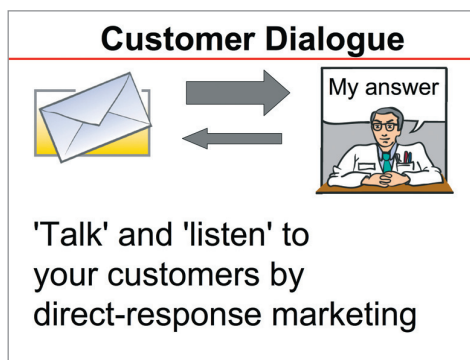


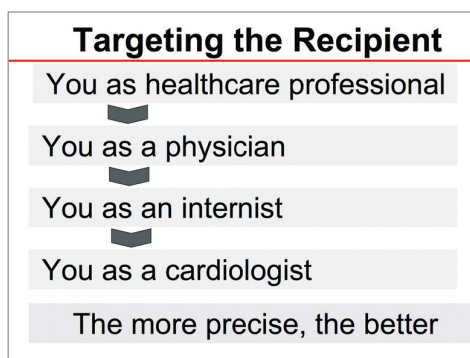
DEVisING DIRECT MAIL THAT GETS GOOD RESPONSES

Open a dialogue with your customers



If you incorporate a response element into your communication activities, for example email, regular mailings, or advertising, you are inviting a dialogue with your customers. There are communication agencies that specialize in direct-response marketing. Use them.

Target the recipient




Be as specific as you can when addressing your prospect. This example illustrates how you can improve your targeting of a cardiologist. If a doctor specializes in an area of medicine, make sure your address reflects their specialization. Use any data from mailing responses (for example the card they stamped) to improve the accuracy of your database.

Find credible gatekeepers

Relationship Marketing	
FAX INFO	
In Cooperation with the Society for	
Hormonal Contraception in Patients with Diabetes mellitus	
.....	
.....	
A Scientific Service from Company ABC	Examp lex

Ask a professional medical society if they are willing to cooperate with you in providing scientific information to physicians as part of the process of continuing medical education. You will need to select a topic and title relevant to your study and to your target group. In this instance, the look and feel of the fax should be neutral, scientific and research-oriented. It should not give the impression of a promotional flyer or folder. Your branding should be subtle.



Use suggestive design

Active Design	
1	Cut _____
2	✂ _____
 3	✂ Highest response?

You offer free article reprints or brochures? Then you want the physician to fill out the coupon, cut it out and send it to you. Based on direct marketing experience, version 1 will give you the lowest response rate, whereas version 3 will give you the highest response rate. Sometimes the simplest aspect of design can have a big impact on response rates.

Trade on familiarity

Familiarity Breeds Response

Person	Sandra	Madeleine
		
Tea	Sanya	Madoorie
	'Implicit Egotism'	

Maurice Carvallo and his colleagues at the State University in New York were responsible for an enlightening experiment. They asked participants to sample two cups of tea. The first three letters in the name of one of the teas were devised to match the first three letters in participants' first names. When asked to choose one of the teas to take home as gift, participants preferred the tea that contained the letters of their name.

We value what looks familiar. The more the elements of your communication (words, symbols and images) reflect an environment that the doctor is familiar with, the more likely she or he will connect with what you have to say. Use the vocabulary and visuals with which the doctor is familiar and feels comfortable. This form of implicit self-interest acts below the level of our conscious awareness and may be more persuasive than more obvious strategies.

Personalize your letters

Personal Salutation

Dear Doctor,	Dear Doctor Miller,
.....
	Name of recipient

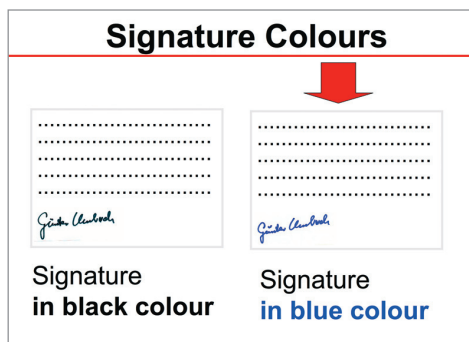
Make your letter as personal as possible. Use the recipient's name in the salutation of your letter. 'Dear Doctor Miller' will elicit more response than just 'Dear Doctor'.

Disclose your first name



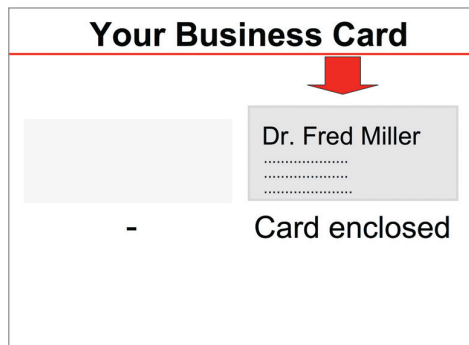
The illustration shows three alternative endings to a letter. The example that reveals the first name (using 'Martin Miller') will yield the highest response.

Avoid ostentatious signatures



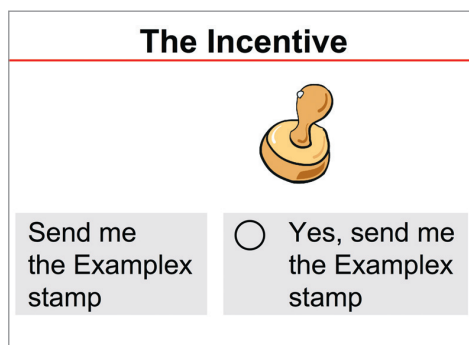
A mailing will yield a higher response when the signatures are printed in blue rather than black. And don't be tempted to try any more unusual or flashy colours such as red or green.

Enclose your business card



If you are sending a small mailing (200 to 300 or letters or less), consider enclosing your business card with the letter. Many people will look at the business card (so make sure that it also displays the name of your product) and whilst they will throw away the letter, some of them will keep the business card.

Show the incentive



'Yes, send me the Examplex stamp' affirms positive action, includes a 'yes' and thus will secure a higher response rate than simply 'Send me the Examplex stamp'. Include an illustration or incentive in your letter so that the recipient can see what he or she will receive: a stamp, a CD, a reprinted article, and so on. Always show clearly what you are offering. Be sure to observe promotional codes when sending out material.

Create a sense of urgency

The Power of Deadlines



This offer expires 31 July
So mail the reply card today

State the date by which your offer expires. This will inject a sense of urgency into the promotion and will increase response. Make sure you allow a reasonable time for the reader to respond and the mailing to pass through the postal system.

Test and test again

The Testing Cycle

Improve continuously:
Your aim in direct-response marketing



Send	Measure	Improve
Send	Measure	Improve
Send	Measure	Improve

Testing Pays

Database	6 000 Names	
Version	A*	B*
Mailed	3000	3000
Response	3%	10%

* Mark version on response card!

Think about how you can improve the effectiveness of your mailings. Use the methods of direct response marketing: send, measure, improve and then restart the cycle.

Test, improve and then test again!

- develop two versions of your text, that are identical with the exception of the headline or some key phrases (Note: If you can't send out the two versions simultaneously, consider sending them one after the other);
- select the sample list of doctors in the data base;
- split the doctors into two random groups ('randomize them');
- mark the two versions appropriately, so you can identify which version of the mailing they received when they do respond (for example 'A' or 'B' on the reply card);
- send out the mailing;
- measure the response for each version.

In this example, version 'B' is obviously more effective than version 'A'. Continue testing and improving version 'B' to increase your response rates further. Find out which headlines or key words work best for you!

Always measure the response to your activities

Response Measurement



Measure
and
Adjust

Record the
customers'
response to
every activity

Then improve it

Try to add a direct response element to every marketing activity you undertake.

Record the response. Since you have objective and precise quantitative feedback from your customers, you can easily adjust and improve your previous versions.

