Canada Post

Direct Mail Production Planner

Valuable and informative time-saving tips to help you execute your next direct mail campaign.

CANADA POST / POSTES CANADA

From anywhere... to anyone

Use your Canada Post Direct Mail Production Planner to save time, energy and resources when producing your direct mail campaigns.

Now that you've decided on a direct mail campaign to help build your business, it's time to put all those pieces together and get your ideas on paper. Let Canada Post help. The Direct Mail Production Planner has been designed to give you an overview of the direct mail production process, with explanations, tips and guidance on how to get started, what to include in your direct mail package, choosing the right direct mail format, and how you can make a great impression in the eyes of your target audience.

Tips

- It's important to start communicating with Canada Post early in the production process. When in final production, schedule your mailings with Canada Post at least five days in advance of your mail date for Addressed and Unaddressed Admail, and at least 10 days for Dimensional Addressed Admail.

- Before you start creating your direct mail campaign, contact and confirm details, dates, etc., with the printer and lettershop* that will be handling your project. Talk to your lettershop about the possibility of negotiating a discount on volume purchases.

*A lettershop assembles and prepares direct mail campaigns for mailing. See page 8 for details.

Getting started

You've moved through the initial stages of planning and developing the content of your direct mail campaign. Before moving to the final production stage, take a moment to make sure you've got all the necessary assets (elements) of a direct mail package. Checking at this stage will help prevent hold-ups later on. Your checklist includes:

- **Artwork**
  Artwork includes all the visual elements of your campaign, such as logos, illustrations and graphics. Make sure all of these digital files are in high-resolution file format.

- **Photography**
  For the best reproduction, all photography and images, whether black and white or colour, should be in high-resolution file format. File formats include .jpeg, .eps and .psd. If you're using stock photography, consider the cost-effective option of royalty-free images. But if you'd like to be the exclusive user of an image, consider buying the rights to it. Find stock images at www.gettyone.com, www.firstlight.ca, www.photonica.com and www.corbis.com.

- **Copy**
  This is the text that will appear in your mailing. Ensure that your fonts (type styles) are loaded properly so they'll easily reproduce. Check and double-check for typos and other errors before submitting your files, and make sure the copy has been approved by a lawyer.

- **Layout**
  This is the framework that holds together all of your assets; the digital canvas on which your advertising message appears. There are several different software programs to create a layout, each designed to accommodate artwork, images and copy, including Adobe InDesign and QuarkXPress.

- **Mailing data**
  With direct mail, you've got two mailing options: an unaddressed distribution that covers all residences or businesses within a specific geographic area; and an addressed mailing, if you have access to a customer/prospect list.

Tip

■ If you need some outside help with the design and copywriting of your direct mail piece, consider using a freelance designer and writer or a small shop specializing in direct mail. Look in your local Yellow Pages under the heading of Advertising – Direct Mail, or check the Canadian Marketing Association's website at www.the-cma.org. They can also connect you to and help you make arrangements with printers, lettershops and other suppliers along the way.

Printing technologies

Advances in printing technology have resulted in a number of different types of printing, each suited to a particular need. Depending on whether you need static printing, with each piece being exactly the same, or variable-data printing, where you can vary the text and/or images on each piece, there's a printing process that's right for you. Keep in mind that these advances allow you to go straight from disk to proofs, bypassing the traditional film stage. Printing types include:

- **Traditional offset**
  This type of printing is more cost-effective for producing higher volume print runs, and allows for higher quality imaging and a wider selection of paper options.

- **Digital laser and inkjet**
  This type of printing gives you tremendous flexibility and control over each page you print. You can vary your message from one piece to the next for total customisation and personalisation based on recipient data. Excellent for fast turnaround times but limited to smaller quantities (due to cost).

To help you decide the right printing for your campaign, take the following factors into consideration:
- What is the size of your print run?
- What is your turnaround time?
- How much personalisation do you require?
- Do you have variable colour images?
- Have you tested the layout with sample data?

Cost-saving Printing Tips

- Opt for smaller paper and packaging
- Print more items on a single sheet
- Use a lighter sheet
- Work with common paper sizes
- Use stock envelopes
- Reduce the number of specialty colours in your design

Production timeline

Direct mail campaigns can take anywhere from two months to three months to develop from the idea stage to the final mailing stage. It's a good idea to use a production timeline so you can stay on track and get your package completed on time. For your reference, we've included some general guidelines with approximate times for the most common stages of direct mail production.

	DAYS
Marketing plan development	5 days
Mailing list selection	2 to 5 days
List acquisition (from outside list owner)	1 week
Development of rough copy and art	7 to 10 days
Development of final copy from rough stage	3 days
Layout development	3 to 5 days
Printing	10 to 15 days
Envelope production:	
custom envelope	6 weeks
stock envelope	2 weeks
Duplication elimination	5 days
Lettershop (labelling, insertion, metering, mailing)	5 to 15 days, depending on mailing sizes

Please note: These are average times for an addressed direct mail campaign. If you want to get your message out quicker, consider doing an unaddressed mailing or using Canada Post's AdCard. See page 3 for details.
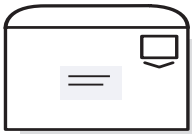
Making an impression

As an advertising medium, direct mail offers choices in creative formats. Choosing the format that's right for you depends a lot on your objectives, strategy, target audience, budget and final design. The two most common formats are the self-mailer and the envelope package.

- **Self-mailer**
  This is a single (stand-alone) piece of advertising that isn't sent in an envelope. It can be as simple as a postcard, or have several folds, and be sealed or unsealed. Canada Post's AdCard™ product is a great example of a self-mailer.

- **Envelope package**
  This is a package containing any or all of the following: a letter, an order form, a buckslip, a brochure, and a business reply card and envelope.

	ADVANTAGES	BENEFITS	DISADVANTAGES	LIMITATIONS
Self-mailer	• Fewer pieces to create and co-ordinate • Can often be produced, sealed and addressed in one pass on the press	• No cost for printing or gluing envelopes • Time-saving, cost-effective solution for large quantity mailings	• Limited space to explain features and benefits of your product or service • Limited space for photography • Message may be viewed as promotional and not as important	• Customer doesn't get the full story • Not being able to show many aspects of new or complex products • Inquiries and/or payments must be taken over the phone or through the Internet
Envelope package	• Statistics show that direct mail packages with a personalised letter almost always results in higher response rates than packages without • As much space as you need to explain features and benefits of your product and offer • Data-driven personalisation	• Generally higher response rate, possibly higher leads and sales • Customer gets the full story • Unlimited ability to change copy, images and offers based on each customer's data profile • Gain customer data collection for new lists	• Each additional piece can add additional cost and time	• Going over budget

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Tip

■ Canada Post offers businesses like yours a unique and easy one-stop advertising solution that combines convenience with the power of direct mail. It's called AdCard.™ With AdCard, Canada Post takes care of the printing, mail preparation, deposit and final delivery so you can get your message out fast with minimal hassle. For more information on AdCard, visit www.canadapost.ca/adcard.

Powerful writing

Direct mail is your opportunity to connect with potential and repeat customers to communicate the features and benefits of your product or service. It is unique in that you can 'talk' to them on a one-to-one basis, speaking in-depth and directly to their specific needs. This powerful medium can generate interest in what you have to offer, which can ultimately lead to sales. Writing for direct mail isn't rocket science, but it is an art. Here are a few tried-and-true methods for compelling direct mail packages:
• Keep it simple
• Use short, digestible sentences
• Use 'you' not 'I'
• Write like you would speak
• Clearly state your offer and price
• Stress the benefits of your product or service
• Make it relevant to your reader
• Back up your claims with statistics, testimonials, etc.
• Keep them interested
• Include a call-to-action with a deadline
• Tell them how to act
• Put compelling and intriguing copy on the outer envelope

Powerful layouts

No matter how compelling your product and offer may be, if the design is weak, your direct mail package may not get opened. Some tried-and-true design fundamentals include:
• Keep the design simple and focused on your core message
• Choose colours, graphics and images that will appeal to your target and complement your company's brand
• Make the package elements cohesive
• Make the design relevant to your target and your product or service
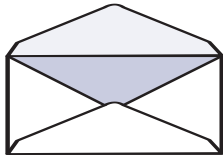• Choose paper stock that complements your design

The envelope

Many will say that the envelope is the most important part of your direct mail package, the piece that makes or breaks your campaign. It's your first opportunity to communicate with your target audience, and it's your chance to invite them to open up the package and read on. It's crucial to make a strong impression. Here's how you can do it:
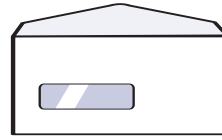• Use intriguing 'teaser' copy and graphics
• Allude to the benefits they'll learn about
• Involve the reader immediately by including a visible response device (sticker, peel-away, stamp, token)
• Hint at the satisfaction the reader will get by opening the envelope
• Let them know there's something in it for them
• Use powerful action words like 'new,' 'now,' 'how to,' 'special,' 'guaranteed,' 'offer' and 'free'
• Personalise the address
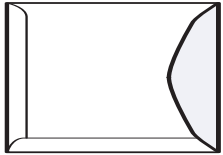
Types of envelopes

Envelopes come in all shapes, sizes and weights. If you're looking to save on costs, select a standard size instead of having envelopes custom made. Some standard designs include:
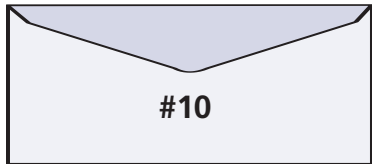

Open side with diagonal seam
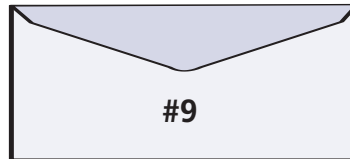

Standard window envelope

Open end with side seam

Non-standard envelopes will add extra time and cost to your project. Consider using them if you've determined that they'll add value to your mailing.
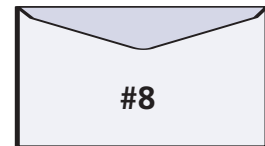
These are some of the most commonly used envelope sizes for direct mail campaigns:

#10

#9

#8

size: 4 1/8" x 9 1/2"
    (104.7 mm x 241.3 mm)

size: 4" x 9"
    (101.6 mm x 228.6 mm)

size: 3 5/8" x 6 1/2"
    (92 mm x 165.1 mm)

Other common sizes: 5 7/8" x 9" (149.2 mm x 228.6 mm)
                      9" x 12" (228.6 mm x 304.8 mm)

Sizes and formats

For the most efficient processing of your mailing, keep in mind that Canada Post has minimum and maximum size specifications. If you stick to these standards, you can avoid delivery delays and higher postage rates. Talk to your lettershop to make sure your envelope meets the requirements.

The five classifications of mail

Lettermail™:
• Any mail item or piece that meets the standard requirements of size and weight
• Can include letters, cards, postcards and financial statements

Addressed Admail™:
• The most popular classification of mail used for direct marketing
• Sent to specific addresses
• Must meet one or more of the following criteria:
  1. Promote the sale or use of products or services;
  2. Report on financial performance, primarily for promotional purposes; or
  3. Solicit donations or contributions.

Unaddressed Admail™:
• Printed matter/product samples not addressed to a specific address
• Targets specific geographically defined areas, locally or nationally
• Directs message to areas as small as a single postal route, or homes, apartments, farms, businesses or any combination of the four
• Can include but not limited to: flyers, cards, single sheets, catalogues, brochures, samples, newspapers, community newspapers, coupons, envelopes, magazines, and co-op mailings
• Most economical way to advertise through the mail

Sizes apply to residential and business distribution

Unaddressed Admail maximum size for Letter Carrier delivery:
Maximum sizes for items weighing up to 230 grams (8.1 oz.):
• Standard: up to 30.5 cm x 15.24 cm x 1.91 cm (12" x 6" x 0.75")
• Oversize: up to 30.5 cm x 22.85 cm x 1.91 cm (12" x 9" x 0.75")

Unaddressed Admail maximum size for non-Letter Carrier delivery:
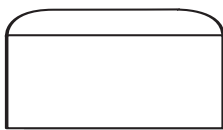**Maximum sizes for items weighing up to 1,000 grams (35.3 oz.):**
• Standard: up to 30.5 cm x 15.24 cm x 3.81 cm (12" x 6" x 1.5")
• Oversize: up to 35.56 cm x 28 cm x 3.81 cm (14" x 11" x 1.5")

Business Reply Mail™:
• Proven response vehicle used by thousands of Canadian businesses
• Use a card, or use a card with envelope
• Includes cards and envelopes
• No cost to the consumer
• You only pay for items returned to you
• Now available: Business Reply Mail artwork online – create your Business Reply Mail artwork quickly and easily right online. Visit www.canadapost.ca/obc for more information.

BRM maximum and minimum sizes and weights:

TYPE		LENGTH		WIDTH		THICKNESS		WEIGHT	
Machineable envelopes									
Max.		245 mm	9 5/8"	156 mm	6 1/8"	5 mm	0.2"	50 g	1.77 oz.
Min.		140 mm	5 1/2"	90 mm	3 9/16"	.18 mm	.007"	3 g	0.11 oz.
Machineable cards									
Max.		235 mm	9 1/4"	120 mm	4 3/4"	5 mm	0.2"	50 g	1.77 oz.
Min.		140 mm	5 1/2"	90 mm	3 9/16"	.18 mm	.007"	3 g	0.11 oz.

What doesn't qualify as Addressed Admail?

• Fulfillment of products or services (with the exception of promotional catalogues and samples)
• Invoices
• Update to a professional handbook
• Fulfillment of a paid subscription
• Recall notices
• Renewal notices (with the exception of publication subscriptions)
• Fulfillment, replacement or renewal of cards (e.g., credit, membership)
• Voter notification
• Opinion and market research surveys
• Notification of price changes
• Government identification cards
• Receipts
• Medical identification cards
• Transaction records
• Tax forms
• Proxies
• Prohibited or dangerous goods

This is a partial list. Please visit www.canadapost.ca/postalguide for details.

	LOCAL	WITHIN A PROVINCE	NATIONAL
Average delivery times for Lettermail:	2 business days	3 business days	4 business days
Average delivery times for Addressed Admail:	up to 3 business days	4 to 5 business days	4 to 15 business days
Average transportation times for Unaddressed Admail:	2 business days	3 to 4 business days	3 to 14 business days
Average delivery times for Business Reply Mail:	3 business days	4 business days	5+ business days

Please note: Transportation times for Unaddressed Admail represent the average time it takes to transfer items between the Canada Post facility where the deposit was made and the delivery depot where the final delivery will take place. Actual delivery can take up to five business days, depending on which option you choose. All of these time guidelines apply to delivery between urban centres. Delivery to rural areas may take longer.

Lettermail checklist

If you're using Lettermail for your direct mail campaign, there are some requirements, specifications and standards to keep in mind. Learn more at www.canadapost.ca/business/offerings/lettermail/can.

Addressed Admail checklist

A few things to help ensure your Addressed Admail mailing goes smoothly:
• Are all items destined for Canadian addresses?
• Do all items have the correct postal code?
• Do all pieces have a consistent message?
• Are all pieces sorted, bundled and bagged according to Canada Post requirements?
• Are all items inserted and sealed?
• If you're using Letter Carrier Presort, do all pieces contain the current Delivery Mode Codes?
• If you're using a lettershop, is it equipped to handle Letter Carrier Presort or machineable mail?

Unaddressed Admail checklist

A few things to help ensure your Unaddressed Admail mailing goes smoothly:
• Know what format or type of mailing you want to send
• Choose your target areas
• Know the quantity for printing
• Follow Unaddressed Admail preparation guidelines when bundling or packing your mailing into containers
• At time of mailing, complete and submit Statement of Mailing along with a sample of the item to be mailed
• Complete Unaddressed Admail Delivery slips, address labels and tags
• Be prepared to pay for your mailing at the office of deposit
• Deposit items at an authorized postal facility (including a retail postal facility)
• For orders submitted manually, the delivery office will backstamp the first copy of your Unaddressed Admail Delivery Slip as validation of payment

Tip

■ Canada Post offers Unaddressed Admail Express Order Entry versions of the Electronic Shipping Tools (EST) right online. Go to www.canadapost.ca/est_uam to find everything you need to get going, including delivery slips, labels and tags.

The finishing touches

Once you've finished putting together the elements of your direct mail campaign, a lettershop can assemble and prepare it for mailing. Generally, a lettershop takes care of:
• Inserting Admail components into envelopes
• Addressing
• Affixing postage
• Bagging and coding mailings
• All other Canada Post requirements

And some will offer:
• Complete mailing services
• Printing
• List selection and maintenance
• Bursting, trimming, folding and creative services

For more information, or to find postal guidelines and direct mail options offered by Canada Post, visit www.canadapost.ca/business.