



## ***The Key To Make Direct Mail Leads Work For You***

Recent scrutiny from state and federal officials has caused concern for financial advisors utilizing direct mail companies that supply lead generation solutions. The crackdown focused on mail houses that were attempting to get around the Do Not Call list by gaining information about prospects using questionable direct mail content. This scrutiny has elicited several high profile news articles, including a front page story in the Wall Street Journal. But financial advisors should not fear this zealous scrutiny – they should simply ensure that their marketing partner is doing what is right for families as well their practice.

The key to making lead generation successful is to quality check the solution provider you are working with. Knowing and understanding the right way to attract a prospect is critical to your overall success and “just” sending out mail to illicit a response should not qualify as true lead generation. Here are some areas to carefully consider:

### **THE MAILER**

Review the mail piece carefully before deciding which one to send. A response rate is “good” if the responder is a potential client. If a company is promising a 3% response, but the topic is not something that is relevant to your community – then don’t waste your time or money. Choose a mail piece that is right for you and right for the type of clients that you would like to have. Ensure that the mail piece does not imply that it is coming from a government agency. This causes confusion for the prospect and will cause you difficulty when attempting to set appointments with those responders. Be extremely cautious of the information that is being requested on the response card and how that information is being protected for the consumer. If they are being asked their birthday or spouses birthday on the reply card that is often unnecessary information for you to have right out of the gate. All you need for permission to call that prospect is an acknowledgement through date or signature that the responder is requesting the information from you.

In all sales situations it is imperative to gain the trust of the prospect and you can’t do that if you are asking for information that is not relevant to have for a first meeting or conversation. You should pay close attention to how the response is returned. If the prospect is sending a mail-back reply it should be enclosed in a postage-paid reply envelope to safe guard the prospects information.

The mailer should also include a small disclaimer that notes the fact that the mailer is not associated with any state or federal agency and that they should consult with an attorney or financial advisor for more detailed information. These are important elements that inform the consumer of their rights and protect you, the advisor, from any complaints.

## THE RESPONSE

Ensure that the direct mail company that you are working with has a plan of action to get your responses to you quickly. Even in the situation of a reply card, you should wait no longer than 14 days to see responses. The best option is to work with a direct mail provider that offers both a phone in response and a mail back feature. This not only causes quicker responses, but offers the consumer a choice. One provider, Seminar Direct, even offers a recorded call function that allows advisors to listen to the conversation between the operator and the prospect as they discuss the reasons why the prospect is calling. This is a huge benefit to you as you begin to make your call backs to the prospects. Can you imagine your first conversation with the prospect starting off like this: "Hi, Ms. Jones, I am returning your call from earlier today about your concerns over your 401k." This immediate ice breaker is a significant part of a process that Seminar Direct offers.

The majority of direct mail lead generation companies receive the mail back responses and collect them for you over a period of a few weeks and then mail the stack of responses to you to. Today's society does not have time to play the waiting game and your prospects will often forget that they even sent the card in when you contact them because of the time lapse. Use an organization that will get you the prospect information within 24 hours of receiving the response. This will save you time in reminding the prospect what they responded to as well as stop other advisors in your community from getting to your prospects first.

An important thing to remember is that these prospects are calling for more information, frequently offered in the form of a brochure or report. Most companies supply these to you as part of the direct mail order. It is critical for you to make sure and get that information in the hands of the prospect. Even if you speak with them on the phone and they don't want to meet with you – put the brochure in the mail to them. You are building your reputation in your local community and you can only do that by following through with what is promised. Word-of-mouth referrals are key in the long-term success of your business. Even if that prospect does not want or need your help today – it does not mean that their neighbor or friend won't need some help tomorrow. Allow your investment to work for you even if they are not going to be your customers right away.

## THE FIRST CONTACT

The first contact is really accomplished by the style of the advisor. Some advisors will take the cards and knock on the door with the brochure in hand, while others will make a phone call to schedule a time when they can bring the brochure by their house. Either way, advisors should remind the prospect why they are contacting them. Here are some phrases that have worked for advisors across the country:

“Hi Ms. Jones, I am calling you back about the brochure you requested regarding saving taxes on your social security. I have that brochure for you and I see you live on Main Street. I am headed out that way later today, could I drop the brochure off to you?”

“Hi Ms. Jones, I wanted to thank you for requesting our brochure on minimizing the taxes you pay on social security. Can I drop that information by to you today and take a second to explain some of the information in that brochure. It won't take but 15 minutes.”

Remember to be personable. Remember that these people need your guidance and want the information that you are providing. The first contact sets the tone for your future conversations and possibly many referrals down the road.

## CONCLUSION

It is important to retain your integrity while building your business and a prime way that you can do that is by working with vendors who not only have your best interest in mind, but also consider the consumer. Find a direct mail organization that has proven and consistent results with their direct mail leads. Make sure that they have the ability to get your leads to you quickly and efficiently while offering quality information to the consumer. Following this formula will show your community that you have their best interest at heart.

*Seminar Direct has supplied thousands of financial advisors with quality direct mail solution for over ten years. Their staff is experienced in providing solutions to advisors for seminars, lead generation, drip marketing and NASD reviewed seminar presentation. They have a robust solution with online tools that allow you immediate access to your prospects and quality mail pieces with a significant ROI. For more information on their solutions please contact a representative at 888-629-1919 or visit them on the web at [www.seminardirect.com](http://www.seminardirect.com)*