

## Digital: An ideal way for direct marketers to go green.



Many direct mail marketers today are eager to implement sustainability initiatives and practices, but they face real challenges. Every year direct generates millions of printed pages. Each has an environmental impact: from the paper fiber content, to the carbon emissions of printing presses right through to the landfill.

Direct marketers, of course, are aware of this and are determined to become greener. But that requires time, research and resources. Right now, the industry is under pressure from rising costs and shrinking budgets. In fact, last year the USPS raised first-class mail rates by nearly 5%.

So what's a direct marketer to do? How can you fulfill the needs of your marketing mission and become more environmentally responsive in these challenging economic times?

**The answer is digital.** That means digital everything. Database. E-media. Digital printing. And perhaps most important, digital workflows.

Driving your email, print, MMS, fulfillment and more via a single, streamlined digital workflow will save steps and minimize the need for paper as part of the process. Furthermore, data-driven strategies will help you better know your customers so you can speak to them in a more focused, even intimate, way – regardless of the medium.

Here are six ways digital can contribute to greener, smarter direct marketing:

1. **Tighter mailing lists.** More rigorous list scrubbing can reduce duplicate and erroneous addresses to reduce the size and number of wasteful returns in any print mailing and minimize email bounce-backs.
2. **Less warehousing.** The added targeting precision that digital provides reduces the need to store and manage printed materials—including the energy required to run a warehouse—and obsolescence waste.
3. **Less internal paperwork.** Whether you're producing printed or electronic marketing materials, a digital workflow can minimize the number of steps and the amount of paper needed for internal development, routing and approvals.
4. **Cost-effective testing.** The more digital your process, the more flexibility you have to test, test, test. Whether it's short-run print versions, or highly segmented email lists, if your data and processes aren't digital, the versioning required for testing can be costly.



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5. **Cross-media campaigns.** Integrating direct mail with electronic media generally boosts response rates, thanks to additional "touches." It also enables you to reach customers in the medium they're most comfortable with.
6. **Direct marketing web portals.** For organizations with networks of retailers, agents or dealers, a web-to-print portal can offer direct marketing materials that retain organizational branding while enabling local personalization. This approach can reduce inventories, boost response rates and help control print volumes.

In addition to all the environmental benefits that digital brings to direct marketing, adopting it can also improve your company's profile. An understanding of what "green" DM is, and how digital technologies can advance your agenda, enables you to rise above the noise and demonstrate superior resource management in a competitive world. In other words, digital is good business.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Kelly', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Susan Kelly