

# successful mailout

questionnaire; 16 per cent of consumers selected it.

The best message delivered by the study is that this year, as in 2008, 86 per cent of consumers opened mail packs - although in both years 37 per cent of these only opened ones from a company with which they have a relationship.

Robert Keitch, UK DMA chief of membership and brand (see also page 7) said: "Direct mail is a powerful channel for brands to communicate with consumers.

"However, it is vital that marketers truly understand what motivates householders to pick up the post from the doormat and open a direct mail pack.

"Consumers have clearly indicated that it's not to do with award-winning copy or design, but instead it's the basic reasons of it being personally addressed and coming from a brand they know.

"Direct mail, like all forms of direct marketing, works best when the right message from the right company is delivered to the right person at the right time. Put simply, precise targeting of consumers in direct marketing campaigns is ultimately the key to sales conversion."

## Blossoming of options

The enduring strength of direct mail - plus the blossoming of many new direct media options in the last five years - means direct marketing is more popular and better-received in the UK now than it's ever been.

Far from alienating our audience with too much communication and junk mail - as the national media would have the public believe - the reality is that, particularly when it comes to mailed

promotions and email, familiarity has bred trust and confidence, not contempt.

When email marketing, websites, mobile marketing and SMS are included (although the last two have made only a tiny impact so far) people are now far happier to receive more direct marketing about a whole host of subjects than they were in 2005.

For example, we found that 95 per cent are happy to receive information about supermarkets and stores they use; 73 per cent about local restaurants and take-aways; 66 per cent local services, tradespeople and shops; 66 per cent books, 65 per cent events and entertainment; 61 per cent DVDs; 53 per cent mail order catalogues; 52 per cent home improvement and gardening; and 50 per cent IT/computers.

Even subjects traditionally regarded as boring have some fans; for example, 12 per cent - unchanged since 2008 - like to hear about mortgages by mail, nine per cent (down three per cent on 2008) by email and one per cent by home telephone.

And 27 per cent of people (up from a quarter in 2008) like to hear about utility companies by mail, 22 per cent (same as 2008) by email and one per cent (down from two per cent) by home telephone. Utility messages via SMS are favoured for the first time by one per cent of consumers.

## Appreciate the changes

Overall, marketers tend to underestimate people's willingness to receive mailed promotions but they are either unaware of, or turning a blind eye to the changes advancing technology, the Telephone Preference Service (TPS) and

the opt-out box are making within their industry.

For example, because of the growth in TPS registrations, it is now possible to reach more people online than via the telephone. And, partly because of the UK Government's loss of hundreds of thousands of sensitive public records, people are less happy to reveal personal information or allow third parties to share it.

Until marketers fully appreciate changes such as these, their strategies will be flawed.

It has never been more essential for them to keep abreast of activity and opinion within the marketplace.

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Between two and three out of ten marketers greatly over-rate the power of aesthetics.

