

Mailers push for deals as holidays near

By Giselle Abramovich

List professionals have seen more targeting and tailored ordering from mailers amid the holiday seasonal rise in volume of orders.

Mailers are narrowing their choice of selections, even asking for selects not listed.

“[In light of the holiday season] mailers are tightening up the selections being taken,”

Barbara Henry, executive vice president of Leon Henry Inc., said from Parkland, FL. “There are more price negotiations and price concessions from the list owners and more exchanging.”

One challenge for list companies in the holiday season is that marketers are more apt to push for negotiations. Not all list prices can be negotiated. But some marketers don’t take no for an answer.

“If an owner is unwilling to negotiate, I see lists being dropped from the mailer’s consideration,” Ms. Henry said.

A shift is continuing toward later order dates and later holiday mail dates from gift catalogers, said Bruce Kimmel, vice president of data management at American List Counsel, Tarrytown, NY.

“Catalog mailers are testing more on exchange, with a 38 percent increase in the average exchange test order,” he said.



Barbara Henry

“There have been a few less exchange continuations but with increased order sizes coming in so far this fall from catalog mailers.”

A.L.C. is seeing slightly lower rental continuation order volumes and average order sizes for catalogers, he said.

Many mailers have availed themselves



Bruce Kimmel

of offers from list companies to reactivate older names, said Lana Cardinale, sales executive at Avrick Direct Inc., Santa Barbara, CA. List firms can take advantage of this by providing services that let high-volume mailers append these older names.

Continue to test, Ms. Henry said. The holiday is the strongest season for gift mailers, and out-of-category files have a high chance of performing well, she said. And given the postal rate increase expected next year, it may be wise to build your house file at lower rates now, possibly by

untapped secondary and tertiary markets.

Mailers also should consider adding insert media, e-mail campaigns and other channels to supplement list prospecting, she said. Owners can see incremental income by opening their catalogs and packages to outside, noncompetitive offers.

“It is becoming more and more important to maintain a balanced marketing mix that shifts budgetary dollars toward the channels that generate the greatest customer value over time,” said Elisa Krause, vice president of analytical services at Abacus, Broomfield, CO. “Direct marketers need to consider the value of new customers acquired through both new and traditional channels when developing campaigns.” ■