

Direct Mail Advertising

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THE basic reason direct mail advertising antagonizes some people, and is unappreciated by many others, is the very reason it is effective. It uses a medium of personal communication, puts its message in personal terms (if it is properly written and prepared), and asks for personal attention from the recipient. Not that it always gets that personal attention; but when it does, it has strong selling power; and when it does not, it may be resented in much the same way as is an aggressive salesman who pushes his way into your home or office, regardless of how busy you are with other matters.

Of course, all the pages of advertising you have to turn over in a magazine (and at least glance at in passing) and all the radio or television commercials you have to wait through (and at least take a little notice of) also represent an intrusive demand on your time and attention, in the sense that they are taking advantage of your use of the media for other purposes. But, though you may be inattentive, bored, or occasionally irritated, somehow you usually forgive them. They are more impersonal; they do not come in an envelope addressed to you, as if they were pretending to be something else.

In this article I want to try to explain the underlying philosophy of direct mail advertising in order that business executives may become (1) more understanding of direct mail addressed to them and thus (2) more realistic in their appraisal of the role such advertising fills, or might fill, in

their own business activities. These two objectives are not unrelated, for many executives look askance (or lukewarmly) at direct mail advertising just because of their individual reactions to it.

Clearing the Air

LET us try to clear the air immediately. There are several things in particular that may cause undesirable reactions to direct mail advertising on the part of recipients, simply for lack of information and understanding.

(1) *Sheer volume*: "I receive seven or eight pieces every day."—There is also a lot of advertising in the magazine you subscribe to, the program you listen to, and so on. But at least you can be sure that the volume of direct mail is reasonably proportionate to its effectiveness; the results of direct mail advertising can be measured, and no one continues spending money on it beyond the point where the response in orders or otherwise demonstrably justifies the cost. Hence, however large the volume of direct mail may appear to you individually, there is not much chance of waste from the over-all economic standpoint.

The thing to remember is that, though you yourself may not respond to a specific mailing, it may only require say, one out of a hundred to "pay off." Take the case of a 100,000 mailing to sell a \$50 service, the total cost running to \$6,000; if just 1% of those who receive the mailing piece respond the cost per order received would be only \$6, or 12% of sales.

(2) *Inappropriateness*: "Much of the stuff I have no interest in."—You are similarly exposed to a lot of other kinds of advertising

that do not point to a particular need on your part, at least as of the moment. But the fact is that the direct mail advertiser, by preselecting lists of specific classes or groups of people (income, position, industry, sex, home ownership, and so on), can come a lot closer to reaching just the *kind* of people who are his logical prospects than can the user of any other type of selling except personal selling. And a good many times you *do* buy.

(3) *Mailing lists*: "*Someone is selling my name.*" Here, admittedly, there seems to be a real difference from other advertising media. However, the end effect is the same. The purchaser of magazine space or air time does not usually see your name, though of course he is addressing you, and you as an individual are temporarily being loaned to him. At the same time, neither do most direct mail advertisers who rent lists ever see your name. For it is the practice of most mailing list owners who rent their lists to others to have the addressing and mailing done in their own shop or under their own supervision *without the renters of the lists being allowed to look over the pieces* before they are put into the inviolate hands of the United States Post Office; and in this and other ways they protect the names from being reused without sanction.

This can lead, of course, to your often receiving duplicate mailing pieces, as well as offers of products or services which you have already purchased or are currently subscribing to. A certain amount of duplication may, more often than it should, represent plain, inexcusable carelessness in keeping lists in order, but in most instances such apparently unnecessary invasion of your time and attention is the direct result of the advertiser's renting several lists whose owners are zealously guarding the names they have, including yours. This is good ethics as well as good business.

There are, to be sure, two kinds of lists: (a) compiled lists, and (b) lists of actual buyers, subscribers, and so on. Compiled lists are usually made up from names which are publicly available (trade and credit directories, telephone books, membership rosters, voting and tax records, mentions in newspapers, etc.) and thus hardly constitute any basis for personal annoyance on the part of those whose names are thus used. It is the use of the other type of lists which may occasion misunderstanding. For example, there may be a feeling that the organization which rents out the names of the people who patronize it—say, a magazine—is somehow being false to its trust.

Most reputable publishers go to extreme lengths (far past the point of profitability) to guard against misuse of their names.

So long as this is done, there is little real difference between allowing advertisers to address a magazine's readers through its pages and renting the use of the readers' names for direct solicitation. Moreover, no reputable publisher will allow his readers' names to be used without checking the contents of the direct mail material they will receive. Under the circumstances, the fact that a particular organization makes its names available (on a business basis) for others' use is simply part of the general interchange of lists whereby that organization also is enabled to grow and prosper. Take a magazine like the Harvard Business Review: for the most part it appeals to businessmen who have more than ordinarily serious *reading interests*—position or financial resources being secondary criteria—and about the only way to reach these men is through the use of lists of those who have already bought books, magazines, or other printed material.

(4) *Presentation*: "*Why did they send me this kind of material?*"—So could you criticize most other kinds of advertising, including especially singing commercials. But the point is that, in direct mail advertising above all other kinds, most copy and format are carefully calculated, both through analysis of past experience and through advance tests, and *it is results which count*. It has been repeatedly demonstrated, by asking people to score a sample of mailing pieces, that those unfamiliar with the field will completely reverse the actual order of pulling power of the various pieces. One reason is, of course, that "being pleased" with the appearance or message of a particular piece is a quite different thing from being "led to action."

For example, 70 out of 100 men may be pleased with a simple, short, to-the-point letter or circular to the extent of thinking, "This sounds good," or "Someday, when I have time, I'll think about this some more," but there is not enough power in the piece to overcome the inertia (the big stumbling block of direct mail advertising) of more than 5 of them; whereas another longer piece or even collection of pieces may discourage or irritate 60 of those same men, but have enough extra information and selling message to get the remaining 10 to send in a signed order card. From the business standpoint, the second mailing would obviously be 100% more effective.

Costs add another element to the calculation. For example, using first-class mail may get more letters past secretaries and wastepaper baskets (though it is surprising how much direct mail, even with third-class postage, does get to the intended recipients so long as it shows it has a message of legitimate interest to them). But the slight-

ly extra pull of the 3-cent stamp, adding \$2,000 to the cost of a 100,000 mailing, may not produce more than \$1,000 additional business, in which case it is not justified.

In any event, the one major fact to keep in mind is that direct mail advertising, where moves can be tested in advance and results measured afterward, is a game, if you will, of "calculated percentages." There are a thousand and one variables of copy, format, list, postage, and so on, any one of which can be manipulated in a given mailing (and its particular effect identified through keyed returns such as Dept. D., Box No. 1228, etc.). You put them together in a purposeful way, send them out into the cold, hard world, and then comes the thrill of seeing the order cards or inquiries come in from people whom you have influenced without ever seeing them, real people but percentage points in your careful calculations of returns and costs. If you make a mistake, there is no dodging the blame. If you succeed, the credit is unmistakable. Altogether the game is an exciting one—for, despite the tangible, concrete nature of the measurements, there is always something new to learn and to fit into the pattern, and the pattern itself is forever changing, both from day to day and from advertiser to advertiser.

Application to Business. As I suggested earlier, the really critical repercussion from misunderstanding of direct mail advertising is that executives may carry over their individual reactions to it in appraising its potential role in the selling and promotional activities of their own businesses.

Leonard J. Raymond, outstanding direct mail advertising expert and President of Dickie-Raymond, Inc., in a recent talk before the Direct Mail Advertising Association, told the story of the president of one of America's best-known national advertisers who proposed that the sales promotion budget be reduced and that the money thus realized be diverted to space advertising. The president had three reasons, according to Mr. Raymond:

"(1) The money appropriated for a special mailing to 200 thousand business executives—\$12,000—if spent in a national publication, would reach over 4 million people instead of only 200 thousand, and would therefore be a better buy.

"(2) In his opinion, \$3,500 of the appropriation, tagged for a mailing to doctors, was a 'waste of money because everyone knows that doctors get more mail than anybody else.'

"(3) His belief in direct mail was shown to be faint because, and this is a direct quote from his memo, 'the mail is so full of presentations on behalf of charities, laundries, automobile garages, and department stores that I do not believe direct mail is effectively read.'"

All three of those statements can be and were answered by Mr. Raymond with pertinent and convincing business facts, but the very existence of such statements is a clear commentary on the lack of understanding that exists about direct mail advertising today — misunderstanding not only among executives who have been and are using direct mail advertising in their own businesses, but also among many professionals in the various branches of the advertising business itself.

The men who misunderstand direct mail and its functions and uses are not only missing a particular excitement they can get from the use of no other advertising medium; they are also missing out on a knowledge of a selling tool that may well solve many of their own marketing problems.

But let us get back to the simple facts that answer the three questions raised by Mr. Raymond's client:

(1) The suggestion that it would be better to buy 4,000,000 circulation in a national magazine instead of 200,000 selected actual prospects is beside the point. Prospects, not suspects, buy merchandise, and selective controlled readership by actual prospects is only available through direct mail advertising. Too many people are concerned merely with the number of potential *readers* of advertising when they should and must be concerned with the number of potential *customers* their advertising will reach and impress.

(2) Certainly everyone knows that doctors get more mail than anybody, but as Mr. Raymond said in his paper: "Sure, doctors get a lot of mail, but the way to pick a good roadside restaurant is to find one with a lot of cars parked outside. The hit shows have standing room only.

"It isn't coincidental that doctors get a lot of mail. Doctors are unusually mail-responsive. Doctors spend a great deal of their leisure time at home. Doctors have to keep up to date. Doctors are not only interested in pharmaceutical, surgical, and technical mailings; they produce a higher percentage of return, at lower cost, on such things as business newspapers, investment

advisory services, newsletters, and other nonmedical propositions.

"Last year we made four complete mailings to a doctor list numbering 110,000 names, on the subject of a dictating machine. Somehow, these four mailings induced approximately 10% of these doctors to struggle up through their mountain of mail and do what we wanted them to do—ask for more complete information. Stop mailing to doctors?—what kind of sales suicide is this?"

(3) As for the executive's conviction that the quality and quantity of direct mail is such that it is not effectively read, Mr. Raymond said:

"This is pure personal opinion. I question whether this president, or any executive in similar position, has a *right* to such an opinion. First, because enforcement of that opinion, could have a detrimental effect on his company's sales; secondly, because the opinion is wrong.

"We could ask our executive how he subscribes to the magazines he reads, to business services; how he learns of activities of the trade associations he belongs to.

"But we don't need to do this. We can refute his arguments by citing actual examples: a mailing to the executive list I have mentioned that pulled over 20% replies; a mailing to college professors that pulled 7%; two mailings in his own field that drew 38% and 51% respectively; a mailing to morticians that brought 100%.

Every one of the mailing pieces Mr. Raymond mentions had to be opened and read carefully before any action could be taken, which should offer some evidence that direct mail advertising is indeed read. Effectively planned direct mail advertising is read and acted upon when it is properly pointed to pre-selected prospects, and the proof of that statement lies all around us. More detailed analysis of some of the points mentioned earlier will show why it works this way—and thus how it can be made to fill its maximum role in business.

Substitute for Personal Selling. Direct mail advertising is in one sense merely part of a larger field—*direct advertising* in general, which would also include many varied forms of dealer helps such as window, counter, floor, hanging, and package displays, plus printed materials not sent through the mails but distributed from door to door, passed to pedestrians in retail stores, enclosed in packages and bundles, delivered by salesmen or messengers, or in some other manner conveyed

directly to the prospect. Such strictly unmailed advertising can be used for the same broad purposes as direct mail advertising.

Direct mail advertising is also used in a specialized sense, as distinct from mail-order advertising. Used this way, direct mail advertising *helps* the salesman to sell but does not take his place. Printed promotional material delivered by and through the mail for this purpose has been aptly called the advance agent, the missionary man, "the handshake ahead of the meeting", plus the means whereby post-selling and continuous contacts with customers can be economically maintained. Its chief functions are to arouse interest in a product or service; to help customers as an aid to buying; to familiarize prospects with the name of the product and its merits; to give the name of the local distributors and remove obstacles to sales; to support the sales activities of retailers; to encourage continued patronage by present and new customers; and finally to predispose prospects favorably so that a closely geared-in personal selling effort, or a national advertising campaign in other media, will produce maximum sales returns.

This is in contrast to the use of printed promotional material for the specific purpose of inducing people to send in orders by mail. Pieces of this kind—whether sales letters or booklets soliciting orders for one product or a group of closely related products, or the mammoth catalogues of mail-order houses embracing wide ranges of products—are designed as self-sufficient to accomplish the whole selling job without resorting to the help of salesmen and with little or no support from other advertising media.

All these aspects are part of the general picture, however, and the important point for our purpose here is that, generally speaking, direct mail advertising is the nearest substitute that exists for personal selling. But while the salesman leaning over the grocer's counter or sitting in the executive's office must (if you will) out-guess only one individual under one particular set of circumstances, direct mail must at one and the same time out-guess hun-

dreds if not thousands of grocers or executives under myriad sets of circumstances.

The personal element in the selling, which we have already indicated as the very reason for the effectiveness of direct mail advertising, carries through the whole process. The thrill that comes to the salesman when he completes a call with a signed order clutched in his hand is as nothing compared to the sight of a large or even a small pile of signed order cards (with checks attached) falling out of reply envelopes like a veritable snowstorm a few days after a mailing has been made to a large group of prospects.

Of course there is pleasure in the knowledge that your four-color, double-spread advertisement in the *Saturday Evening Post* or *Life* is bringing your product to the attention of millions of present and potential customers. It is mighty nice to be congratulated at the bridge table or the country club on your radio entertainer's newest gag or song. A compliment about your TV commercial may very well set you up for a whole day. And so on. But there is little that is really personal about your part in any of those things.

On the other hand, the orders you receive from a successful mailing are completely personal: individuals have sent something directly to you in response to your sending something directly to them. Here is proof that you not only have a good product that is priced right, but also, and probably even more thrilling, those orders are all yours. You got them without any outside help; your own letter or folder convinced a whole group of previously unknown prospects that your product was worth more to them than keeping their money or buying something else.

Playing the Organ

PLANNING and preparing direct mail is a little like playing an organ. There are so many buttons, stops, pedals, and keys which have to be mastered before real music can be played that many a budding organist takes one look and goes quickly back to his piano. So, also, all

too many business executives and advertising practitioners shy away from direct mail.

They hear so many harrowing tales of format and lists, copy and coverage, paper and printing, stencils and reply cards, that instead of being caught up in the excitement of the game they take to the hills of other kinds of advertising or, even worse, none at all.

Really playing an organ well is an art; and in its own way direct mail advertising is, too. Of course, it is easy to write a letter, a folder, a booklet, or even to compile a catalogue. Practically anyone can do that. But because anyone can—and usually does (on the slightest provocation)—there is probably a greater proportion of lost potential in direct mail than in any other major advertising medium. The point is that it is *too* easy—to write a poor one. Actually, good direct mail advertising requires just as much specialized talent as any other kind of advertising, if not more.

However, it is not only the writing that counts. *First*, there is the important problem of who the person is that the piece of direct mail advertising is going to reach; *secondly*, there is the copy itself; and, *finally*, there is the problem of how the finished product will look. The art of direct mail comes in the solution of those three problems. Let us look at some of the high spots, just to get the general feel of it.

Lists Are People. It is a definite credo of American salesmanship that you cannot sell straw hats to Eskimos or baby carriages to bachelors. And although there are probably some who can prove those two statements are incorrect, there seems little doubt that the content of the mailing list is the very cornerstone on which rests the success or failure of direct mail advertising.

As usual, the experts disagree. But in this case their area of disagreement is minute. Some of them say the list represents 60% of the ultimate success or failure of a mailing, while others maintain that even 70% is not too high a value to place on it. Whatever the percentage actually is, it is a foregone conclusion that a mailing

list is the most important single factor in the ultimate success or failure of direct mail advertising.

Copy can sparkle, layout and format can be an art director's joy, printing can be beautiful enough to win a Graphic Arts top award—but if the mailing piece is directed to people who are not prospects and *cannot* buy the product to be sold, the entire effort will be an expensive “bust.”

Potentially, direct mail is the only perfect form of advertising. If we can look forward to the millennium, we can conceive of a list of prospects who would all want to buy a product or service at the exact moment they were told it was ready to sell. But that state of bliss will probably never arrive, and no such list will ever be built. However, if only prospects are selected for a list instead of suspects, it is possible at least to approach that state of perfection.

A prospect, we might add, may be classified as a man, woman, company, or institution that, under normal conditions, will have a definite use for a product or service, has sufficient money to pay for it, and in whom a desire for it can be created.

Though there are many reliable sources for renting mailing lists of potential users of particular products or services, and while many lists can be compiled from readily available information, real ingenuity is often needed to find or contrive the right list, as the following story indicates:

A manufacturer of foundation garments with retail shops in Chicago and New York had something special to offer fat ladies. The hero of the story was called on to build a list of fat ladies whose husbands had incomes of \$10,000 or more a year apiece.

First he studied the real estate records of both cities and picked out neighbourhoods that had rental values necessitating annual incomes of \$10,000. Then he hired some high school girls and boys and placed them at strategic street corners between four and six o'clock in the evening, having first carefully explained exactly what was meant by a “fat” lady. The girls and boys were taught to follow fat ladies to their homes as they got out of busses or taxis. If they entered private homes and there was no apparent party in progress, the boy or girl merely took down the address, which was later checked against city records; but if the lady

walked into an apartment building, the doorman was asked, “Wasn't that Mrs. Smith who just went in?” And the doorman would usually answer, “No, that was Mrs. DePuyster.”

The list was built all right, and at a cost to the manufacturer of only 75c a name. The end of the story is a happy one: from the first mailing made to the list the manufacturer sold even more girdles, I mean foundation garments, than his factory could produce.

Obviously, without a careful and complete definition of the market you are trying to reach, using sound sources or applying ingenuity means nothing. Another thing to keep in mind, specifically for those advertisers who are using direct mail advertising to help the activities of their dealers or salesmen, is the need for cooperation between the home office and those in the field in building the right kind of list of prospects. The big difference, though, lies in the way the cooperation is developed. Long, bitter, and expensive experience has proved the following method to be the best one in almost every case:

- (1) Compile or buy the best list you can, at the home office.
- (2) Break it down into dealers' or sales territories.
- (3) Send the list for each territory to the interested salesman or dealer with a letter telling him how good it is.

Maybe it is the dealer's or salesman's vanity, but, whatever the reason, the more you “pour it on” in your letter, the better will be your final list when *he* gets through with it. The very fact that you tell the man in the field that you have done a superb job seems to guarantee that your original list will be torn apart, and that in its place (usually quicker than you dare hope) will come what will probably be the best list ever compiled for the territory.

Remember: Send the salesman or dealer a list. Almost any list will do. Do not expect him to build one for you from scratch; unless he is exceptional, he just will not do a good job on that. But tearing apart what you have sent will start him on the right track.

People Buy Benefits. Now what about the copy for the letter, or folder, or booklet! Probably the simplest yet most easily

forgotten thing to remember when any kind of copy is being written is that people buy for only one of two reasons. Either the product will give them a new benefit, or it will protect a benefit they already have. That may be oversimplification, but if you are going to sell, you will have to convince them that the benefit they would get from you or your product or service is greater than they would get from anybody else or any other use of the money. And you cannot do that (short of trickery) unless you have something to offer them that is of legitimate value to them.

You must start, however, with the thought that the "average recipient" is a peculiar breed, an unpredictable creature crammed full of contradictions, prone to make "snap" decisions. He just does not take the trouble to analyze carefully the mailings he receives, although he thinks he does. His net reaction is largely one of impulse. Either he likes it, or he does not like it, usually without knowing why. Even the trained mail advertiser—perhaps just because he is so familiar with the technicalities of direct mail—often makes the serious error of assuming that his prospect is capable of the same degree of appreciation and analysis.

Attention value is, of course, the primary factor. The best sales story in the world is valueless until it gets read. So, step No. 1 is to compel attention. Like everything else, there is a right way and a wrong way to accomplish this. It varies with the type of market and product being sold. Basically, there are two kinds of attention—favorable and unfavorable. A letter salutation that pops off the pages with "Hi-yah Harry, you old so-and-so" may very well be a "natural" for uniqueness as well as the ultimate in the "human" approach, but it is certain to stimulate embarrassed resentment rather than the urge to buy; and, needless to say, the sale will probably *not* be made.

In the sanctity of his private office, the prospect can afford to indulge himself generously with foibles and preconceptions that he could not employ if he faced you man to man. For instance, he need not fear ridicule for being prudish, or criticism

for being hard-boiled. He can run the whole gamut of such reactions without risk of discovery. And, whether rightly or wrongly, he consistently does so. This, of course, you have to take into account. The approach, therefore, must be carefully calculated to strike precisely the right note to penetrate his shell of cynicism or indifference or distaste.

Once attention has been gained, the next task of successful selling copy is to hold that attention long enough to let the sales message sink in. To accomplish this, the thoughtful advertiser does not barge right into his sales routine. He subtly eases the prospect into reading further by making his opening paragraph human, interesting, and easy to take, by suggesting rather than forcing ideas, by overcoming the buyer's natural suspicion ("caveat emptor").

Now the reader is more receptive to the "nuts and bolts" portion of the sales message. (By our original assumption, remember, the product or service is of legitimate value to him; otherwise none of this is applicable.) A certain unity between the seller and the buyer has been established. The only remaining task for the advertiser is to get action which will result in the sale. Here he can become bold-faced and wholly transparent in his desire to get an order, even to the extent of offering a premium or some other kind of inducement. He must make his play for action while the reader feels kindly toward him; and *if the "dress" of the mailing piece has done its job*, the sale is probably "in the bag."

For the real *art* of direct mail advertising comes into being when you decide how your letter, circular, or booklet will be dressed.

Clothes Make the Man. Too many advertisers are prone to follow in the footsteps of other advertisers in their choice of dress for their own direct mail. Let someone write an article (or a book) about the successful use of four-color printing, personally typewritten letters, or handsomely illustrated envelopes, and the old game of "follow the leader" starts in all its fury.

It works in reverse, too. Publicize the use of penny postals, inexpensive broad-

sides, and one-color circulars, and in a few days or weeks your mail will be flooded with them, selling everything from ships to shoes to sealing wax.

One man does a successful job of mail selling by dressing his material in evening clothes, and for months you are likely to see not a single pair of overalls and very, very few business suits. Another direct mail expert (maybe it is a woman this time) discovers that dungarees and T-shirts are the correct costume for his (or her) selling materials, and not even an afternoon dress will cross your desk in weeks and maybe months, which is probably one more reason why there is so much lost potential in the mails.

The temptation to follow the other fellow and forget all about the "mood" or (if you prefer) "personality" of your own product or service may be traceable to lots of things. But I lean toward the theory that so much is written and preached about direct mail devices and the "musts" of a successful direct mail piece that when your own common and business sense tells you to discard these devices and musts, and really follow the mood of your own product or service, you are afraid to swim against the tide.

Think, if you will, of the following hypothetical case of two salesmen:

The first salesman gets by your secretary (you never do discover just how he did it), and when he finally arrives at your desk, you get quite a shock to see how he is dressed. The first thing you notice is that his shirt has seen better and cleaner days. His tie, or rather what is left of it, has more spots of varying colors and sizes than it has stripes. His pants have not been pressed in many a day, and Joe, the shine expert, would give up in despair after one look at his shoes. To cap the climax, his jacket is practically out at the elbows, and you wonder whether it ever matched anything, for it surely has nothing in common with his pants.

But he is in your office, so you have to listen to his story. Then comes the real surprise. When you expected a "quick pitch" for enough to buy a cup of coffee, you are practically floored by a splendid sales talk about setting up a trust fund for your family with (he says, "unfortunately") a minimum down payment of \$5,000.

Of course, you do not buy. But while you are still reeling from the whole experience

your trusted secretary, who pulled the boner of letting the first one in, announces in her most honeyed tones that Mr. Montmorency Tillingham Smythe would like to see you for a few moments, and she thinks even though you are so busy, that you really should take the time.

So, in comes Mr. M. T. Smythe. And what a relief after your last interview! The contrast is so great that you take a moment to examine Mr. Smythe carefully—and you are really pleased by what you see. The shoes (they look handmade) have that dull finish of really fine leather carefully cared for. The trousers are faintly striped, but there is nothing faint about the razor-edge crease. The vest and coat are Oxford gray, spotless, and seem molded to Smythe's broad shoulders and flat waist. His shirt gleams; his wing collar and beautifully tied bow are in perfect harmony with the dignified ensemble. The final touch is not the spats but rather a combination of the black Homburg, black fur-lined coat, and polished cane that he places carefully on your extra chair before he sits down.

Now you are ready for a real presentation—for nothing less than a new Cadillac, or maybe the yacht you cannot afford but dream about even in your waking hours.

Then Smythe starts, and in a halting, mumbling manner attempts to sell you on the wonders of mechanical pencils—sales-priced at three for 25 cents. So you get rid of him, and take a triple slug from the bottle you keep in the bottom drawer.

Those two salesmen are not complete figments of the imagination. They have a lot in common with a great deal of direct mail advertising. The advertising, like the salesmen, just is not dressed "for the occasion." Even though you probably would not attend a beach picnic dressed for an evening at the Waldorf, surprisingly often, if you are like other businessmen, you dress your direct mail just as inconsistently.

It is not always true that a piece engraved on the finest paper will do a better job for you than one mimeographed on newsprint. A great many charitable and fund-raising organizations have found that it does not pay dividends to dress their mailings in mink coats. Many of their donors resent the appearance of money being spent on expensive materials that should be spent in other and "more important" ways. Nor does the fact that one company is successfully using penny postals printed in one color to sell expensive food deli-

capacities by mail prove that the job could not be done better and at a lower sales cost by four-color brochures.

The significant point is that the mood of the product or service you are selling must determine the kind of material you use. Although it is usually true that a two-color letter will sell more magazine subscriptions than one multigraphed or printed in one color, it is not and probably never has been true that the use of a second color will increase results for a bank selling a trust service to wealthy families. Again, four-color printing does increase the business you will get if you are selling a product that has "sight" appeal; but even though the use of the second color normally pays out in results, the addition of the third and fourth usually does not do most direct advertising a bit of good.

Personalizing sales letters does wonders for the man or woman who is selling a personal service. But in mass appeals it is usually just so much extra profit for the printer and extra loss for the advertiser. Good rag paper for letterheads and heavy coated or beautiful handmade antique for folders and brochures are fine for the yacht broker, but if you are selling rowboats, they may cut your number of replies to the vanishing point.

Those beautiful new commemorative stamps (which Congress authorizes and the Post Office prints at the slightest excuse) do definitely add attention value to your mail—but they also cost three cents instead of the one cent you have probably been spending for third-class postage. Perhaps you will be lots better off in your old one-cent work clothes than you could be in that three-cent evening dress.

And, by the way, tests prove that people do pay attention to the postage stamp on the mail they receive. They pay careful attention to both kinds and colors. This is one example of the countless little things which make such a difference in direct mail advertising.

One successful mail advertiser found that he could increase the results of his mailing by printing his permit in two colors and at a slight angle running *up* to the right. Another tried to be different and

slant his *down* to the right and found to his great chagrin that he got less rather than more business.

Still another national advertiser discovered he could well afford to use air-mail stamps on his outgoing mail. Even though the cost of his mailing went way up, his orders went up even further. And of course there was the man who, after hearing about the successful use of an air-mail stamp, decided to go one step further and use special delivery. But he had a sad awakening, getting less business than he had from an ordinary mailing. He just did not take into account the rather obvious fact that people would be so completely let down when they found that the special was "only a circular" that they would shy away from his product in disgust.

Yes, advertisers have found out much about postage stamps and postal indicia, but most of the findings, while true for one particular mailing under one particular set of circumstances, are not universally true. However, there are a few things that show up on every postage test, and it is pretty safe to assume they will work out the same way for you:

The color of the stamp or indicia does affect the results of your mailing, and, all other factors being equal, you will get your best results in the following order: (1) purple, (2) blue, (3) red, (4) brown, (5) green, and (6) black.

By and large, third-class mail is a better bet if you are interested in your cost per inquiry or sale. But if you just want replies regardless of the cost, first class and/or air mail should be your choice. In method of stamping, the purple postage-meter imprint (for one-cent mailings) "gets the nod" when you are writing to business offices. The use of two half-cent stamps (if they are available) generally wins out among people addressed at their homes. And, when you use first-class mail, a three-cent stamp will generally do a better job than a meter imprint.

Basically—on the matter of postage stamps and everything else—you have one problem to solve before you spend your dollars on a mail advertising campaign. You have to find the "mood" or (again) the "personality" that will sell for you. Either underdressing or overdressing will

cut the number of your replies so low that they may cease to exist altogether. It may be true that printed promotion, like people, looks lots better in evening wear than in daytime dresses, business suits, or working clothes. But looks (to paraphrase the poet) are "only skin deep."

In other words, it is important to dress your direct mail for the occasion. Make your mood festive or serious, sad or gay, snobbish or democratic, but be sure you make it fit. Before you call in the dressmaker or tailor, be sure you find out what particular occasion it is, insofar as it covers your own problem of selling your own product or service by mail.

Don't Be Afraid to Push. "That's all very fine," you are probably saying at this point, "but remembering how direct mail annoys me, I imagine that it probably annoys a great many other people the same way." And so you may hesitate to push, to really go after your prospects. But there is little point to all the concern with lists, message, and format if you are afraid to hit your prospects hard and hit them often.

The fact has already been stressed that direct mail is highly personal, and, being addressed to an individual, it invades and interrupts, gets mixed in with really personal correspondence, and all too often arrives not as a single copy but in piles of duplication—all the faults of its own virtues. So you must start with the fact that inevitably you will lose some of the prospects you mail to, which provides all the more reason to go after the remaining ones strongly. That, again, is part of the game of calculated percentages.

Remember, too, that in the face of what may be your own personal experience, a recent survey proves that people get far less direct mail than is generally believed. The national average, based on scores of personal interview studies, is only about three to four pieces a week. That may not sound possible, but remember: *you personally are a known prospect with high purchasing power for scores of specialized products and services.* Everybody does not get as much mail as you do, and *you* would not continue to be "snowed under" if you

did not buy some of the products offered and remain an active prospect for the others.

Of course, one of the way of hitting hard is with long letters. We mentioned this earlier as a cause of annoyance. "Why," it is often asked, "do they have to take four pages to say the same thing they could easily get on one single sheet!" The point is that it just cannot be done on one sheet in the majority of cases.

No letter is *too* long if it tells the whole story and only that. Consider, if you will, the studies made of the number of words used in an average personal sales call. The figures show that approximately 4,000 words are spoken, including about 2,500 by the salesman. If you allow 300 words to a page, this means that a salesman attempting to sell to *one* and only *one* individual needs a "letter" about eight pages long to tell his complete story. Yet a sales letter in direct mail, though addressed to one individual, to be successful must apply to all of the individuals on the list. It must cover *all* of the reasons why a prospect should buy, and answer in advance and without coaxing *all* of the objections to buying of *all* the prospects.

Not too long ago one of the organizations that sell a business service by mail got a little "fed up" with the complaints it was receiving about the eight-page letter it was using to sell its service so successfully. After extremely careful rewriting, the eight pages were cut down to two and mailed to one half of a list of excellent prospects, the other half receiving the original letter. There were very few complaints from the people who received the two-page missive, and there were very few orders, too. But the long, eight-page treatise brought its usual number of complaints *and* its usual large number of orders—by coincidence, exactly four times as much business as the two-page letter.

Then there is the story of the well-known specialist in simplified writing who offered to rewrite a long (three-page) magazine circulation solicitation. He did—got it down to one side of one sheet of paper. But in comparison to the original, his short letter brought in less than one third as many orders.

All short letters are not failures, nor are all the long ones great successes, but the moral is that direct mail advertising is supposed to *sell* the prospect, not just please him.

The same moral applies to the use of continuity, which also like long letters is sometimes misunderstood. Too often an executive who should know better will say, "I wish they'd stop sending these things to me. I've heard their story so many times I'm sick of it."

It is undoubtedly true that numerous mail advertisers have had outstanding success with a single mailing making a specific offer, but in ordinary direct mail we know of no authenticated case where a single mailing did as good a job as a carefully planned series of mailings. And there are several reasons why this fact is invariably true.

One reason runs something like this: According to the story books love at first sight is wonderful and joyous. But it happens more often on the pages of the best-selling novels than it does in real life. Admittedly, there is often an instant attraction between two people who will finally end up in each other's arms solemnly convinced that they both knew it all along. On the other hand, there are many extremely happy marriages that only come into being after a long and involved courtship.

Likewise, though there are very few salesmen who do not boast about the sales they have made on their first and only calls, even a casual investigation of their own records shows conclusively that the major portion of the products they sell are purchased only after an arduous series of carefully planned solicitations. As the result of a recent survey, one of the large oil companies found that in selling products to industrial users, it took four or more sales calls to close over 80% of the business.

For another reason, it is absolutely impossible to time an individual mailing so that it will reach every person on the list when he or she is in actual need of the product or service being sold. Some few of the prospects very probably bought from a competitor just the day before

your enticing offer arrived. Some others may be too interested in the latest sensation that is spread across the front page of the local newspaper to bother to read an advertising masterpiece at all. Others may be bothered by the heat or the cold, or the wrinkle in the sheet that kept them awake the previous night. Still others may resent the burnt toast they are having for breakfast or the demand for an increase in Johnny's allowance or sufficient money for a new coat to match the one Mrs. Jones wore to the club last night.

A letter or any mailing piece sent to 100 different people will probably be read (if at all) from about 100 different viewpoints. The impression a mailing piece makes will more often than not depend on whether a bill, an invitation to join a certain club, or a note from an old friend precedes it in the pile of mail. Jack Carr, one of the world's greatest letter writers, says: "The arrival of an income tax bill has done more to make good letters bad than any other single influence."

There is one particular and well-known case in the drug field where it took exactly 103 mailings to open a particular account. The fact that this account is now the largest of all those served by the advertiser neither adds to nor detracts from the extreme value of continuity in advertising.

Advertisers who use the other important media are made to realize this fact much more than our direct mail users. Most radio and television time is sold in blocks of several weeks' broadcasts. Newspapers and magazines, although they sell single insertions, give a sizable discount for 6, 12, 13, or more advertisements. These media people know that probably the strongest selling force in advertising is continuity. And the direct mail advertiser who overlooks continuity in his own advertising is almost sure to fail in his selling efforts. Even the mail-order advertiser who must make each mailing pay its own way will cover the same list over and over again, sometimes using the same piece of material and merely mailing at a later date.

It may be true that after even a comparatively few mailings requests will be received to take names off a list. But it

is equally true that after a man or woman has been told the same thing over and over again for 20, 30 or 40 times, many inquiries and orders will come in carrying the comment, "Why didn't you tell me about this before!"

Common-Sense Approach. The one inescapable fact about direct mail advertising is its manifold variety and variability. Rather than trying to apply a vague "canned" formula in its preparation, it is wiser to sit down and do a bit of simple, common-sense reflecting and then develop your own formula, one designed to introduce your product or service most effectively. Consider, then, these three points:

- (1) What are the real advantages of my product or service?
- (2) Why would certain people need them?
- (3) Is it better to sell the product itself or to create a desire for it?

The answers to Question 1 are easily provided. Your commodity is bigger, better, cheaper, newer. You can fill a page with appropriate adjectives in a minute.

Question 2 is no riddle either. It is simple enough to say "makes work easier," "saves time," "saves money."

Question 3, however, is the real one. Here lies the very heart of direct mail advertising's success. Here is where a campaign will nosedive to an ignominious zero or soar to new highs of very profitable business.

Say to yourself again, "Is it better to sell the product itself or to create a desire for it?" Let us suppose you are a manufacturing stationer:

You have various types of file folders for sale. Your market: office managers. Now you know perfectly well that no office manager buys file folders because he *likes* them. He buys because he *needs* them. He uses various sizes, various colors, various weights. He buys on a price basis, seeks a comparable quality for less money. Obviously, he is the type who will respond to an *informative, factual, statistical* type of advertising appeal. Therefore, you will reason, give this man facts and figures, and he may buy. Your caption, then, may easily fall into the "economy" appeal—save money, get better values! You will follow this with a tabular listing, giving size, color, weight, indexing data,

expansion capacity, and price. To retrace your thinking:

- (1) You know he uses file folders.
- (2) You know he wants quality at a price.
- (3) You know you have the sizes, colors, and types he will need.

Therefore you decide:

(1) He is already sold on the idea of using file folders—so I do not have to tell him how or why.

(2) He is going to replenish his supply eventually, so I must choose a high-frequency medium of advertising, repeating my facts and figures as often as possible so that I will get action when he is in the market for my product.

(3) The profit margin on this item is small. Therefore my advertising medium must be inexpensive, must give the widest possible coverage for the money, and must *not* be wasted in *useless* circulation.

(4) The advertising must do the following: (a) get attention, (b) give full information about the product, and (c) urge immediate action.

Now, let us change the picture. Think of yourself as a packer of pickles:

You wish to sell direct—to the consumer—get mail orders direct by mail. Your product is good, clean, nicely packaged, properly priced. But so are a half-dozen competitive brands, available in every grocery store. You are seeking acceptance for your product from housewives. You reason this way:

(1) Everybody who uses pickles will like my pickles.

(2) Practically *everybody* either uses or likes pickles.

(3) My product is excellent, perhaps better than others.

(4) My competitors say the same about theirs.

(5) I will, therefore, avoid merely selling pickles but will endeavor to develop an *appetite* for pickles.

Your selling letter may appear like this:

"Honey, . . . fetch the dill from the pantry! How long is it since you stood there in the cool half-light of the mossy granite cellar and watched Grandma's gnarled old hands deftly pressing the long, green, garden-fresh cucumbers into the big brine-filled earthenware crocks—topping them with the smooth brown stones which you yourself had brought so breathlessly from the swift silver brook? Will you ever forget the heady, spicy scent of bay leaf, dill, and vine-

gar and the sight of rich red peppers laid among the luscious green grape and cherry leaves as they were bedded down in the crocks? Do you remember the furtive trips down cellar during the hot August days when you reached elbow-deep into the cool brine to snatch the forbidden refreshment for its tangy, crispy, green delight?

"Would you like to relive those golden moments—bring back out of the past a taste thrill so poignantly real—so delightful—so good that you'll never be without a big jar of Smith Pickles?"

"Then do this now . . . etc."

Now you have done it! Your prospective pickle purchaser has a faraway look in his or her eyes. Where there was no thought of pickles before, there is now a live desire to taste again the quenching goodness of your old-fashioned dills—and from there to the completed order is only a brief step.

Do you see, now, how you have neatly by-passed competition, created an *appetite* for your product by developing a nostalgia for an irretrievable moment, and turned it into a sale? Of course, you could have simply said, "Smith's Pickles are bigger, better, greener, fresher, cost less, and you get more . . ." But would your prospect have that compelling desire for one of Grandma's pickles? Not likely!

Advantages and Disadvantages

SO, whether it is file folders or pickles or, for that matter, filets or puppies, direct mail advertising furnishes business with an efficient, economical, and effective medium for sales and promotion. Based on its performance record alone, direct advertising well merits its designation as "a management tool." It can widen the influence and increase the power of all other forms of advertising. Properly coordinated with newspaper, magazine, radio, business-paper, outdoor, car-card, window-display, or business-film promotion, direct mail advertising increases the effectiveness of these powerful media. In other words, for the very best results, you should use a carefully planned and correlated program of *every* advertising medium that will help solve your selling problem.

The experienced user of advertising knows that all forms of advertising, when properly used, are good; that each in its place is best; that each has its own distinct advantages and disadvantages; and that

the war of counter-claims among advertising media belongs to the horse-and-buggy era of marketing. Direct mail advertising has many uses. For some of these uses, as is also the case with other forms of advertising, there is no satisfactory substitute.

Direct mail advertising is, in many instances, the most effective, inexpensive, and practical form of business promotion. For a dealer or businessman whose advertising funds are limited, it can well be, and frequently is, his major or sole advertising medium. In almost all promotional programs, direct mail advertising should be used, irrespective of the size of the advertising budget. The student, counselor, and user of direct advertising should be thoroughly familiar with these six basic uses of the medium:

- (1) To secure contacts for salesmen;
- (2) To bring persons to you (e.g., invitations to dormant charge-account customers to visit retail stores);
- (3) To influence the thinking of groups (e.g., letters to stockholders discussing the effect which legislation up for voting would have on the economy);
- (4) To obtain actual orders through the mail;
- (5) To stimulate some desired action (e.g., booklets explaining to employees the need for increased production); and
- (6) To learn facts (e.g., questionnaires to dealers asking how the company's current newspaper advertising is affecting local demand for its products).

I want to emphasize, again and again: Direct mail is *no* cure-all. It can do an eminently successful job if used properly. But if asked, and expected, to accomplish a job for which it is not cut out, it will fail even more ignominiously than any of its advertising brothers and sisters.

The ultimate clue to whether it is suited or not lies in the fact that it is the most personal, most intimate of all forms of advertising. You address your customer or prospect individually by the most important word he knows—his name. Basically, you seek to create the impression that you know who he is and what he is like. In most direct mail copy you talk to him as you would if you were face to face. Therefore, direct mail advertising

is best suited to situations where it is logical and likely that you should so approach your prospects. In such situations it offers the following advantages:

1. *Direct mail enables the advertiser to select his own circulation*—The direct advertiser can and should build the kind of list that will cover the particular market he wants to sell. He can—and, if at all possible, should—eliminate from his list all but actual prospects for his product or service.

On the other hand, the newspaper, magazine, radio, television, billboard, or car-card audience is less flexible. The newspaper circulation is considered first by the geographical location of the office of publication. Normally, only people living in the area or nearby read it. Secondly, and particularly in those cities or towns having more than one newspaper, the editorial content (plus the political policy of the paper itself) governs the circulation. It is possible that advertising in one particular paper in one particular city will direct your advertisement only to upper-class Republicans although your product may be just as valuable and acceptable to middle-class Democrats.

Magazines are almost always edited either to appeal to a particular group of people (*The New Yorker*, for instance) or to cover a specific field or subject (*House Beautiful* or *Gourmet* are examples). Advertising in magazines may very well give you exactly the market you are trying to cover, but, on the other hand, whether it is the right market or not, you have to take what already exists.

Radio and television programs build their audiences on the entertainment or educational value of the program itself. It is possible that your market is made up entirely of people who listen exclusively to symphonies; but if your product is also acceptable to Bob Hope or Bing Crosby listeners, one type of program will not cover your full potential market for you. A particular radio or television show will not touch those who cannot hear your broadcast or see your telecast if it just does not reach their homes or, worse still, reaches them while they are having dinner or are in bed asleep.

Obviously, the only people who will see your billboards, are the ones who will either walk or drive past them, and unless your prospects ride in the proper bus, streetcar, train, or automobile and go by a certain route, they will never even know you use car-card or billboard advertising.

So, for selected coverage of actual prospects who can buy exactly what you have to sell, particularly when yours is not a product that has mass appeal, direct mail offers you the opportunity of building a near-per-

fect list not possible in the case of any other advertising medium.

2. *Direct mail speeds the message to markets*—While the magazine publisher must worry about closing dates, usually weeks in advance of publication, and cannot compete with direct mail advertising either in speed of reaching a market or in timeliness of particular appeals, the newspaper and the radio and television offer even greater speed than does direct mail when news of immediate interest must be placed before prospects and customers.

It does not seem possible that direct mail will ever be able to compete with either newspaper or radio and television advertising in the ability to get a timely message with real news value in front of a mass market, but overnight printing and mailing services are available for just such emergencies. Then, if the Post Office will start giving the kind of service it did before the war, even though you will not beat the bulldog editions or a 9 a.m. broadcast, *you will be able to get your message prepared, mailed, and received by the people you want to reach, where and when you yourself want to reach them.*

3. *Direct mail materials can take any size, color, or shape*—No other medium can offer that amount of flexibility. In planning your direct mail piece, the sky is the limit. You can make it as large or as small as you want. You can use any kind of paper and any color ink. You can die-cut to the shape of your product, emboss to simulate the feel, perfume to imitate the odor—in fact, you name it, and some smart printer, lithographer, or finisher will show you how to do it.

The newspaper and magazine are limited to definite space segments, and billboards and car cards have to be a standard size. Even radio and television programs must be designed to cover a specific amount of time.

But a word of caution: This lack of limitation has led to many misspent dollars. Just because you can do anything is no reason why you should. Direct mail becomes more valuable when its format fits the product it is selling and the market it is reaching. It is perfectly satisfactory to let your imagination run riot, but it is a safe bet that too little imagination is better, much better, than too much.

4. *Direct mail has a flexible unit of cost*—Normally, the unit cost reader, in direct mail, is higher than that of any other medium, and it can be made still higher (or lower) depending on the job you want to accomplish. But the real economy is in the overall cost.

Potentially, as noted earlier, direct mail is the only kind of advertising. It is conceivable, though highly improbable if not downright impossible, that you could build a

mailing list made up of only 100% sure-fire, want-to-buy-now prospects. But even though you never achieve such perfection, the ordinary direct mail list probably contains a much larger proportion of actual prospects than exists among the readers of any newspaper or magazine or the listeners to any radio or television program.

Basically, direct mail is both the least and the most expensive kind of advertising. If you are silly enough to use it to do a mass-selling job that should be done in the pages of the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Life*, or *Look*, you will be squandering your money. If, however, your market has been selected, defined carefully, and the names on your list are at least potential prospects, the fact that each piece costs as much as 10 cents or perhaps even 25 cents may be completely unimportant.

Used wisely for the jobs it is designed to do well, direct mail is, even in these days of high printing and mailing costs, the cheapest possible method of reaching a selected market. But, again, if you ask it to do a job that could and should be done by another medium, it becomes extravagantly wasteful and something to be shunned like the plague itself.

5. *Direct mail has less competition for the reader's attention*—Direct mail pieces are usually devoted exclusively to the advertising message of one company, and the most successful ones to the sale of a single product of that company. Thus your direct mail piece stands on its own feet, alone in its demand for the reader's interest as of the moment. In contrast, newspapers, magazines, radio, and television carry competitive advertising, as well as editorial and other material, right along side your own message.

But this is not all to the good. The very lack of competition for attention carries with it a total lack of both entertainment value and voluntary acceptance. The radio comedian, comics, fiction, news, editorials, feature articles, and symphony music—to mention just a few—condition the reader or listener to the point where his interest has been secured and his attention is then brought logically to the advertiser's product. Insofar as voluntary acceptance is concerned, newspapers and magazines must be purchased, and you have to buy your own radio or television set and then tune in a program of your own choice. Direct mail is not asked for; it interrupts; and though this may be a great advantage in one way, it is offset to some extent because the direct mail recipient is not, like the publication reader or radio listener, conditioned to and expecting to see or hear advertising in a familiar form.

Furthermore, the lack of competition is not so real as it appears at first glance. It

may be that there is mighty little competition for attention in the home or office when your direct mail arrives, but no housewife or businessman ever greets the postman with, "Isn't it wonderful that you have so much direct mail advertising for me today."

The fact remains that lack of competition does offer you a better *chance* for the reader's attention. Remember, though, if you are really going to capitalize on this isolation, your direct mail must be twice as good as any of your other advertising.

6. *Direct mail advertising is more confidential*—Because you use a particular mailing list which can be limited to a hundred names or expanded to a million, your offer is not open to the eyes or ears of your competitors until after the mailing piece has been seen and digested by your prospects. Special inducements to buy can be made with less chance that your competitor will be able to "steal your stuff" until it is too late to do him any good. Sometimes there is great value in keeping your advertising message from the prying eyes of your competitors; and when that problem must be met, direct mail usually offers the best solution.

7. *Direct mail advertising is action advertising*—It is quite probable that you can get more tangible, traceable returns from direct mail than you will from any other kind of advertising. *And you should.* It is the only kind of advertising that makes it possible, in fact easy, to place all the implements of action in the very "package" that contains the advertisement itself. You can and should include inquiry cards, order forms, and reply envelopes so that it will be easy for your prospect to send you an order or an inquiry.

In a survey conducted by the Direct Mail Advertising Association in 1947, several questions attempted to compare the results of direct mail with publication advertising. Here are the questions and the tabulated answers:

"From your experience, which of these two types of advertising brings you more replies per dollar spent?"

83%—reported direct advertising brings more replies per dollar spent.

14%—reported publication advertising brings more replies per dollar spent.

3%—reported both to be about the same. (It must be noted, however, that the direct advertising mentioned includes expenditures for catalogues, which are designed to bring more responses per dollar invested.)

"From your experience, which of these two types of advertising is more valuable for immediate sales results?"

83%—reported direct advertising more valuable for immediate sales results.

7%—reported publication advertising more valuable for immediate sales results.

10%—reported results to be about the same.

If it is action you want—and who does not under certain circumstances?—direct mail offers you more opportunity than any other medium.

Conclusion

DIRECT mail advertising is an exciting art and, when played right, an exhilarating game of acquired skill. There is a real thrill in watching the returns from a mailing *you* have made come in day by day, particularly on the “big” days. There is a fascination to “keeping the Score” on the different lists you used. And, when all the keyed returns are finally tabulated, there is a deep satisfaction in learning you were right in figuring that pink order cards would bring in more business than blue ones; that your prospects would react to a two-page letter printed on two separate sheets of paper better than to the same letter printed on both sides of one sheet; or that two one-half cent, orange-colored stamps (your own idea) meant more orders than the usual 3-cent purple stamp.

But its thrills are less important than its practical uses. If your product or service is used by classifiable, selective

markets, there is *no* other advertising medium that will get results for you the way carefully planned direct mail advertising does. And if your product or service is sold to a mass consumer market, the value of and results from your other advertising will be increased many times if direct mail is used to merchandise to your salesmen, distributors, dealers, and retailers the selling plans and materials of the over-all campaign.

What direct mail needs today, and what *you* can give to it, is understanding based on knowledge of its real value. Rather than wild and biased opinion and authoritatively spoken half and quarter truths about its practices and potentials, it requires careful research and serious study on the part of business management and advertising executives alike. It should neither be compared to nor contrasted with publication, radio, or television advertising, for it like the others has its own unique advantages and disadvantages.

Let us remember that in considering direct mail advertising, we are not dealing with a destitute orphan on the doorstep of American advertising. Let no one ever underestimate, through annoyance, oversight, or ignorance, its potential selling power. It is a major advertising medium capable of doing a powerful selling job for American business.

Lower Taxes?

“When I hear people speaking of reducing taxation and at the same time see the cost of social services rising rapidly, very often in response to the demands of the same people, I wonder whether they appreciate in full the old adage that we cannot have our cake and eat it.”

SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS