Mail Meets
...PURL
...QR Code
...Email
...Mobile
...Landing page

A Step-by-Step Guide to Coordinating Your Multi-Channel Direct Marketing

SNAILWORKS
COORDINATED DIRECT MARKETING PLATFORM

MULTI-CHANNEL DIRECT MARKETING

MAIL WORKS BETTER WITH PARTNERS

Poor mail. It doesn't get any respect any more. Every new medium that comes along claims to be "replacing" mail. Email, the Internet, broadcast fax, even the telephone – they all claimed that they would be the new means of communicating. Who needs to send someone a letter – or a catalog – when you can call them, or send them an email or a fax, or put your catalog live, right on the Internet? Who needs the mail?

As it turns out, a lot of people.

Even with the advent of each of these new technologies, mail remains the one irreplaceable channel in many direct marketing efforts. Many nonprofits would have to close their doors if not for the funds raised through the mail. Small businesses trying to reach their local market have no other viable way of reaching out to their neighborhood. Catalogers see their sales evaporate when they don't reach their customers with a catalog in the mail. Why? Mail has integrity – the public trusts it. It has unmatched penetration – virtually every recipient at least looks at the message on every piece of their mail. It has exclusivity – compared to most other media, prospects only get a few messages each day – allowing recipients to pay attention to each piece. None of these other technologies have managed to match mail at these qualities.

Still, direct mail can be better when other channels are coordinated with it. Today's consumer tends to go to the web to respond. A direct mail piece may get their attention, but they are likely to visit a web site to actually make the purchase or browse for more details. Mobile is a growing medium as well – many folks want to execute their purchase on their mobile device. Again, the direct mail can communicate the offer, but prospects need somewhere to go – in this case their phone – to respond.

Most direct marketers today use a variety of channels in their marketing. It is a rare company that doesn't have a web site today. Email marketing has grown to such an extent it is overloading inboxes. QR codes are popping up on burger wrappers, bus shelters, and on the side of vans – as well as on direct mail pieces. Organizations are looking towards online more and more as a revenue source. Multi-channel marketing is here.

COODINATING THOSE CHANNELS IS ANOTHER MATTER

In this paper we'll discuss tools and methods for coordinating your different direct marketing channels into an integrated campaign. There are two big payoffs for executing this successfully:
1. **Improved response**. Reinforcing one channel with others can boost your response

– often a lot. DMA and Postal Service studies have routinely shown response rates dramatically improved when multiple channels were employed in a campaign.

2. **Improved customer experience.** All too often, multiple channels just don't work together. You scan a QR code and go to site that isn't compatible with your mobile device. You click on a link and end up at a confusing web home page and can't find the offer you were responding to. Getting all of these channels to work together makes a more enjoyable buying experience for your customers. Isn't that the point?

WHY ISN'T ALL MARKETING COORDINATED?

If we're all using a variety of marketing media in our organizations, and it's more effective when it's coordinated or integrated, why *isn't* it all integrated? There are really two principal reasons:

Different media are often overseen by different staff or even departments within an organization. The web folks might have never met the direct mail folks;

It's hard to do! There are a lot of things you can do wrong in attempting to integrate your messages, and it requires careful planning.

Because of these challenges, a successfully coordinated direct marketing program is most often championed by the senior leadership of an organization. The direct mail people still do their direct mail, the email folks still direct electronic messaging, while the web and social media staff need to continue to direct their efforts – each area has its own special requirements and knowledge sets. Of course,

in many organizations these many hats may be worn by a lesser number of heads, but still the tasks remain distinct.

As a senior marketing executive, you need to take a higher level view of all of these functions to make sure that they operate in a coordinated manner. If you do it right, you can maintain the individual strength of each channel, while making all of them stronger through coordination.

This is the challenge *and* opportunity of coordinated direct marketing.

RULES AND TOOLS TIE IT ALL TOGETHER

Planning a coordinated marketing campaign involves creating a special set of business rules, and tactical marketing tools. When we talk about rules and tools in the context of coordinated direct marketing, we are referring to *business rules* and *tactical technology tools* for implementation.

Business rules are the predetermined actions you will take based on outcomes of other efforts. For example, if a prospect requests information, how you will handle that request is a business rule.

Tactical technology tools are simply the systems and methods you will use in executing these business rules.

Our goal here is to help you develop the business rules that serve as the tactics for your coordinated direct marketing campaigns, and show you how to implement those rules.

MAIL, MEET PURL... AND SOME OF HER FRIENDS

The key to success for your multi-channel campaign is getting your channels together. Everyone (and every channel) works better with a little support.

GETTING YOUR DIRECT MAIL HOOKED UP

To get started, let's make our direct mail more presentable to other channels. Direct mail remains perhaps <u>the</u> indispensable channel in direct marketing. You don't need permission to send direct mail. You can target direct mail better than other channels – by geography, demographics, buying history, to name just a few. Mail also tends

to stand out more – he has less competition than most other channels. Each piece of mail can stand alone among just a few other pieces of competitive mail at the "mail moment" each day. All in all, direct mail is a pretty fabulous channel.

Still, direct mail can use a little help to be more effective – sure his message is targeted and stands out, but exactly when he arrives can be a bit of a mystery. He's also out in the mail box by himself, while most of the other channels tend to live online. Getting him hooked up is essential.

Knowing where your direct mail is and when it gets delivered is critical. Fortunately, there is a tool for doing that – Intelligent Mail. Intelligent Mail follows every piece of mail as it travels through USPS sorting equipment and can provide reliable information on when the mail is delivered. Mail is not the man of mystery he once was – we know exactly when he arrives.

Of course knowing when the mail is delivered doesn't do you any good unless you do

something with that information. Triggering your next marketing channel is the best use of the delivery data. And not all of the mail delivers on the same day – so all of your follow-ups shouldn't go on the same day, either. Use the sophistication of Intelligent Mail to trigger each follow-up uniquely, so every piece of mail has its perfect match at the perfect time. If that follow-up is an email, as it often is, you may want to delay it to deliver a day or two after the mail is delivered. In B-to-B mail in particular, it may take a day to two to reach your prospect's desk. Intelligent Mail and good business rules let you time each piece perfectly. Who knew direct mail could show such sensitivity?

And mail tracking and triggering doesn't have to be direct mail's only link to online channels. Every piece of mail can have its own Personal URL (PURL) that links that piece to a specific landing page – and not just any landing page, but one designed specifically for that prospect – so direct mail can be very particular. Not only can mail have a unique PURL, every piece can also have a unique QR code, that again takes the prospect to a landing page designed just for them – and this time it's optimized for a mobile device. Mail doesn't always have to wait to get to a computer to get hooked
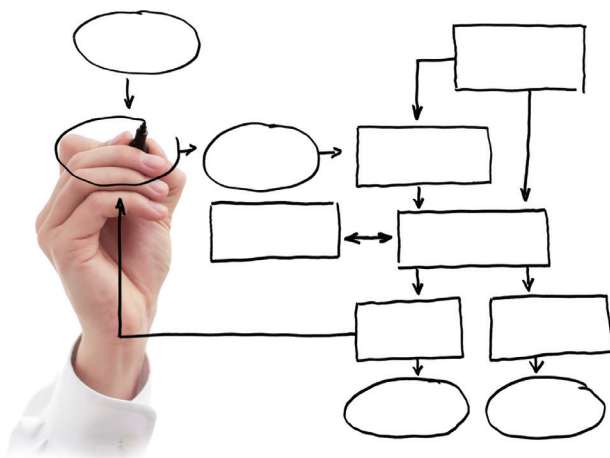
up – it can happen right at the mail box, if the prospect scans the QR code with their mobile device.

So direct mail doesn't have to be mysterious and alone. With Intelligent Mail tracking we can know when he arrives and hook him right up by triggering a coordinated email at the perfect moment. And direct mail can reach out to the online world, too, with PURLs and QRURLs linking him to the perfect landing page. Sophisticated, intelligent, discriminating, communicative… this is one desirable piece of mail.

EMAIL MEETS MAIL… AND MORE

Email is another channel that can stand strong on her own, or can lend support – and a response path – to direct mail. Email can be triggered by the delivery of the direct mail channel of a campaign, or can be sent out as a unique blast at one time. Most multi-channel campaigns employ both. One of the advantages of email is that she is cheap and easy – and we mean this in the most positive way. There is very little production involved, so there is a low unit cost. Used strategically as part of a larger campaign, email can be very effective in reinforcing other channels, and can provide an immediate response link. If

the value proposition presented in an email is appealing, the prospect can click right then and there to respond. The downside of email is that she is often ignored – open rates are rarely more than 10% - 15%. Email can also be harder to target, and it is permission based, so you can't send it to a prospect unless they have given permission.

Still, as part of a campaign, email can be very effective. She can reinforce the message delivered by direct mail, especially if she has been triggered to arrive at the perfect moment when direct mail has stirred some interest. And she can have a PURL of her own embedded, so when a prospect clicks on her link they are delivered to a landing page designed just for them – so she can be discriminating, too.

LANDING PAGES – WHERE MAIL, EMAIL AND PROSPECTS MEET

The landing page is the place that all of the mail and email, all those PURLs and QRURLs lead to. The landing page is where commerce happens. The landing page is where response lives.

In most multi-channel campaigns you will need to create a web and a mobile version of your landing page. While they should carry common branding – to coincide with the branding of the direct mail and email – they are very different in other ways. A web based landing page can be more elaborate. You have a large pallet to work with, and plug-ins such as Adobe Flash will generally work, so you can add elements of motion to the landing page. The mobile landing page is usually much simpler, employing perhaps similar graphics, but generally less text and fewer moving elements. The mobile landing page

should have large clearly marked buttons that make it easy to respond on the small screen of a smart phone.

Navigation to the appropriate landing page is accomplished in a few ways. If a prospect scans a QR code, it is generally sent by default to a mobile landing page. If they type in the URL, the landing page technology should be able to detect the type of device and route the prospect appropriately. No routing method is foolproof, given all of the different devices that exist.

Personalizing is critical, too. If the prospect uses a PURL or QRURL they should go to a landing page customized for them. Of course they are all visiting fundamentally the same landing page, but based on the PURL or QRURL, data can be called up specific to them, allowing the landing page they view to be personalized to them – maybe graphics specific to their gender or product information specific to their interests. The response can also be prepopulated so they don't need to type in a lot to respond – maybe just click on a "YES!" button.

The last thing you want to do is take your prospects to your corporate home page. You're making them a specific offer – make

sure you craft a landing page to show them just that. Make your selling message specific on the landing page. After they have responded you can let them see your home page.

In your campaign, mail, email, PURLs, and QRURLs all get together on your landing page. Make it a great place to meet.
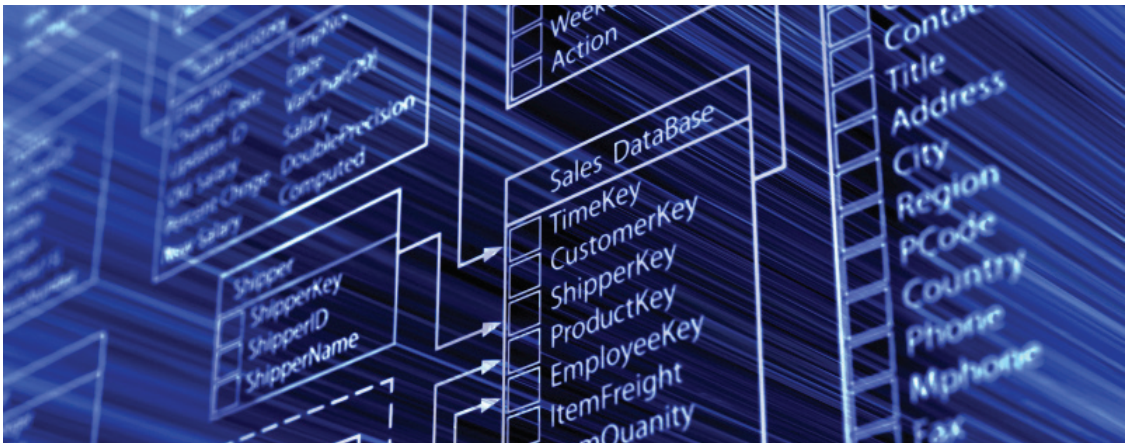
THE BIG MATCH MAKER IN ALL OF THIS – A DATABASE

The main tool driving all of this meeting and mingling is a centralized database that creates the prospect record, matches the email and tracks all of the activity related to that record, including PURLs, QRURLs and prospect actions. For any given record, a lot of things can happen, and the database has to track all of it:

- Direct mail sent;
- Direct mail delivered
- Email triggered and sent
- Email opened (or not)
- Links clicked (or not)

- Mobile page was viewed
- Offer was clicked
- Thank-you was sent
- Follow-up email sent

The list can go on and on. The database needs to be set up to monitor every event. Keeping a central database where all of this is tracked is essential to building a successful coordinated campaign; all of these actions can happen very quickly for a lot of people.

Each event may trigger another in a tightly timed coordination. A properly structured database and marketing system makes it happen. The payoff is significant with greater response and measurability with no additional resources.

CREATING YOUR DIRECT MARKETING CONNECTION

THE SAME PEOPLE DOING THE SAME THINGS – BUT TOGETHER

If you look at the activities in a coordinated campaign, none of them are unique, or even unusual. They are, in all likelihood, things that your organization already does today – sending direct mail promotions, sending emails, and giving leads to sales people. What we're urging is that you coordinate these efforts. Organizationally it may require a more senior executive to initiate such efforts, and the right vendor or team of vendors to execute. Smaller organizations or those testing the concept may be better off working with a single skilled vendor as coordinator.

GETTING STARTED

1) Develop a strategic offer: This is the selling proposition of the campaign. It may well be an offer you have used before – indeed the message does not need to be unique or even changed, to use in a coordinated campaign. It is the execution, not the offer, which is different.
2) Develop a tactical plan: Working with your vendor(s) decide what media you want to deploy in the campaign.
3) Create the business rules for the campaign: Determine what action you will take based on prospect actions. Have a plan for steering a prospect to accepting your offer, as well as how to handle those who don't.
4) Determine the tools you will need to execute the campaign:
   a. Mail tracking
   b. Landing pages
   c. Centralized data management
   d. Email tracking and reporting. There may well be many more tools that you will use in your particular campaign.
5) Do the creative: Determine what elements need to be designed, and get it done at one time. For a typical campaign you are probably looking at designing:
   a. Direct mail promo
   b. Email promos
   c. Landing pages (web and mobile)
   d. Splash pages and fulfillment items
6) Plan out the deployment, based on rules and tools. It may be helpful to flow-chart the process.
7) Make sure you have measurement tools in place.
8) Deploy!

PLANNING, MEASURING, AND PAYOFF

In the end, with coordinated marketing the only difference is the planning and measurement you put into place. With a well-planned campaign very little is left to chance. All responses (or lack thereof) should be managed in a centralized database, and every next action planned by a business rule.

The payoff of a coordinated direct marketing campaign is increased response and trackability using the same resources. The only thing you will really doing that is different is coordinating your efforts. Set up the right rules, build with the right tools, and succeed!

LET SNAILWORKS™ EXECUTE IT FOR YOU

Snailworks™ is a ready-built suite of services that can help you create coordinated direct marketing campaigns today. SnailWorks puts your "snail mail" at the heart of your campaign, and coordinates it with all of the other marketing channels to boost response and effectiveness. Getting started is often the hardest part – SnailWorks gives you the tools to start today!

When you choose to work with the SnailWorks system we work with you to build the business rules you need for your specific campaigns, and choose the appropriate tools for each campaign. Our coordinated marketing professionals walk you through the process of building and executing the campaign, including:

- Direct mail design and production;
- Mail tracking and email triggering;
- Email marketing – triggered, coordinated
- Landing page creation and hosting – web and mobile
- Coordination tools – PURLs, QR codes, QRURLS and more
- Tracking and reporting on every element of your campaign from a simple, intuitive online dashboard.

You provide the offer, and we'll execute the tactics and coordination. With SnailWorks™ your integrated marketing becomes reality – today! We don't just talk about integrated direct marketing – we do it!

MAIL, MEET PURL... AND EMAIL, MOBILE, LANDING PAGES FOR A LONG TERM RELATIONSHIP LEADING TO SUCCESS!

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ABOUT SNAILWORKS

SnailWorks™ is an integrated direct marketing platform from ProList, Inc. – the same team that made mail tracking easy in 2000. We've leveraged our expertise in mail tracking and web-based interfaces to create a solution that allow direct marketers to increase the effectiveness of direct mail through coordinated channels.

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