

The DM Checklist

Discover the 31 Things you'd better nail down beforehand to have a chance of launching a successful direct marketing program.

Like most everything in marketing, Direct doesn't come cheap. But when it's based on a strategic plan that's been developed with absolute precision it can be impressively, even spectacularly, cost-effective.

A successful DM plan begins with the answers to the questions on this checklist. And when we say that it's imperative for you to have nailed down all 31 of 'em before your program can hope to have even a shot at success, we're not kidding. The Kern Organization has been driving clients crazy with our probing, insistent questions for over two decades, and we doggedly continue to do so. For while it's true that meetings would end earlier and tempers would flare less frequently if we were to back off, it's also true that our clients' ROI would suffer as a result.

We simply can't settle for that. And neither should you.

It will be tempting to give short shrift to some of the items on this checklist, to provide casual answers, best guesses, working assumptions, data that's stale and statements that are, shall we say, politically correct.

Tempting. And potentially, quite expensive.

So make sure you're approaching each item on the list with maximum precision and frankness. Make sure, also, that you revisit this checklist prior to the launch of every direct marketing program your company undertakes in future.

Should you have questions, doubts, fears, or a crisis that simply must be resolved right now to keep your career prospects from going off a cliff, call 800-335-4244 or visit www.thekernorg.com today.

Establishing Your Campaign Goals

1. Provide a detailed description of your product or service.

2. How much total revenue do you hope to generate? _____

3. What is your average sale in units and dollars? _____

4. What is your pricing strategy?

Per-unit price _____

Per-unit gross margin _____

Per-unit sales _____

Marketing allocation _____

5. How does your pricing compare to that of your competitors?

6. Can your product/service be sold in a single contact, or are multiple steps required? _____

7. Is a one-step strategy appropriate given your market, product, price, and competitive situation?

Yes. Explain _____

No. Explain _____

8. What are your program performance expectations?

Response rate targets _____

Lead quantity _____

Allowable cost-per-lead _____

Cost-per-response targets _____

Closing or conversion rate targets _____

Expense-to-Revenue (E/R) _____

Cost-per-sale _____

Return-on-Investment _____

Sales volume target _____

9. What are your opportunities for up-sell or cross-sell?

10. Do you have specific budget constraints?

Profiling Your Target Audience

11. Describe who is going to benefit from having your product or service. Then list the unique features, advantages and benefits of your product/service for each target group.

BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS TARGET INDUSTRIES/COMPANIES

Target Title _____

Features _____ Benefits _____

Target Title _____

Features _____ Benefits _____

Target Title _____
Features _____ Benefits _____

CONSUMER TARGET (i.e. college kids, husbands, teen, mom)

Target Individuals _____
Features _____ Benefits _____

Target Individuals _____
Features _____ Benefits _____

Target Individuals _____
Features _____ Benefits _____

12. Where are your target buyers located?

13. Where do your targets get their information?

- Mail Online Industry publications Personal Interest Publications
 Friends, family or neighbors Other _____

14. Are they currently using a competitive product? Explain.

15. What would motivate them to make a change?

16. What situation/need/pain/issue will your product/service solve for them?

17. Will they need to change their behavior to use your product?

Yes. Explain _____

No

Offering the Right Incentive to Respond or Buy

18. If your product/service can be sold in a single step, what incentive offers can you make to sweeten the buying decision?

Discounts _____

Bonus accessories _____

Free services _____

Bonus services _____

Bonus gift _____

Free shipping _____

Other(s) _____

19. If your product/service requires a longer buying cycle and multiple contacts to sell, do you have unique and insightful information to offer that a reader will request immediately?

White Papers or Guides _____

On-Demand Webcasts _____

Checklists or Self-Assessments _____

Online Resource Centers _____

Others _____

20. Describe the relevance of your offers based upon your target market's needs, pains, problems or interests.

21. If your product/service has a lengthy buying cycle, do you have multiple offers to provide that are appropriate at each stage prior to the purchase decision?

Offers Applicable to Interest Stage _____

Offers Applicable to Consideration Stage _____

Offers Applicable to Evaluation Stage _____

Integrating Your Brand Message and Direct Marketing Best Practices

22. What are the platform, message and relevant guidelines of your brand?

23. How much does the brand require you to talk about the company and the brand versus the needs of the target market?

24. Does the brand allow you to make your offer the star of your messaging?

Yes. Explain _____

No. Explain _____

25. Will the graphic standards or policies that are required support or conflict with direct marketing best practices?

Yes. Explain _____

No. Explain _____

Converting Leads, Closing Sales and Tracking Results

- 26.** Do inbound telemarketing and/or online marketing have a selling or customer service orientation? Are there any constraints?

- 27.** If Sales requires a multi-step campaign, have you carefully detailed the outbound telemarketing and/or online capabilities to support this effort? Are there volume constraints?

- 28.** In a multi-step selling program, who closes the sale?

Telemarketing In-person sales Online
 Other _____

- 29.** Are the fulfillment capabilities described in detail? Are there volume constraints?

- 30.** Is the back-end ready to support sales conversion?

Yes. Explain _____
 No. Explain _____

- 31.** At the end of the program, how will success be measured? Check all that apply.

Response rates _____ Lead quantity _____
 Cost-per-lead _____ Cost-per-response _____
 Closing or conversion rates _____ Expense-to-Revenue _____
 Cost-per-sale _____ Return-on-Investment _____
 Sales volume _____

THE | kern | ORGANIZATION
Essential Direct™

Russell M. Kern

President/Founder
rkern@thekernorg.com

818-703-8775
www.thekernorg.com
20955 Warner Center Lane, Woodland Hills, CA 91367

es·sen·tial *adj* **1.** of the highest importance for achieving something.

Encarta® World English Dictionary
©2005 Microsoft Corporation

Es·sen·tial Dir·ect *n* **1.** a swiftly executed, battle-tested approach to solving marketing problems that minimizes expenditure and maximizes results for clients who thought they'd never live to see it happen.

Sign on the wall at
The Kern Organization

THE | kern | ORGANIZATION
Essential Direct™

800-335-4244 • www.thekernorg.com