

### eco-consciousness becomes eco-friendly

It's one thing to be aware of one's negative environmental impact, but it's much more important to work to decrease it. Diligent marketers can take some very simple steps to ensure that their Direct Mail is both eco-friendly and effective. Direct marketers have the opportunity to take the initiative and become more eco-friendly in their customers' eyes. Always print environmental certifications clearly and honestly on your mail pieces, and remind consumers to recycle Direct Mail when they're through with it. Environmentally sound Direct Mail practices are really about the little details. You may even see the benefits by simply looking outside your window.

### eco-friendly online

Learn more about green direct marketing practices from paper to power. Point your browser to:

[the-dma.org/environment](http://the-dma.org/environment)

[delivermagazine.com](http://delivermagazine.com) (go to "topic," select "Green Marketing")



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[www.fsc.org](http://www.fsc.org) Cert no. SW-COC-002527  
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**Green Direct Mail.**  
marketing that doesn't  
spoil the view.

In growing numbers, today's consumers are demanding more environmental responsibility from businesses across America. Why? Well, in 2006, 67% of Americans – the highest percentage Gallup has recorded – said the quality of the environment is getting worse; just 25% said it's getting better.\* And 74% of Americans have recycled some used product or material in the last month, according to a recent Barna Group survey.†

In other words, consumer environmental concerns are changing your business environment, and eco-friendly practices are more important than ever. Everything you do to preserve the environment – even little things – can reflect on your business and may impact your bottom line.

Enter Direct Mail. Some may believe this paper-based medium is not eco-friendly and should be avoided. However, Direct Mail can be greener than you think, and Green Direct Mail practices give marketers an opportunity to demonstrate their environmental responsibility through certified materials and initiatives. Even the staunchly environmental Rainforest Alliance relies on Direct Mail for much of its member communications and, by using paper that has been certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), they support responsible forest management.\*\*

### shades of green

As you read, remember that there are many shades of green. As a marketer, there are steps you can take to make your Direct Mail a little greener to have less of an impact on the environment.



\*Gallup poll conducted March 2006.  
†"American Lifestyles Mix Compassion and Self-Oriented Behavior," The Barna Group, February 5, 2007, [www.barna.org](http://www.barna.org)  
\*\*Deliver magazine, September 2007.



# give your message a message.

## Insight 1 greening the list

Every year, U.S. businesses send billions of pieces of mail that are undeliverable as addressed (UAA). By taking simple, ongoing steps to maintain a clean, up-to-date list, your business can reduce its amount of UAA mail. This will help lessen its impact on the environment because you will be producing fewer mail pieces and using less paper, ink, and energy. And by using less paper, ink, and postage, you can also save money. Another advantage of a well-maintained list is better targeting, which may help increase ROI. There are many resources available to help hone your lists:

- ZIP™ Code correction\* ensures that mail is delivered to its proper recipient
- Address standardization\* eliminates address errors
- National Change of Address Linkage System\* (NCOALINK®) corrects addresses before mailing
- U.S. Postal Service® Address Change Service\* corrects an address after mailing
- DMA Mail Preference Service (MPS)† subscription lists consumers who want to receive less unrequested advertising mail

### In addition, there are steps marketers can take to fine-tune their lists.

- Merge and purge mailing lists often to remove invalid names and addresses
- Provide frequent, clear opportunities for customers to opt-in and opt-out
- Maintain a Do Not Mail list to prevent unwanted communications
- Allow customers to specify their preferred method of contact

- Keep a detailed suppression file that classifies customers by the products they're interested in – and the products they aren't
- Use incentives to encourage customers to proactively notify the company of incorrect mailing information or duplicate mailings
- Target and mail efficiently, using segmentation and modeling to select recipients
- Personalize your message to increase relevance and reduce waste
- Test a sample of a list before mass mailing to ascertain its accuracy

### green in practice: L.L. Bean

Outdoor outfitter and cataloger L.L. Bean invests considerable resources in list hygiene. The company compares its lists to Do Not Mail lists to remove uninterested recipients and then goes a step further. L.L. Bean asks customers to specify how often they want to receive mailings. By doing so, the company strives to preserve the very environment that its customers so greatly enjoy.

Deliver® magazine, September 2007.

**the take-away:** List management is the first line of environmental defense in Direct Mail. Before marketers print a single mail piece, a list can be sorted and honed to ensure that there are fewer pieces sent to incorrect addresses or uninterested recipients. Not only does this reduce the environmental impact and save on the monetary cost of paper, ink, and postage, it also helps increase ROI through effective targeting.

## Insight 2 the many faces of paper

Almost every Direct Mail piece is printed and mailed using paper. Depending on the piece, certain characteristics may be required of the paper itself, including brightness, coatings, and a host of other traits. Marketers can reduce their environmental footprint significantly by using non-traditional kinds of paper. There are many opportunities to make Direct Mail more eco-friendly:

- Explore using paper containing post-consumer waste
- Print on the lightest weight of paper you can
- Investigate papers made of alternative materials, such as sugarcane
- Choose paper made using chemical-free processes (chlorine-free, for example)
- Experiment with formats that require less paper and packaging to reduce paper use and overall weight
- Work with paper mills that use environmentally friendly production practices and that use/encourage sustainability practices to renew forest resources

### green in practice: Patagonia

Outdoor outfitter Patagonia uses recycled paper and paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). Of this paper, 85% is used to print its catalogs. In 2006, the company's use of recycled paper in catalogs saved an estimated 5,340 trees, 750,000 pounds of greenhouse gases (equivalent to 66 fewer cars on the road), 2.3 million gallons of water, and 5.1 billion BTUs of energy (enough to power 49 households). Remember: This is simply by using recycled paper.

The Footprint Chronicles, August 2007.

**the take-away:** Paper is the backbone of Direct Mail and represents the most tangible eco-friendly opportunity. There are a wide variety of papers with varying amounts of recycled content. Papers with high recycled content can be more expensive, but this is changing and the goodwill benefit from using it can outweigh the out-of-pocket cost. Marketers can choose the product that best suits their creative execution or even choose to make eco-friendly paper integral to the execution.

## Insight 3 inks and coatings

An often-overlooked opportunity to spare the environment during Direct Mail production are the inks and/or varnishes and coatings used during printing. Some inks have a greater environmental impact than others, as do the special chemical coatings used to give a piece some extra visual or tactile pizzazz. Marketers looking to become greener should pay attention to inks and coatings and research their impact on the environment. Printers are excellent sources of information and should be consulted about different inks and coatings and their various uses. Here are some things for marketers to consider:

- Look for agri-based inks and use them whenever possible
- Opt for less ink usage/coverage (fewer colors usually mean fewer chemicals)
- Research different coatings and the impact of each on the environment before using them

### green in practice: Consumers Union

Consumers Union uses soy-based ink for some of its printing projects and finds that it is no more expensive than petroleum-based ink. Soy-based inks are more eco-friendly because they contain fewer Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and can help minimize air pollution. Soy-based inks are also easier to remove from paper during the recycling process. Even when soy-based ink is not feasible, Consumers Union doesn't resort to petroleum-based inks because, according to them, finding low- or no-VOC emissions inks is not difficult.

Deliver® magazine, September 2007.

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**the take-away:** Think about the inks a Direct Mail piece uses, how they are made, and what effect they will have on the environment. Varnishes and coatings should also be considered because they may contain harmful chemicals. Ask printers about the various inks and chemicals used in a mailing, and find out if there are any eco-friendly alternatives.

## Insight 4 production and partners

Printers aren't the only ones to consult during Direct Mail production. Sometimes there are other partners who can also have an impact on the eco-friendliness of a mailing. With the help of these production partners, you can discover additional practices that will help you become eco-friendly:

- Print on both sides of materials to maximize communication space and minimize paper usage
- Seek out printers near your letter shop/mail house to minimize transportation, which reduces cost and uses less fuel in the process

- Take advantage of print-on-demand technology instead of printing large quantities and warehousing them until they're needed
- Use production methods that reduce print overruns, waste allowances, and in-process waste
- Find vendors that use renewable energy sources whenever possible
- Collaborate with printers to ensure the best use of press size – sometimes a slight alteration of the mail piece can allow more to be produced from each press sheet

### green in practice: MetLife

MetLife found that it was printing and storing large quantities of postcards that would later be printed with personalized information and sent to customers. However, by the time they were needed, the pieces would often be obsolete. Turning to print-on-demand technology allowed MetLife to print pieces as needed, reducing inventory waste and warehousing costs and eliminating the need to discard out-of-date materials.

Deliver® magazine, September 2007.

**the take-away:** Green Direct Mail is more than just eco-friendly papers and inks. Marketers should take a broader view of environmental responsibility by partnering with companies that are working to alter the entire Direct Mail process for the better. This can mean choosing partners based on their location, their practices, and their capabilities for each individual mailing.