included information regarding the company’s many benefits, rather than a simple and bold call to action. Even the incentive was vague, inviting recipients to come to their PURL to “learn more and take advantage of a great promotional offer.” The response was dismal.

The lessons drawn from these examples and others like them are clear—several factors, in addition to available data, must be addressed in order to use 1:1 personalization effectively:

- There must be a clear call to action
- The message must be tailored to the recipient, not the marketer
- There must be a strong incentive to respond
- The design must be clean and uncluttered

Personalization is a powerful marketing tool, but data alone doesn’t motivate response. It must be paired with an attractive design and the right incentive for your target audience. Otherwise, it can be ineffective—no matter how personalized the communication.

At **TanaSeybert**, we’re equipped to produce any and all manner of VDP materials, whether your print requirements number in the tens or tens of millions. Our digital and offset presses are manned 24 hours a day, six days a week, and we maintain our own bindery, assembly and mailing services on the premises—so you can meet all your direct marketing needs under one roof, time- and cost-efficiently.