Checklist - Direct Mail Campaign

1. **Advantages of Direct Mail**

    A.   Individuals are communicated with on a person-to-person level.

    B.   Waste can be low if targeted individuals are carefully selected.

    C.   Effectiveness is easily and quickly measured.

    D.   Initial testing is easy (by sending out to a sample of addresses).

    E.   Direct mailing can save time and money for the recipient since he/she does not have to visit, for example, a retail outlet.

    F.   Direct mailing can be more convenient for the recipient since the decision of whether or not to purchase the product or service can be made at his or her leisure.

2. **Disadvantages of [Direct Mail](#)**

    A.   People are often wary of and/or uninterested in unsolicited "junk" mail.

    B.   A suitable mailing list must be available. The research required to build up a suitable list can be expensive.

    C.   An up-to-date and accurate mailing list is relatively rare.

3. **Action checklist**

    A.   Define the terms of reference.

        1.   Identify what you want to achieve by using direct mail. For example, is it a general awareness campaign or is it to help launch a new service or product?

        2.   The target audience for the campaign should be defined. For example, are there sectors who do not use the service or product, or are there those who subscribe in larger quantities?

        3.   Identify the profile of your best customers and you will identify the profile of your best prospects.

        4.   Assign a budget for the campaign.

    B.   Decide who is to run the campaign.

        1.   Consider appointing an agency to run the campaign. However, you may be able to use your own marketing department if you have one which is large enough, or a special working party drawn from your organization.

        2.   Consider contracting the work out to an external consultant if you feel you lack the necessary expertise internally. This may prove to be more expensive, but a badly run campaign is not just ineffective, it can be damaging to an organization's reputation.

    C.   Prepare or obtain a mailing list.

        1.   Evaluate the usefulness of the information on in-house databases.

        2.   If there are limitations, suggest improvements.

        3.   If an in-house database doesn't exist, consider the benefits and costs of `
                starting one.

        4.   It will be much cheaper to purchase a mailing list from a specialist
                company.

                a.   Make sure you check the company's reputation for producing lists.

                b.   The addressee information must be up-to-date and accurate.

4.   Design the Mailing

    A.   Check out in-house capability of designing advertising material.

    B.   Be creative when designing the mailing (including the envelope) to attract
          and hold the attention of the addressee.

        1.   Make the mailing look as personal as possible.

        2.   Ensure that the design matches the type of target; for example, the style
              appropriate for teenagers will differ from that appropriate to senior
              managers.

    C.   Consider contracting out the design stage to an appropriate agency if
          your organization lacks the expertise.

5.   Build in the Trust Factor

    A.   If you are looking for a direct return from the recipient, such as the disclosure of
          personal information, offer a meaningful incentive for the recipient.

    B.   Make yourself aware of the main points of privacy regulations.

6.   Get the Right Incentive

    A.   Offer a stimulus for an early response, possibly a discount or free gift, since the
          longer a person leaves mail unanswered the less likely they are to

answer.

    B.   In cases which need a mailed response, enclose a postage-paid envelope and
          don't ask for too much information.

    C.   Minimize the time and complexity involved to complete the form.

    D.   It is often useful to produce two or three different designs to use in the testing
          stage.

    E.   Check that everything will remain within the budget when reproduced on its full
          scale.

7.   Test the Mailing

    A.   Send out a copy of the mailing to a sample from the list, making sure your
          sample is large enough to yield valid results.

    B.   If more than one design of mailing was produced, these should also be tested.
          Evaluate the results by checking the time taken to reply, the information
              obtained, and subsequently the number of sales.

    C.   Look for any sectors that have not replied, for example the younger age range.

8.   Make Modifications and Produce the Package

    A.   Make any necessary changes to the mailing and package.

       B.   Have the final copy of the package printed to the numbers required.

9.   Prepare for Response

       A.   Plan for a maximum response.

            1.   This may mean taking on additional staff temporarily or ordering greater levels of stock.

            2.   Customers will not be happy if their order cannot be met and/or are told an item is sold out.

            3.   Ensure that your staff are aware of the pending campaign and the possibility of a large response over a short period of time.

       B.   Prepare to monitor increases in telephone calls, orders, or service usage.

10.   Send out the Mailing

       A.   Depending on the size of the mailing it is often sensible to outsource envelope-stuffing to an external agency.

       B.   The size and importance of the mailing and the capability of existing resources and budgets will determine whether you need to take on temporary staff

or not.

11.   Evaluate the Results

       A.   See if the stimulus for early response worked.

       B.   Compare the results of the campaign (for example numbers of extra sales) against the original objectives or targets.

       C.   Identify problem areas and ways that improvements can be made for next time.

       D.   Make as much use as possible of the incoming data in order to improve your own customer databases and the profiles of order prospects.

12.   Dos and Don'ts for Using Direct Mail

       A.   **Do:**

            1.   Research your target audience carefully.

            2.   Use the most up-to-date and accurate mailing list you can obtain.

            3.   Try to be innovative when designing your letter.

            4.   Keep the letter short and to the point.

            5.   Make sure the recipient knows what they have to do next.

            6.   Offer a stimulus to reply quickly.

            7.   Review the results and use them when planning future mailings.

       B.   **Don't:**

            1.   Send out the mailing without testing it on a sample first.

            2.   Throw too much information at the addressee.

            3.   Use language or terminology that the addressee will not understand.

            4.   Forget that a successful campaign will increase the workload.