



Connect!

REAL RELATIONSHIP MARKETING IDEAS



by CHAD RUEFFERT

Why Direct Mail Works in the Social Media Age

This morning I deleted over 100 spam email messages from my inbox. Mixed in with that were a dozen or so forwarded jokes or urban legends from real contacts but with no real content (FWD: Funny!)—all deleted unread. Then I waded through photos of cats in clothing, a couple lewd comics, video links to people damaging important body parts and a lot of painful and pointless political posturing on Facebook just to see if anyone had anything really important to share.

I was exposed to a lot of commercial messages and advertisements mixed during that time spent online. I paid attention to none of it. Just like, and perhaps because of, the spam, e-mail forwards and social slush, I have a hard time taking it seriously. That's part of the reason I love direct mail as a

marketing medium. It's just more...REAL.

UK Company Milward Brown was recently hired by the Royal Mail to investigate how the brain processes physical marketing materials, such as direct mail, compared to virtual materials presented on a screen. They used functional Magnetic Resonance Imagery to understand how the brain reacts to the same images provided digitally and physically. The same material was shown to subjects on screen and on printed cards and their brain was scanned during the interaction to assess how the processing of marketing messages was affected by the medium of presentation.

The findings were significant. "Tangible materials left a deeper footprint in the brain. This suggests that physical material is more "real" to the brain. Physical material involved more emotional processing, which

is important for memory and brand associations. Physical materials produced more brain responses connected with internal feelings, suggesting greater 'internalization' of the ads."

The findings definitely support the idea that relying on virtual or digital marketing alone may be a mistake, despite the fanatical focus on it right now by marketers and trend advisors. Having a social media strategy is important. But incorporating tangible, physical marketing materials into your media mix will insure a deeper, more emotional, more memorable impact on your prospects.

Chad Rueffert is the president of Braintree Marketing, Inc. and the creator of the From Your Friends Relationship Marketing program.

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