

Making magic:

How to build stronger relationships with direct mail and corporate gifting

If you've written off direct mail and corporate gifting as a thing of the past, we're here to highlight just how well it can work alongside digital channels to build stronger relationships with the people that matter to your business.



The Year is 1000 BC and an Egyptian landowner wrote out an advertisement on papyrus and sent it out far and wide. At the time, this may have just seemed like a common-sense approach to that particular landowner, but inadvertently this became the first known example of direct mail. ([True story](#): The papyrus was discovered in Thebes, and can be found today in the British Museum.)

3,021 years later, direct mail is still one of the most effective ways to get your message out here. But if you, like many others, think it's a mummified art, we're here to show you it's alive and very much kicking.

It might even be your secret weapon to rising above the digital noise and building stronger relationships.

1%

response rate on average when using cold email outreach

[Clearbit](#)

18

calls on average before you connect with a buyer

[Gartner](#)

30x

higher response rate when using direct mail compared to email

[Cheif Marketer](#)

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If there's one thing for you to take away from this guide, it should be this: direct mail and gifting are by no means just for the marketing and sales folk among you.

In fact, a good direct mail and gifting strategy can benefit many areas of the business from customer retention, to employee engagement.

In this guide, we'll share various examples of how direct mail and gifting can be used across the entire customer lifecycle, from prospecting, to marketing, right through to customer success.

To help you navigate the busy world of direct mail and corporate gifting, we'll talk you through some best practices, handy stats if you're looking to get top-tier buy-in as well as some specific plays. So use them as they are or let them be a jumping-off point for your own strategy.

NB: We've divided sales into a few handy sections just to give you some specific advice areas, but of course, talented salespeople, BDRs, SDRs and lead gen folk wear many hats!

The power of direct mail and corporate gifting

Direct mail and corporate gifting have come a long way since the days of sending out papyrus and hoping for the best. When used as part of a more comprehensive strategy, they can:

- ★ Improve marketing ROI
- ★ Boost performance of digital marketing channels
- ★ Accelerate sales pipeline
- ★ Increase ABM effectiveness and efficiency
- ★ Improve employee engagement
- ★ Convert satisfied customers into loyal advocates

Employing direct mail and gifting at the right moments across different business functions from sales and marketing to hiring and onboarding can drive significant ROI.

Why? Because at the core of direct mail and corporate gifting is human-centricity. Putting people at the heart of your business decisions is never a bad idea. In the new era of direct marketing and gifting, you'll find you can automate, track and assess your investment efforts to move the needle for your business.

Incorporating direct mail and gifting into your sales and marketing process can drive real business results from boosting virtual event attendance to re-engaging prospects that have gone cold.



The elephant in the room:

many marketers think of direct marketing as an archaic way of making contact with people. It's perceived as difficult to scale and hard to measure.

But it's the 21st century and the stats speak for themselves.

Actual numbers from our clients:



[Leadfeeder](#) used direct mail and eGifting to break through digital fatigue and experienced a **384% ROI**



*Fun fact: the average webinar attendance rate is 46%. Yet, [Sailthru](#) boast a **76% rate** by sending an eGift to sign-ups*



After working with us, [test IO](#) calculated a **46% decrease** in Customer Acquisition Costs



[Contentsquare](#) generated an impressive **\$1 million** in pipeline using direct mail

When shouldn't you use direct mail?

Anybody who tells you that something is good for everything is trying to sell you something. The truth is, direct mail and corporate gifting only work well if you understand where they should be used – and where it's really not appropriate.

Quid (no) pro quo

If you plan to use corporate gifting solely to get something in return, then let's stop you right there. Like with any gift-giving, the onus should be to give freely rather than thinking solely in terms of reciprocity. Consider how you want your company to be perceived and act accordingly – it's all about building relationships through delivering those moments that matter!

No gifts allowed

Certain industries cannot accept corporate gifts or vouchers of any kind (we're looking at the finance world, in particular). However, rather than settling for bland emails and hoping for the best, you could consider charitable options (such as our great new option to [Plant a Tree](#)), some branded office supplies or merchandise that won't tip the balance but may keep you top of mind.

B is for...

The best of intentions, but also bribery. While we're sure that you have no plans to break any rules and regulations, it can be a bit of a quagmire if you don't know what you're doing. Bribery is all about influencing someone to act by withholding something, **our golden rule is to give without expecting anything in return**. Also, ask yourself: is this gift appropriate? Would I send the same gift (or gift value) to every client? Is this an appropriate time of year to be sending this gift?

Marketing

The already crowded digital space is becoming even more tightly packed, which means that it can be challenging to stand out.

Adding a non-digital channel to your approach can break through to your prospects in a way that digital alone struggles to do. Direct mail gives you an opportunity to leave a lasting impression and build a more personal connection with your prospects.

So take your marketing personas and use them as your focus point to deliver something THEY want.

If you consider yourself a client-centric marketer, then direct mail and corporate gifting allow you to show, not tell, your prospects how you operate.

Relieve the fatigue

Webinar fatigue, particularly in a post-lockdown world, is real. So why not make your webinar a more comfortable and welcoming place to be: perhaps a thank you pack with a notebook, pen, some content, and a highlighter along with an eGift card for a coffee to get your prospect more excited about the webinar and more intrigued to turn up and learn.

Lights, camera, action

According to [Hubspot](#), 93% of marketers who use video say it's an integral part of their marketing strategy. And user-generated content is the holy grail, giving you social proof as well as highlighting the quality of your relationship with your existing clients.

Thanks to smartphones, you no longer need to set up complex filming days, but it doesn't hurt to send some branded merchandise that can sit in a video background. Subtle but incredibly effective.

Content is king

Don't assume that everything has to be about expensive gifts and vouchers. You can also reach out to your list with carefully curated content such as articles, guides and events. Think about how you're providing value and add a personalized comment in your brand voice to deepen the relationship further.

ABM and lead generation

Account-Based Marketing (ABM) has become quite the industry buzzword and for a good reason. You can see some incredible results in your lead generation strategy when going after those high-value accounts.

Much of ABM is centred around creating bespoke experiences to stand out from the crowd. For that very reason, direct mail and gifting and ABM go together like fish and chips.

You don't have to take our word for it, though. Here are a couple of ways to use direct mail and gifting for your ABM and lead gen efforts.





Queen's Gambit

Picture this: you're a company with a killer product or service. What's going to pique your interest more: an email that starts with your name and job title, clearly lifted from LinkedIn? Or a link to a bespoke landing page with an eGift card for lunch to enjoy while you peruse it?

When it comes to how direct mail and gifting can further your ABM efforts, the sky's the limit. For example, we once sent a pair of scissors and a Google Home Smart-Speaker to show how we "cut through the noise". (Oh, and it absolutely worked – we saw a 1019% ROI attributed to closed won.)



ABM webinar and...

If you have a webinar as part of your ABM strategy for your Tier 1 accounts, why not turn it into an unforgettable experience. Book a sommelier to host a virtual wine tasting with samples of the wines going to your attendees a few days before. Or host a virtual cooking class with a voucher for the ingredients and a recipe card printed on a thank you note.



Getting personal

When you're trying to get the attention of a prospect, personalization is key. Thanks to social media, you can find out a huge amount of information on a prospect in a way that's informed (without being creepy!) Say someone's LinkedIn profile shows they're interested in a particular hobby or professional topic, why not send a related gift or eGift along with a follow-up meeting once it's been claimed? This kind of attention to detail makes striking up a conversation more fun for everyone and is a great way to show that working hard doesn't have to feel like hard work.

Business and sales development

One thing to note is that direct mail and corporate gifting aren't channels that compete with digital: they complement it. The average office worker receives 121 emails a day according to [Review42](#) and phone calls are just as crucial as Zoom calls or voice notes.

So, how can adding direct mail and corporate gifting help the more traditional routes?

According to [Campaign Monitor](#), B2B emails have a lower rate of opens and engagement than you might think – and cold calls don't perform much better:

- The average open rate of email is 15.1%
- The average click-through rate is 3.2%
- [91%](#) of cold calls are considered ineffective
- Over [20%](#) of cold calls result in a meeting
- [18 calls](#) on average to reach a prospect

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- ★ 18 calls on average to reach a prospect

Our research on over 60,000 sends of eGifts over email or by sharing a URL to claim the eGift across other channels shows that:

Physical direct mail bundles have a claim rate of **82%**

Marketplace sends have a claim rate of **52%**

eGifts have a claim rate of **22%**

Adding a physical channel can increase call attendance, email open and email engagement rates as well as strengthen your offering before someone has signed on the dotted line.



Fancy a coffee?

The best SDRs aren't thinking about how to sell their solutions but how best to meet the needs of a client. In a busy schedule, it can be tricky to find time to coffee and court a prospect – but once you've got a meeting in the diary, what better way to show you care about their needs than sending a coffee eGift or a lunch voucher for them to enjoy over the call.



Lunch 'n' learn demos

We've never met a single person who doesn't get excited at the prospect of delivering a demo. Wouldn't it be great to walk in knowing everyone is pumped to be there? Sending over an eGift for lunch before their meeting, along with the demo call invite, can be the difference between a successful demo and a no-show!



Welcome to the family

Weeks of back and forth, countless calls and emails, all to get to that final close. Direct mail and gifting are a great way to celebrate that new relationship – perhaps with a bottle of personalized champagne or some delicious sweet treats.

Sales process

You've booked the demo and now it's time to guide your potential client through the sales process. From navigating the decision-making process to helping your client get top-level buy-in, sales is a juggling game of speaking to many people in different departments.

When personalization is key, how can you do this without adding an extra four or five hours in a day?



Tis the season

Religious holiday, company anniversary, special celebration, or your prospect's favourite soccer team just made the finals? Tapping into world events is a great excuse to drop someone a note and a gift to say hello! A gift card for a new puppy pack or a bespoke gameday cup and snack kit is a great way to show how much you care.



Velocity = distance over time

The conundrum: you want to sign off on deals as quickly as possible without being seen as pushy or impatient. But you're also juggling many priorities, and sometimes prospects can cool off a little. So here's where a little push from direct mail and corporate gifting can get you

back on track and bring you back to the forefront of their minds.



Here's to our new relationship

You've pursued. They've signed. You've celebrated. But don't forget the follow-up – nobody wants a relationship that loses interest the minute it's locked down. Consider a gifting schedule where you can share company swag or an occasional email with relevant content they might enjoy. You'll be amazed at how far a little thoughtfulness can take you.

Customer success

We talk a lot about the chase when using direct mail and gifting but there's so much more for you to offer your clients once they've signed on the dotted line. As customer service begins to be overshadowed by Customer Experience and becomes [a major priority for businesses in 2021](#), it's time to get creative.

It's time to wield the magic of surprise and delight.



Hi, I'm your new CSM

Onboarding is something that can be overwhelming for clients. So, start things off on the right foot by sending over lunch, treats, or a voucher for lunch and treats before your first call. Little gestures like this help to solidify in people's minds that they did the right thing by signing with you in the first place!



You aced it!

When building relationships with your clients, it's always key to remember that your clients are working as hard as you are. So what better way to show that you're part of the team than by acknowledging their hard work and celebrating with them? Champagne is a great celebration gift! Or if you know they've been slugging it hard to get work done, why not send a little tea and pamper kit to give them the chance to catch a breath for a minute? Or how about some branded SWAG as a token of appreciation?



Cupcakes for contracts

What's better than a new sign? A re-sign! When your customers decide to renew, that's when it's time to break out the baked goods and have a little party. Adding something extra to a handwritten thank you note is a great way to show your appreciation for them and remind them why they love you in the first place! Cognism has been sending MIA cupcakes to re-engage customers that have gone dark and have seen a significant increase in engagement!

Employee engagement and retention

We've talked a lot about how you can positively position your company in the eyes of new clients, but there's so much that can be done to delight your employees too.

Direct mail and gifting can go a long way in boosting employee engagement and retention and turning team members into loyal advocates.

Why does that matter? Well, according to the [Center for American Progress](#), the cost of replacing employees ranges from 20% to a whopping 213% of the employee's annual salary. Meanwhile, HR industry expert [Josh Bersin](#) has suggested that the lifetime costs vary between 1.5 to 2 times the annual salary of your team member.

Direct mail and gifting can help you show appreciation and care for your employees – what might seem like small gestures for you can add up to saving time and money, increasing team engagement, and turning your company into a sought-after place to work.





Onboarding with a bang

Starting a new job is just as daunting as it is exciting. Speaking to the needs of your new hires as people (and not just as workers) is a fantastic way to start your new relationship. Whether that's sharing some branded swag or offering lunch-on-you for the first day at the office, you can show you care in a way that will leave a lasting impression.



Red letter days

Their birthday. The company birthday. Celebration days. National holidays. Marking red-letter days with an eGift or voucher is a tangible way to show just how much you appreciate your team's hard work and give them a profound case of the warm fuzzies (and don't feel like you have to be limited to the "traditional" days - having ice lollies delivered on the "Hottest day of the year" is guaranteed to bring a smile to people's faces!)



Teamwork makes the...

Just as with clients, we're not simply suggesting that you throw money and gifts at a situation. Simple things, such as employee newsletters and shoutouts, are also a great way to highlight that your company appreciates the people who make the magic happen. Sharing success and talking about what people are up to can help drive employee engagement and create a buzzing company culture.

SMART direct mail and corporate gifting



Return on investment

447%

opportunities generate

163%

won business



Prospect gifting

+19%

increase in close rate



Multi-channel marketing

+28%

increase in digital channel engagement



Pre-event (virtual)

+42%

increase in attendance



Seasonal campaigns

20hrs

saved per campaign



MIA prospects

+212%

increase in response rate



SDR outreach

+20%

more meetings per rep

We don't want to bog you down with trite phrases but there's more than some truth in the adage "Failing to plan is planning to fail". That's why we love an excellent SMART goal around here, and it's also a great way to ensure that your direct mail and corporate efforts are moving the needle as much as you'd like.

Specific

If you don't know what you're hoping to achieve, direct mail and gifting can be an expensive and ineffective use of your time and resources. Instead, be very specific about your focus. Not, "improve sales" or "generate leads" or (shudder) "build brand awareness". But "generating 25 sales-qualified leads" or "increasing pipeline coverage."

Measurable

Once you know what you're trying to do, you need to be sure how to measure that. For example, calculating the cost per lead or your return on investment is critical at any stage of the process. Ensure that you have your tracking and metrics plan in place and you know who will be keeping track of everything – and when.

Achievable

If you don't have existing metrics, it's okay to set a goal and make it aspirational. The trick to any goal is ensuring that it stretches you enough to get everyone inspired to work but not so lofty that it's unachievable.

Realistic

"I'd like to go from zero to one million clients in the next week" is a lovely goal, and we salute dreamers around here. However, it's best not to derail everybody with unattainable and frustrating goals when it comes to making the most of your efforts.

Timely

Is this going to be for a month? Two months? The next quarter? To get an accurate indicator of success, it's essential to understand how long you plan on running the test for and when you're going to pull metrics.

Only once you've reached this can you get an accurate view of your metrics and see what's worked for you.

Then it's time to dream it all up again. While the first SMART goal is always the hardest, from there, you can build and scale based on where you've been and where you hope to go.

Making the most of direct mail & gifting

So when it comes to adding a little flavour to your marketing and engagement efforts, direct mail and gifting could be your new best friend. It's not a magic salve, but with smart use of your time, energy and research (much of which you're already doing), it can widen your reach and improve your ROI.

Direct mail is ready for the 21st century and could quite easily be your superpower. Putting a plan in place now is the best way to ensure you're ahead of the curve.

For any questions, get in touch with us at hello@reachdesk.com.

 Reachdesk

We'd love to hear from you

Request a [demo](#) to find out how Reachdesk can help you deliver moments that matter at scale.

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