

# 6 WAYS TO **TIDY UP** YOUR DIRECT MAIL PROCESSES



**mailing.com**  
mail with confidence



A smiling couple, a woman with long brown hair and a man with short brown hair, are standing in a modern office. The woman is wearing a patterned top and the man is wearing a blue and white checkered shirt. They are both looking towards the camera and smiling. The background is a blurred office environment with shelves and plants.

## **Customer retention is a common concern and challenge for marketers....**

Improving it, at some level, means really understanding all of the factors that go into a direct mail campaign, and finding ways to improve them. When you have more possibilities for achieving efficiencies, you have more options for balancing and meeting your goals.

You need a partner with the right experience who optimizes their processes (and yours) to save you time and money on your campaigns.



## 1. Data on the Front End

Your list data should always be run through a series of vital checks and tools to ensure that it's accurate and current and will reach your audience the first time. These procedures include:

- **CASS (Coding Accuracy Support System):** A USPS certification that corrects and standardizes address elements like zip codes and misspelled street or city names
- **NCOA (National Change of Address):** Compares addresses against a database of all new address information filed with the USPS
- **Dedupe & Presort:** Removes duplicates and pre-sorts the list in proper order before printing; pre-sorting a list in zip code order with a minimum of 200 pieces and a bulk permit earns you a discount
- **Data collection & Structure Review:** Examine where and how data is collected and determine if it easily and quickly aligns with print production

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## 2. Connect the Workflows

Understanding and controlling many workflows in your processes is critical for overcoming bottlenecks, eliminating workarounds, and attaining efficiencies. This requires a series of integrations to share data easily.

A key step for moving forward is to start with assessing and documenting your current workflows and focus on those that generate the most orders. Identify any gaps in your processes and look for opportunities to integrate and automate using your workforce and solutions (software and hardware) already in place. And if there are none, then document your specific needs or challenges and then find solutions that achieve your goals.

**For example:** Receiving and sharing data as part of an integrated production workflow proceeds faster when it is automated.

**Important questions that must be answered first include:**

- **What data is being integrated?** What specific data points need to be incorporated into the print design?
- **How often does this process need to occur?** Is data exchanged continuously or batched?
- **What method will be needed?** Is it through a simple export to the printer's MIS or an API?

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### 3. Segmentation Options

Direct mail segmentation is a crucial step in creating campaigns that reach different people who have different expectations of your brand, and different requirements of how their preferences, needs, and wants can be met. With these insights, you can use copy and images on your mail piece that are more likely to get their attention than a static piece.

By segmenting your lists, you can use predictive modeling to identify customers who may prove to be less profitable over time, allowing you to focus on your best prospects.

**At mailing.com, we work with companies using hundreds of data points on their campaigns.** This allows them to create the perfect mailing list that targets better ROI-delivering segments of their desired audience by one or more these factors:

- **Demographic:** Gender, age, ethnicity, income, occupation, and education level
- **Geographic:** State, city, zip code, street, or “neighborhood”/radius
- **Behavioral:** Customer activity, such as buying products and services, using the RFM (Recency, Frequency, Monetary) model
- **Psychographic:** Attitudes and values, interests, and more broadly, lifestyle, all form a personality profile

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## 4. Invest in Automation

If your mailing pieces are compatible with USPS's processing equipment, they qualify for discount pricing. But, they must meet several criteria, such as:

- **Minimum quantities** (500 mailings for First Class, 200 for Marketing Mail)
- **CASS certification** in the last 180 days
- **An Intelligent Mail barcode** (IMb) with the correct delivery point routing code printed on each piece

At mailing.com, our on-site USPS team analyzes your list by city or zip and compares postage rates so you always get the least expensive option. **Because we use USPS Seamless Acceptance to automate and streamline mail entry verification, we're able to offer significant postage discounts.** And thanks to our drop shipping service, we can send your mail in bulk to the nearest USPS office, saving you even more money and time.

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## 5. Change Mailer Size

Your mailpiece's format and size are variable costs that may affect how much you pay in postage for a campaign, as well as the time needed to produce it.

For more available affordable and flexible options, think about how you may achieve the same relevancy and results by redesigning your mailer.

- **Compare the costs of using less components** or a lighter paper stock
- **Switch your current mailing to a smaller, lighter format** (e.g., downsizing from envelopes/flats to self-mailers or from self-mailers to postcards)
- **Move to a larger mailer size** (e.g., upsizing to a single 6"x9" or 6"x11" postcard that can take the place of multiple smaller pieces)
- **Replace a warm up or drip sequence** mailer with an email effort

**Think about how you may achieve the same relevancy and results by redesigning your mailer.**



## 6. Customer Service/Consultation

End-to-end communication is the foundation of any strong partnership. Beginning at the concept stage of a mail campaign, it's crucial for every stakeholder to:

- Work closely, seamlessly, and transparently together
- Ensure that any obstacles are overcome quickly
- Meet production milestones
- Achieve project goals and develop learnings for continued improvement

**A single, under-one-roof vendor manages any issues in quality and accuracy, coordinates different functions, and presents options that keeps both deadlines and budgets on track.**



# How We Helped an Medical Practice Agency Partner Increase Their Customer Retention

## The Partner

Medical agency with 700 PT locations nationwide previously printed and mailed 1 million newsletters annually

## The Goal

Improve production efficiencies to increase customer retention with newsletters

## The Solution

- The partner restructured client data to align better with their workflow and our production process.
- We helped client secure postal permit to enable visibility by account and campaign.
- USPS postage savings & proprietary software achieves postal savings on a continuous basis.
- Customized new 24/7 ordering site.
- Developed efficient & more flexible formats for client needs.
- Improved communication at every stage of production process.

## Results

By developing a seamless production flow and automated update process, together our collaboration accomplished:

- **Client customer retention of 25%**
- **1st year postage savings of 12%**
- **5X increase in amount of newsletters mailed annually**
- **3X number of newsletter format options**
- **Production cycle reduced by 4 days**
- **Data accuracy improved by 98%**



*mailing.com is our print vendor. The team produces great results for us, and our clients' newsletters are perfect every time. Their customer service is above and beyond. We always have a live person to communicate with who gets us answers right away.*

### Bethany

Senior Print Account Manager,  
Medical Practice Agency Partner





# Conclusion

When you align your production process with customer data and mailing options choices, you can operate more seamlessly across your entire direct mail cycle. In addition to reducing costs, you'll get into the mailstream faster, and with less friction, and reach your target audiences sooner.



## We Can Help You Too!

At mailing.com, we pay attention to even the smallest details. We have over 50 years of experience helping marketers optimize their planning and processes to keep their direct mail costs affordable. As a full-service Mail Services Provider, our all-in-one mailing and data management teams can streamline your workflows and find savings for your campaign's setups, pre-press, printing, mailing, and shipment costs.

**Drop us a line or call us! We'd love to show you how to control your direct mail postage costs in your future campaigns.**

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