

Stephen Oliver:

... that you cycled through with your staff and black belts if not on a broader group. But anyway, let's... Our primary topic today is direct mail and we touched upon direct mail briefly last week. But let's try to dig a little deeper today. It's such a broad topic. The first thing I think to remember about direct mail is if you dig around online for marketing guru type of stuff, what you'll find is you'll find an almost total dominance of digital marketing, meaning Facebook, Google, blogging, podcast, websites, one thing or another.

Stephen Oliver:

And I've talked to a number of pretty smart business owners and as soon as direct mail comes out of my mouth, they go, oh, you mean snail mail. And that's a really incorrect way of thinking. We've hit this over the head a jillion times and I looked up some stats yesterday because I was doing a blog on this. But the stats I came up with, and I don't know as though they're particularly accurate, but in proportion they're right is it was actually saying, Master Moody was saying, I think 178 was the average daily emails people were getting. I'm guessing it's-

Greg Moody:

211, 211 I think was our last stat.

Stephen Oliver:

... Yeah. Yeah, so I think they underestimated it. And it was also saying that the average person gets 1.4 pieces of direct mail per day. And I think that was really based upon household counts in the US divided into how many pieces of mail go out each year. My guess would be it's more like three or four pieces of mail per day. Judge whatever you get. I get a lot of mail, but I try to be on people's list so just to watch what they're doing. But if you take that in proportion and you think about... And the stats I've read also, and I think this is pretty accurate is that a follow-up by email is about three times more powerful than a follow-up by a retargeting ad on Facebook or on Google.

Stephen Oliver:

So you think about that is retargeting is a powerful tool, but is far less useful, powerful, impactful than email. Email is far less impactful than say a text message. A text message I would say is probably comparable to a voicemail far less impactful than actually talking to a human being on the phone by a massive factor. The problem we know is of course is getting people actually on the phone. But then a piece of mail, I would put it below actually talking to somebody on the phone because talking to somebody on the phone is only bested by talking to somebody by video is only bested by talking to somebody face to face. So you think in terms of communication, your preference always is to be in what would be technically called synchronous communication rather than asynchronous communication. The revolution of digital mail and so forth was asynchronous communication, meaning you're communicating with them an hour later, they're communicating back. You don't have to be in the same place at the same time.

Stephen Oliver:

That's never, never as good as being on the phone, on a video conference or face to face. But when you start talking about direct mail is, we talked about this last week if you were on that meeting is the first most important thing about getting direct mail to work is mailing the piece to the right person. Now this

could be analogous to email. Email cold unsolicited has gotten the word from the Monty Python skit that it's spam. And unsolicited email with very few exceptions is almost impossible to get to work, almost impossible to get delivered, is not illegal, but the service providers will shut you down pretty quick because of the ubiquitous and semi free nature of the deal. It is become just... The world has become overrun with spam.

Stephen Oliver:

Now unsolicited direct mail neither has the same, what was I going to say? The same negative connotation nor does it have the same problems. But if you think about analogous to email is the first most important thing to get email to work is emailing it to somebody who knows who you are, who is going to recognize the sender, who is going to be receptive to the message. In other words, it's a solicited email. And the basic principle got started many, many, many years ago in part was Seth Godin who wrote a book called Permission Marketing. But it's the idea that they raised their hand, give you permission because they're interested and then they pay attention. Does that make sense?

Stephen Oliver:

So the same thing is true of direct mail though not to the same degree. So if somebody gets 211 emails a day or maybe more conservatively 175 or whatever it is in between or even more is there almost universally if it gets through the promotions file, the spam filter, the spam file, everything else, they're going to ignore anything that they don't immediately recognize. And then they're going to really ignore pretty much anything unless it's family, friends or it's a subject line that captures their attention from somebody they recognize. Does that make sense?

Stephen Oliver:

So those are all important things to keep in mind in email, but all the same direct response principles apply exactly to direct mail. Now does that make sense? So with direct mail, there was a famous copywriter and marketing genius, passed away a few years ago by the name of Gary Halbert. And his principal was A-pile B-pile mail. And what A-Pile... And here's the basic principle. I've used the example many times of pulling in to my house. The mailbox is at the end of a fairly long driveway pulling in the 911, pull the mail out of the mailbox. And pretty much before I ever get into the house, I'd sorted it into A-pile B-pile.

Stephen Oliver:

So the B-pile is things that I don't recognize, things that aren't interesting, things that I don't intend to open and there's a trashcan at the door on the way in to the house. And they go into the trash can on the way in. And really I kind of have an A-pile, B-pile, C-pile. The C-pile goes in, the B-pile might be stuff that I kind of want to look at and the A-pile is stuff that's important. Now so what would be important? If I got a personal note from any of you, from the end candidate, from my mother, anybody on that list, that's going to end up in A-pile. So how does that look? Usually, it has a live stamp. It has a hand address. Sometimes it has a hand address, return address. Sometimes it has one of those little stickers. But you get the idea. It looks like a personal piece of mail.

Stephen Oliver:

So in Halbert's terms, that's the A-pile mail is anything that looks like it's from another human being who sat down, hand wrote it, put it in the mail, was thinking about you specifically, one thing or another. Anything that's a mass mailing. So worst case, it's got a bulk mail and Disha. It's got address sticker or

nowadays, usually they're printed onto the label, but you can tell that it's a bulk mail. Those are all B-pile mail. Does that make sense? So at the highest level with direct mail and this is the same with email, I think it's important to take the principles away, is with all communication, if it's somebody they know, like and trust and they recognize it as personal is more likely to get opened, the message is more likely to get through, is more likely to be effective. Does that make sense for everybody?

Stephen Oliver:

So when you're using direct mail, that's the starting point is if you can accomplish, they know you, they like you, they trust you and it gets into the A-pile category, that's the best. So that then comes back to Seth Godin's, which was primarily referring to email, but kind of comes back to Seth Godin, Permission Marketing idea. So if it is, they recognize you, they've raised their hand, they're interested in what you're doing, which certainly is true, hopefully always active students. It's certainly mostly true of inactive student, especially recently inactive student. It's certainly true of somebody who has scheduled an appointment. They're coming in for your doctorate class, they've been in for your doctorate class and they haven't enrolled. Those are all people who have raised their hand, they recognize you, you've communicated with them in a number of different ways already presumably, they know who you are, they recognize it and they're more likely to open.

Stephen Oliver:

So if I had a choice on all of those categories or is it on any category, but especially those categories, anything they received in the ideal world would be a live stamp, handwritten with a little sticker or looked like a personal handwritten address. In the case of they're student, a former student, a prospect coming in for the intro, it can have the school return address and so where they're going to already recognize that. In the A-pile example that Halbert gives, normally you would have it be where it looks like it comes from a human, not it looks like it comes from a business. And a good rule of thumb by the way in everything you do is for everything to come from the human and nothing to come from an impersonal business.

Stephen Oliver:

So when you start designing email autoresponder sequence for instance, big mistake I see almost everybody make is the signature line says, for instance, Olson's Martial Arts. Doesn't say Amanda Olson, Chief Master Instructor Olsen's Martial Arts. You always want it to be from a person. So any communication, a text message, an email, a piece of direct mail, obviously a voicemail. And you've probably gotten robocalls that really screw this up. I mean, it sounds like it's from a corporation, even though it's a voice speaking to you. Have you ever gotten one of those? Sometimes generated by a computer.

Stephen Oliver:

Well, that's the worst thing. If you do a voicemail, it should be, and I'll pick on you, Amanda, hi, this is Amanda Olson, Olson's Martial Arts. I'm so sorry. I missed you. I mean, it should always be from a human and it should be introducing yourself as a human, a human talking to a human, not a faceless company talking to a human. Does that make sense? So anything you mail, whether it's a notice to a student, all the handouts that we always did in the schools had Stephen Oliver, preferably my signature, Chief Master Instructor of Mile High Karate. Always had that on it because I wanted it to be coming from a human, not becoming from a faceless individual. Is that making sense so far?

Stephen Oliver:

So again, I mean, if I was addressing an envelope and let's say that I was going to all the trouble of... And I see this happen a lot. Big companies do get a smart marketing idea, then they screw it up. So I'll see a lot of them where it has just the company name and then it looks hand address and then you open it up and the signature instead of being the CEO or instead of being a human is just, it says, sincerely Pella Windows or whatever. So you want to make sure to not make that mistake. I remember years ago one of the companies we worked with because we had a bunch of their executives. In fact, Greg Mary, the president's daughter years ago was Ultimate Electronics. But they were smart. Even their newspaper advertising had a picture of, God, what's his first name, of Mr. Workman who was the president and had a picture and all their stuff was signed.

Stephen Oliver:

This is a \$780 million electronics firm that was branding it with a person. If you look at ad you see, many times, even big companies figure this out. And so now you have the company, there's a face of the company. Apple computers, even though they didn't use him in the advertising, Steve Jobs was clearly the face of the company for many, many, many years. If you look at, what was the firm? I liked the company so much. I bought it. Remington, I think. But you'll see, age dating myself a little bit, when Lee lacocca turned around Chrysler, the first thing he did was he made all the advertising feature Lee lacocca. And it was all about his personal integrity turning around the company. And when they introduce like the LeBaron convertible, he did a whole thing. Even recently, I think he passed away recently, but even recently there was an ad with him and Snoop Dogg, which was kind of humorous because talk about a contrast.

Stephen Oliver:

But the more you can make everything be from a person, the better off you are. Everybody good on all that stuff so far? So see, from the minute that somebody raises their hand, whether it's a website opt-in or they made an appointment, one thing or another, following up with direct mail, but also by text and also by email and also by voicemail is you're better off to tag a human to all of the communication and have it feel personal and have it feel like, have them feel like they know that person, even if... Again, and [June Rhee's 00:15:42] case years ago, well, I mean, there was nine and 12 and 13 locations. The student was maybe an intermural rolled around or one of the testings they might need June Rhee. But they weren't going to have any kind of relationship with them unless they became a staff member. And then he was going to yell a lot.

Stephen Oliver:

But other than that, they weren't going to have that, but everybody knew from all the communications and frankly back then, they could have done a better job. But it's still the ads feature June Rhee. June Rhee, the master. They recognized and knew who he was. Now the martial arts mistake by the way is I see this a lot is you try to make the marketing about your resume. And now the marketing is featured with stuff they don't know about, they don't care about, that is irrelevant to them. All the marketing should be about them, not about you. But again, all the communications, especially once they raise their hands should be from a human, shouldn't be from a faceless company. Does that make sense to everybody?

Stephen Oliver:

Okay, so let's step back. When we talk about direct mail, it seems like most people want to talk about at one end Valpack and Money Mailer, which would be called marriage mail pieces or they want to talk about Every Door Direct. And those are both things that, although you can get them to work, they fall on the opposite end of the spectrum is the list is geographically targeted, perhaps somewhat demographically targeted, no psychographic targeting and no relationship i.e permission market targeting. Does everybody follow those components?

Stephen Oliver:

So if I wanted to get direct mail to work to a cold list, in other words, we don't have a relationship, presumably they don't know and love you, although all the type of building the Parthenon, everything from the banner on the school, the kicking guy on the front, the bandit signs up and down the street, all of that stuff up to and including massive Facebook campaign, massive Google pay-per-click campaign, effective search marketing and so forth. All that stuff contributes to you going to a cold person on your list and them recognizing you. With Mile high karate for years is it was such that if they had lived in the area for at least a couple of years, pretty much everybody knew of because we were saturating TV, infomercials, Rocky Mountain News, which is now defunct Denver Post which is alive but crippled. We were saturating all of that kind of broad media stuff.

Stephen Oliver:

So they are very likely when they got a piece of mail in the mail or when we... And by the way, we were saturating the elementary schools. So the kids were very likely to recognize us from their elementary school. Many of the parents would have recognized us from all the material going out through their elementary schools and all of the mass media market. They were very likely to have recognize this. But admittedly, that's a more difficult thing to do. Questions about that so far? So if you want to make cold direct mail work, the same principle applies is the thing that's going to make it work the best is the list. And there are, I don't want to get too complicated here, but think generally, there's two types of lists. Usually we're going to use the least effective one. But there's what's called a compiled list and there's what's called a response list.

Stephen Oliver:

A response list would be some other advertiser who aims that the same people that you're aiming at has already gotten them to raise their hand and buy something. This is again, dating myself, but there used to be where there's a will, there's an A. And for a while there, there was a company marketing fix your kid. Are you so frustrated with your kid's discipline? Well, if you could have gotten either one of those lists and gotten enough critical mass of names that were within a reasonable radius of your school, sending mail to those lists would have been more effective than just the fact that they lived in a three or five mile radius of your school. Does that make sense for everybody? But I'll tell you how you can accomplish that many times is what you do is you go to other businesses who have your clientele and do deals with them.

Stephen Oliver:

So if I had my choice of I'm going to mail on Every Door Direct list or I'm going to mail the list to the orthodontist whose office is next door to me or the pediatrician whose office is next door to me or the toy store who is next door to me and I'm going to get them to do, now this is a host beneficiary, host parasite type of thing, but I'm going to get them to mail to their list with an endorsement. Now guess what I have? I have a targeted list, I have from a name source and one thing or another that they know

and recognize. They're much more likely to open it because it's coming from them. And now I have an endorsed recommendation at the same time.

Stephen Oliver:

So an example of things like that are, years ago, we had Mike Misegadis. We did so much stuff with him. I remember them even though it's 20 years ago. But Mike Misegadis, we had his two kids in the program. He happened to be in charge of the Rocky Mountain Flag Football League, which at the time was huge. So they had elementary school kids playing flag football. So at the end of the season, Mike Misegadis would mail a letter to everybody who was part of their organization, which was into the thousands and it read, hi, this is Mike Misegadis. I've been so happy that you participated in our flag football league this year. I'm hoping that you will come back next year. One of the most important things that I would recommend in the off season is cross training and developing focus, discipline and confidence. In fact, I'd recommend that year round.

Stephen Oliver:

So the kids that we have who have the most success with our program have also been at a company that I know, like and love. In fact, my two kids just got their black belts from them, Mile High Karate. I've gone to the effort to have the Rocky Mountain Flag Football Association purchased from them a one month free certificate. And as part of the Rocky Mountain Flag Football League, you'll also get a free uniform for you to try them out and hopefully follow through with that at least in the off season, preferably on an ongoing basis because I know that'll help your child thrive and succeed. Everybody get the idea?

Stephen Oliver:

So we've done things like that with soccer leagues, baseball leagues, in that case, the flag football league. We've done things like that with chiropractors, with dentists, with orthodontist, with pediatricians. We've done things like that. Or you can even go through the list. And we've done things like that with US West and comparable employers. Part of what I used to do by the way is I pull out the Denver Business Journal and they're all over the country, but I pull out who the top 20, top 50 employers were in the state. And I would go after number one, number two, number three. In the case of, let's say, Jason in Seattle. You want to know who the top employers are around the Queen Anne area.

Stephen Oliver:

So you go after Amazon obviously and other comparables that are in your immediate area. But I would go after the top employers and hopefully find somebody who was a C-suite or HR who was already a student. And oftentimes, we found out about those people. But I'd go after those people to get them to do comparables to their employees. And I always would approach them by the way to do those kinds of things with what's in it for them. WIIFM is what Zig Ziglar used to call it. But what's in it for them is they're interested in reducing insurance premiums, having higher level of productivity, having fewer sick days, having perceived benefit from being an employee of that company. So they... And this is by the way, apartment complex is similar organizations like to have a benefit that they're providing to their residents.

Stephen Oliver:

So you can go after them from the standpoint of here's a benefit, a free thing, a discount and so forth for your employees, but predominantly the reason that you would probably be most interested is all the studies show mental acuity, everything else dramatically improves, health and goes without saying cardiovascular fitness, aerobic, anaerobic activity, flexibility mobility reduces sick days, reduces insurance claims, et cetera. So it creates a healthier workforce. Those who still, for instance, smoke, it gives them the ability to wean themselves. All of those who are overweight, it gives them the ability to wean down on that. And obviously the parents, something productive for their kids is always fantastic as well.

Stephen Oliver:

So you get the idea is you're going after those people from a standpoint of here's why it's going to be a healthy, productive thing for the employees. What's in it for you is lower insurance premium, more productivity, a healthier workforce and an employee benefit. Is this making sense to everybody? So how did I get onto this from direct mail? Well, remember rule number one is the way you get them to pay attention to it whether it's by email, by text, by phone or by mail is A-pile. Somebody they know, like and trust. So if I'm an employee, something coming from my employer, if I'm a patient, something coming from my doctor or coming from my dentist or at least coming from a company that I already have a relationship with, that's always better than cold coming from you or usually it's better than something cold coming from me if that makes sense. Hey, as I pause here, Sam, what the hell did you do to yourself?

Sam Llabres:

Can you hear me?

Stephen Oliver:

Yeah.

Sam Llabres:

Just been rolling through these intros like crazy. So we've been doing the Facebook thing. So I've just-

Stephen Oliver:

Oh, wait a minute. So it's a mask hanging around your neck.

Sam Llabres:

Oh, yeah-

Stephen Oliver:

That looked like a neck brace. I was going, oh my God, that guy broke his neck.

Sam Llabres:

... No, sir. I got a bunch of Facebook leads coming in at three. So I'm just ready and prepared, sir.

Stephen Oliver:

Oh, good. So you've got huge intro flow.

Sam Llabres:

Oh, yeah. Yes, sir.

Stephen Oliver:

Okay, well, that was worth the break. I looked at that. The mask look like it was a neck brace to me. I was going, oh my God, he broke his neck.

Sam Llabres:

Oh, God. No, sir.

Greg Moody:

He's really prepared. He's very prepared. He's ready to go.

Stephen Oliver:

Yeah. Yeah, and we'll try to get everybody put their own name there so that I have enough time not butchering names and group settings anyway. But at least I didn't butcher that one. But yeah, as soon as you logged on, I went, oh my God, he broke his neck. So it's good news you're slammed with intro traffic-

Sam Llabres:

Yes, sir.

Stephen Oliver:

... and you have your mask available for when they come in the door.

Sam Llabres:

Exactly.

Stephen Oliver:

Is not bad news. I've always hated, and occasionally, we've had the staff who shows up and they're going to teach intros in a cast from the hip down or from the knee down or they have their hand in a cast or they have a black guy. Master Smith, as you recall, that was a specific problem when he had a bunch of sadistic kickboxers training the black belts. My favorite, by the way, I wish I had saved. It was the memo that came out from January, corporate offices when Andre Yamakawa broke Jamie Trujillo before I was scheduled to have a professional fight with him. So the memo said, from now on just as a notice professional fighters and training injuries preparing for professional fights is not covered by Workman's Compensation. That was approximately what it said.

GMJeff Smith:

Very true.

Stephen Oliver:

Okay, let me take a pause. I've covered a lot of ground here, but questions about direct mail from this so far? I mean, let's make sure we end and we've got time, but make sure we end with action steps and priority order. Is this making sense so far? Okay, so-

Greg Moody:

I think, Master Oliver, I think maybe it'd be helpful for everybody to understand they should be using this in lots of different avenues-

Stephen Oliver:

Absolutely.

Greg Moody:

... and might be important for people if you're writing this stuff down to be focusing on the different ways that you're going to be using that may take... And literally as you're saying Master Oliver, write down some action steps here where you're going to use direct mail.

Stephen Oliver:

Yeah. Well, starting point is always make sure that things that you're trying to communicate effectively with your students, that you don't just email them or posted in the Facebook group or page knowing full well that most of the time posting it online, most people aren't going to see it. And even if they see it, they're not going to really sit down, get their notebook out, write it down, put it on a post-it note, put it in their iPhone or their Android calendar. So start with notices for your students. We're going to be closed on a Saturday for the intermural tournament all the way up to sequential aggressive, mailed a prep for the renewal, that all of that stuff goes out. Postcard letter, one thing or another as well.

Stephen Oliver:

The next starting point is to make sure that anybody who's missing an action. So inactive students that they're always getting mail from you and I would say at least a couple of times a month. But you're always following up. I mean, if nothing else that you may not get them back, but you may get their kids back, you may get their family members back, you may get referrals, but very few people leave because they dislike you. They leave because life gets in the way and they fade away. And I can't tell you... I mean, in fact, last time we did the little tour last live meeting, we had three or four people who had been gone for...

Stephen Oliver:

Well, one of them was a mom, Mindy Prime, who now has her kids in. And she was last a student when she got her black belt at 16 or 17, probably when she got her second degree, when she was off to college. Then she went off to college and now is full circle with her kids who are elementary age. And she's back and her husband's in there and her kids are in there. So it's always worthwhile to maintain that contact and that relationship regardless. And then the third is get really good at people who came in for an intro who didn't enroll. Moving it back a little bit. People who made an appointment who didn't come in for an intro. Moving it back a little bit. People who opted in who never made an appointment.

Stephen Oliver:

And it's again, the online lead capture debate is always do I just capture an email address, the online Google types? I keep being battered by people that we work with. Well, no, the conversion rate is much higher if you just get an email address. Well, yeah, but then what the hell do I do with that? So the debate is always do you get an email address, do you get an email address and a name, do you get an email address, phone number and name or do you get a name, email address, phone number and full mailing address. And usually our structure of it is to do a two-step. Get email, phone number, name and then on the second page, give them reason to give you a full address. I'm going to mail you something and collect a full address. And then you can kick off and do sequential direct mail to prospects as well as to people who've come in for an intro as well as people who... The other categories. Is that making sense so far?

Stephen Oliver:

So then let's go to again, go back to A-pile B-pile. A-pile is you just got a note from your grandmother and B-pile is Chase Manhattan Bank sent you a solicitation for a credit card. So B-pile is the stuff that many times, in my case, never makes it through the garage into the house, but ends up in the trash can by the front door and A-pile is the stuff that's going to make it into the house and all likelihood get open. So the easiest way to ensure this stuff gets opened is to have it look like A-pile mail. Now nowadays with all the digital stuff, there are some really easy ways to get mass mailings to look that way.

Stephen Oliver:

One that we've used a lot, although they're kind of difficult to use sometimes is app called SendOutCards. So what SendOutCards allows you to do, and this isn't particularly cheap, but what SendOutCards allows you to do is fill out a little form and it gives you a handwriting font and even gives you a handwriting font that looks like your handwriting. And then you can create everything from one-off cards to 1,000 of them that look like you hand addressed it. They'll put a live stamp on it and they'll mail it out. And you can also add individualized posters. So again, you can go back to the birthday party thing, put a picture of the birthday party on the card, have it looked like it's hand addressed, have the envelope look like it's hand addressed, have a stamp on. Does that make sense?

Stephen Oliver:

And Dervish, I apologize. Mostly these things aren't going to work for the UK, but there are comparables in the UK. And some of this stuff will or will not work in Canada. But another solution is the company that we use is called, well, we use SendOutCards, but we've used a company called Handy Mail and they do all kinds of direct mail stuff. But one of the things that they do is they have a machine with a pen, kind of like the politicians have always used to make things look handwritten, but they have a machine with a pen that you can give them the content and you can choose from different fonts. They don't do your handwriting. In my case, that's a benefit. But you can choose from different fonts. And now they hand address the envelope, they hand address the return address, they put a live stamp on it and you can give them a list of anywhere from one to 1,000 and they can send them out looking hand addressed. Does that make sense?

Stephen Oliver:

Now back to the A-pile B-pile conversation is part of the issue with A-pile B-pile is getting them to open the envelope. Now I'll tell you what a shortcut is. Sometimes it works, but sometimes it doesn't work is one of three things is teaser copy on the envelope. In other words, a powerful headline that gets their attention, that spurs them to open the piece of mail printed on the outside of the envelope. Number

two is using a postcard instead of an envelope. Now a postcard is, I won't say never, but rarely going to be perceived as an individualized piece. Now there are exceptions to that. One exception is you can do handwritten looking postcards just like you do handwritten neat looking letters. And there's another app that we use sometimes called PURLs, personalized URL.

Stephen Oliver:

And what it can do is you can do a personalized handwritten copy, but also then take them to a website that says, hey, Jim, thank you so much for your interest. What we were thinking about for you, Jim is... And you can have the URL personalized where it looks like a personalized letter. That's pretty powerful as well. So one way to shortcut the A-pile thing is with something that looks handwritten, SendOutCards, Handy Mail. There's others. I think one of them was thanks.io. I never use them, but I've seen them coming across my desk as well. But using something where you can do bigger lists, but have it be where it is looks personalized. The next shortcut is to use a postcard rather than using an envelope. Now, but those are a teaser copy on the envelope, a postcard or dimensional 3D, something like that mail.

Stephen Oliver:

So a lot of the 3D mail, and we talked about this a little bit last week as well, but a lot of the 3D mail type of stuff has one of two elements that either has you actually mail in something like, oh my God, what is this? So in a bank bag or in a bottle, message in a bottle or something like that or it's lumpy mail. You put something in the envelope that gets their attention. I get all the times mailers from people who want to do personalized pens. The people who print pens and different things, you've probably seen it. And what do they do in the envelope essentially always is they put one of the pens, it's already been personalized to your business. And so you get this package with this pen. You almost always open it to go, what is that? And then oftentimes, you at least keep the pen and use the pen. But those are examples of the 3D mail or something that's lumpy or something that mails in something that gets their attention.

Stephen Oliver:

A third element of that would be what's called a grabber and we talked about that last week as well, which is something to get them to open the envelope that might be handwritten with a stamp. It might be obviously, it's commercial mail, but there's a headline that grabs their attention, maybe an offer that grabs their attention. But then when they open it, there's something like a dollar bill attached or a fake million dollar bill attached or a packet of aspirin attached or something like that. It might be parents is your child's discipline problems giving you a headache every day, we have the solution. I mean, some headline that ties to the grabber on the letter and the point of the grabber is to get them to read the letter and pay attention. Does that make sense so far?

Stephen Oliver:

So again, I'm squeezing in here what could be a three-day seminar on copywriting. But I'm trying to hit a lot of different points. So step back a second, A-pile B-pile. A-pile typically is life stamp, handwritten, looks like it comes from somebody that I know, like and trust. And some ways they short circuit that by the way is all... I mentioned already, but making sure the return address is always from a person, not from a company or if it's from a company they know, like and trust, making sure it's from a person at a company hand addressed. But the short circuits on that, the hacks or alternatives are the envelope with

teaser copy, meaning headline, offer. I've done a lot where it has a headline, has an offer. On the back of it, it has 22 testimonials.

Stephen Oliver:

So you can do stuff with the envelope that makes enough of a sales argument that it tries to get to open the envelope. And you can do fake handwritten SendOutCards, Handy Mail, et cetera and you can do 3D mail. So you can do lumpy mail or you could do teaser copy with lumpy mail. You could do teaser copy with a grabber on the letter. Or you could do a mailer that gets their attention, bank bag or something like that. Or you use a postcard. Now the good thing about a postcard is on the way to throwing it away, they get the headline, they get a picture that grabs their attention, they get an offer. It's hard to miss what you're trying to pitch on a big oversized color postcard. The bad thing is with very rare exceptions i.e handwritten type of things, with very rare exceptions, they're not going to confuse a postcard for something personal.

Stephen Oliver:

If you wanted them to confuse it with something personal, you do something like, hey, I'm in Cancun and I was thinking about you. And on the cover, it looks like a postcard from you in Cancun and the back is handwritten. See, some of that stuff is pretty interesting. One of the marketing guys I worked with, he just had a serious stroke last week sadly, Bill Glazer. He wrote a great book called Outrageous Advertising. But he did one where he mailed it to everybody. And I think he was in the Grand Canyon and it was him on a borough. And it was a little one that barely looked like his feet were dragging. And so him on a borough and the headline was who's the greater ass? And then you of course had to figure out what he's talking about. And you read the copy.

Stephen Oliver:

So frankly, for your students and for your prospects, anytime you go on vacation, why not? Hey, I'm here in the Rocky Mountains in Colorado. Last time we were at West Point, we had one of our members take a picture of them. And there's a big tank outside of West Point with the big stone thing that says West Point. I think West Point Visitor Center is where it's at. So they had all their staff showing the West Point Visitor Center and the tank and they sent them a postcard that says, we're here at the United States Military Academy at West Point learning leadership skills. And one thing... I mean, great. Copy. But a great visual also because people are going, what the hell are they doing in their uniforms and for standing in front of a tank?

Stephen Oliver:

So do you get the idea? I mean, the more you do something that's interesting and grabs their attention, but the short circuits on it being personal are the postcard, obviously, the more interesting and unique, the better, like the picture of all the kids that were at the birthday party, like you and your staff standing in front of the tank at West Point, anything in between or it's lumpy grabber type of stuff to get them to open and or read it or it's something that fakes handwritten like Handy Mail or... And by the way, another resource. Handy Mail can do all the big oversized postcards and stuff you've seen by the way too. But one that I use a lot for like short runs is Amazing Mail.

Stephen Oliver:

And that's one where you can, like SendOutCards, you can upload a list, upload a picture and it'll mail it out the next day from Phoenix with 30 kids in a birthday party or 300 kids who were at a gym teacher for

the day. I mean, one thing I might do is you go do a PE teach for the day, once they're back open is picture of you and your staff in uniform standing out in front of the elementary school or you and your staff standing with a group of kids in front of the elementary school and that's the picture. Hey, we had a great time this week at Leewood Elementary. Billy, I hope you enjoyed the class as you remember.

Stephen Oliver:

One of the things that all the kids are going to do is come into our free two weeks at the school. And I wanted to remind your parents about the lessons. Something like that. Is this giving everybody some ideas so far? Okay, so let me try to squeeze one more thing in all the way back to lists. There's response list, compiled list. One iteration of response list is host parasite or host beneficiary, business co-promotional type of stuff, where a business that serves a comparable clientele, where it comes from them rather than from you.

Stephen Oliver:

Years ago, I went to a seminar with Jay Abraham and basically, everybody in the seminar was Tony Robbins customers. And the way he had filled the customers is Tony Robbins sent a letter from his list from Robbins Research, from Tony with a letter from Tony pumping the seminar. And it was a lead gen letter designed to get you to raise your hands say, yes, I'd be interested in coming to your marketing guru seminar, which by the way pissed Dan Kennedy off because the guy that made Tony Robbins was Dan Kennedy working for Guthy Renker who made the original Ultimate, what is it, Ultimate Power or whatever series work. But that's a side story.

Stephen Oliver:

A funny iteration, by the way, is Dan Kennedy has written one that I know of, one fictional novel and it's all about the success guru type of thing and the plot is basically somebody killed Tony Robbins because he doesn't like Tony that well although it doesn't say it's Tony. And all the different types of success gurus all have different personalities in there, including Lee Milteer. I don't think I made the cut, but Lee is one of the characters in there. But going back to that is, so you've got a list from somebody they already know, like and trust, you have a list of people that you already have a relationship with. The stronger the relationship, the better.

Stephen Oliver:

And then you get to respond. Other types of response are compiled list. And without going much further into response lists because it's kind of difficult usually for us to pull that off. But on compiled list, we've made that work, but made it work with, I want for kids mailing and women for kickboxing or adult man for MMA or whatever would be a little different sort. But for instance, for kids is we'll go in and look at income levels. So maybe the income sword is 75,000 and up. And then we'll look at home ownership. So we'll mail only to homeowners, not to renters. And then we'll mail only to two parents households, not a single parent households. In addition, this is all in addition mailed to households that have kids say four to 12.

Stephen Oliver:

So I can get a list now, may not be a huge list, but I can get a list of kids four to 12, owns tome, makes income over 100,000 or over 75,000 or over 50,000. Sometimes I can get a list which is increasingly difficult, but say Hispanic Surname Households. So I can do some specifically targeted to that demographic. So when I do a, that would be called a compiled list, when I do that, again, usually don't

do something like Every Door Direct, usually do something like for instance, I'm going to be at that elementary school down the street. And so I pull a list of everybody who's in the neighborhood that goes to that elementary school. And we use an app called Sales Genie, which just changed their name. I forget what it's called.

Greg Moody:

I don't remember what it's either.

Stephen Oliver:

I'll tell you in 32 seconds. Data Axle Genie. I don't know why all these companies changed their names from pretty good names to stupid company names. Some corporate boardroom somewhere thought it was cool. But Data Axle Genie, and it's the InfoUSA list. And by the way, this works in Canada, Canada, USA list also. In Canada, by the way, there's some rules that limit anything having to do with kids in the household. So typically Canada has been much more open or maybe I should say lagging the US from a standpoint of trying to kill businesses and keep them for doing things at work. They more recently have gotten much more draconian on email than the US.

Stephen Oliver:

But for years, they've had data privacy laws that make it more difficult to target families with kids because giving out demographic information of households that have kids and the age of the kids and so forth is one of the things they restricted. But for instance, so if I was going to do P-TEACH for the day or a Zoom group class for XYZ elementary school, I can use an app like that and I can go to the school website or the district website and figure out everybody who lives in that district. And then I can pull approximately the same list and I can come up with some portion, maybe only a quarter of them, but I can come up with a portion of the kids that go to that same elementary school.

Stephen Oliver:

And then what I could do is I could mail to that list or it's a good argument then to do Every Door Direct because I could go to that neighborhood and basically mail every household in that area. Or I could sort out the trailer parks and only go to the houses with three car garages. They're on the golf course more or less. But more likely what I would do is cut out the apartment buildings, cut out the government subsidized stuff, cut out the trailer park, cut out the houses with one car garages and I would go to the houses with two car garages and figure out those neighborhoods are. But that is a situation where I could do Every Door Direct and make it work.

Stephen Oliver:

And so I'm doing that household over there. I might do Every Door Direct, I might do bandit signs in the area, I might do rack cards in the area. I do all the things that I would do to promote the program in the school. But I would do all of the above to get the attention of people where I'm already going to be there once. And by the way, that's illustrated another principle. Rather than having a list of 10,000 people that I hit once, I'd much rather have a list of 300 people that I hit 10 times. Does that make sense?

Stephen Oliver:

I'm much more likely wanting to get them to know, like and trust me too to get them to raise their hand, to get past their buying resistance, to get them to eventually raise their hand. So I'd much rather hit them from 10 different angles and repetitiously which is the last principle I'll say about direct mail because we're over our time limit here is if I had a list, let's take that 10,000 as example. If I had a 10,000 person list, I'd much rather narrow it down to 3,000 that were good and mailed to them three times in a row than to mail one time to the entire 10,000. So if I'm going to a list, very rarely would I ever mailed to them once. Almost always I would mail to them three times or more.

Stephen Oliver:

Now that's true whether you're mailing to your students to try to remind them you're going to be closed this Saturday or whether it's a renewal blitz or whether it's a cold list that I'm trying to get them to raise their hand for some kind of free offer. I'm going to mail to them repetitiously rather than just mail to them once. And that's much more likely to get a positive response. Any questions on all of this? Again, I know there's a lot of content here. Bob, this might be one of those it's worth pulling the transcript, getting it cleaned up by rev.com and then posting this as well because there's an awful lot of content buried in there. Master Moody, what would you add to that?

Greg Moody:

Well, again, I think what you said that people need to pay attention to, which is usually something we fight people on is mailing to people multiple times over a short period of time. It's not mailing to them once a month. And well, you get vendors that come to you or even mailing houses that'll give you really bad advice on this. If you go to a mailing house, maybe somebody that's a student and they do direct mail and go, oh no, mail to more people. Or they'll tell you to mail once a month. And they'll give you bad advice on these kinds of things. This is the way that works.

Greg Moody:

Also with expiration dates on the mailers. Shorter expiration dates work better. You said a lot of stuff there and I'm not sure if we covered that thoroughly. I think Glazer was the one that I remember hearing this from that expiration dates less than two weeks. So putting a piece out that if you're going to mail to them three times in a month, that would work better than once a month for three months if you're budgeting out that well or that way. And having expiration date that lands somewhere around when the next piece is going to hit would work better.

Greg Moody:

So some of those things are really important when you're thinking about mailings and a lot of the mailing houses that you'll deal with will not give you advice that way because their job is to be a mailing house. Their job is they're not really marketers. I think that's really important. And that's true of a lot of vendors of marketing type media. Vendors of marketing type media are not good marketers. They're just vendors of marketing type media. So don't ask them to... Even people that sell you TV advertising or radio advertising or whatever it is, they're not going to give you the best advice about what's going to give you the best ROI.

Stephen Oliver:

Well, and the reps rarely know much about what they're selling.

Greg Moody:

I would give counterproductive advice.

Stephen Oliver:

Yeah.

Greg Moody:

They're just doing what they need to do to try to close the sale, which is what they're supposed to do. And that's fine, but that's not... You have to be smart about it, which is what we're here for to help you be educated about it.

Stephen Oliver:

And by the way, a good rule of thumb is to always look at what somebody pitch is compared to how they're selling their own thing and see if it's congruent or incongruent. I don't know how many direct mail companies their pitch is. Our direct mail thing works great. And what they're doing is they're making cold calls and that's showing up on your door and knocking on your door and invading your office to sell you on it. So the internet guys, the ones that are getting a clue are using direct mail and often their pitch is all you need to do is run this Facebook ad and do a sequential auto responders sequence and just get an email address. But then when you look at what they're doing, it's different. So you always do want to look at them.

Greg Moody:

Absolutely.

GMJeff Smith:

And I think one more comment on what you said, Master Oliver, I think the most or one of the most important things you said about the direct mail is your targeted list. Make sure you have a targeted list that's going to target to your dropouts. You have a targeted list that you send to your leads that never came in or the ones who made an appointment and didn't show up or the ones who took a first and didn't come back for the second or took a second and didn't enroll. Those are all really high warm leads that you can follow-up on. And when you're doing a direct mail piece that isn't with any of your former people, then make sure it meets your criteria on what market or what group that you're aiming at, the kid market or the female or the male or whatever it is you're looking for and make sure it's the right demographic and make sure it's close enough to your school that... And I liked what you said about it's better to do 1,000 three times than to do 10,000 one time.

Stephen Oliver:

Yeah.