

DAVID COLE says its not the designer but the backroom staff who make DM work.

Definition of a

HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS says there are marketers who look the other way

The greatest motivator for opening and reading a mail pack is that the communication comes from a brand or company the recipient knows. The second is that it's personally addressed.

With direct marketing, as with most jobs, it's often the painstaking, tedious bits that ensure success rather than the exciting creative or big budget productions.

The truth of this slightly depressing fact is illustrated in the results of the marketing industry study, the fast.MAP/DMA Marketing-GAP Tracker.

For the fifth year, the main two motivations for opening and reading a promotional pack have remained unchanged - and they are nothing to do with show-stopping artwork or brilliant copywriting.

Half the respondents agree the greatest motivator is that the communication comes from a brand or company the recipient knows. The second (47%) is that it's personally addressed to them.

The percentages for these two options have fluctuated by up to nine per cent over the years, but they have always been at the top of the chart.

The fast.MAP/DMA Marketing-GAP Tracker charts year-on-year changes in people's usage of and attitudes to marketing (among a panel of

1,376 consumers whose profile echoes the UK demographics), and also monitors marketers' ability to observe and respond to those changes.

The GAP is the gulf between what consumers are actually doing and thinking and what marketers believe consumers are doing and thinking.

About half the panel of 300 marketers (comprising UK DMA members plus the fast.MAP marketer panel) are on the right track when it comes to identifying what makes people open promotional packs. But, as in previous years, between two and three out of ten of them greatly over-rate the power of aesthetics.

Analysing the graph

'Interested in the product or service' (42%) would have held third place, had the position not been usurped by a new option added this year. The 'May contain a coupon or voucher' option zoomed straight in as third strongest motivation (44%) - two places above 'See it contains a free sample or voucher' (38%), which would otherwise have remained

fourth strongest motivator.

This surprising outcome no doubt reveals a human predilection to take a punt. Seemingly, the uncertainty adds a certain frisson.

Creative content - looks fun (eight per cent), attractive envelope (four per cent), design (three per cent) and colour (one per cent) - have remained the least important motivational tools over the five-year study period. But although these are not pivotal reasons for opening and reading a direct promotion, they are also least likely to deter people from doing so.

The top five reasons why people throw away promotional packs unopened have also remained unchanged for half a decade. They are the converse of their reasons for opening them - that is, because the recipient is not interested in either the product (69%) or company (74%); because the pack is not personally addressed (39%); lack of time (19%); or because people object to being sent marketing (70%).

'Incorrect address' was added to the demotivation checklist in this year's

What makes you decide to open/read a direct mail pack?

| Year | consumers 2009 | marketers 09 | 2008 | 2007 | 2006 | 2005 |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|------|------|------|------|
| | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| From brand/company I know | 50 | 56 | 55 | 56 | 47 | 51 |
| Personally addressed to me | 47 | 42 | 51 | 49 | 43 | - |
| May contain a coupon/voucher | 44 | 31 | - | - | - | - |
| Interested in the product/service | 42 | 55 | 50 | 46 | 42 | 50 |
| See it contains free sample/voucher | 38 | 50 | 39 | 40 | 36 | 43 |
| Local services or events | 21 | 28 | 27 | 24 | 21 | 28 |
| Because it's a competition | 19 | 31 | 21 | 20 | 18 | 23 |
| Interesting package | 15 | 34 | 15 | 19 | 17 | 21 |
| Other | 14 | 3 | 12 | 12 | 16 | 21 |
| Looks fun/humorous | 8 | 25 | 10 | 11 | 10 | 14 |
| Attractive envelope | 4 | 19 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 7 |
| The design | 3 | 21 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 7 |
| The colour | 1 | 14 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |

Source: Fast.MAP/ DMA Marketing-GAP Tracker: 1376 consumer respondents: 309 marketer respondents