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Writing a mailshot

Most businesses send out mailshots several times a year, whether they are large-scale mailings or batches of individualised letters to a dozen key customers at a time. If the targeting and the offer are right, you get a positive response. If you get them wrong, it is junk mail.

You need a good list, a proven product and a strong offer, embodied in a compelling mail pack. But writing a successful mailshot need not be difficult, if you set about it the right way.

This briefing focuses on writing a traditional mailshot, to be printed and sent out by post. It covers:

- Knowing what you are trying to achieve.
- Getting the content right.
- Essential tips on form and style.
- The keys to maximise your response.

1 Plan your approach

1.1 Know what **objectives** you want the mailshot to achieve.

- You may want it to sell a product or to generate sales leads.
- You may want to launch a new product or service or break into new markets.
- You may be test marketing, to try out new products, packaging or campaign ideas.
- You may want to enhance your service to existing customers by giving them up-to-date information.

1.2 Identify your **readers**, so you know what sort of approach is likely to work best.

- What prior knowledge do they have about your product?
- Why do they need what you are offering?
- What do they want to hear about your product?
- What are their likely objections?

1.3 Choose the right **format**. Mail, fax and email give you three distinct options. Each of them needs to be written in a different way.

- Most mailings will consist of a pack of several items that is posted second class, or first class if the timing is important.
- Fax is limited to black and white and costs money to receive. It will only be welcomed by people who are keen to hear what you have to say.

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