



Go Beyond the Datacard

By Fran Green

November 14, 2007

Whether publishing a magazine, marketing a product or operating a nonprofit organization, successful direct marketers all share one thing in common: a base of multisourced customers. Add them together and you have an incredibly large and robust universe to draw from.

Why then do so many marketers find it difficult to profitably acquire new customers from outside lists, particularly from outside their own market category? Simply put, they don't dig deep enough.

One glance at a datacard and many a good list gets passed over. But in today's data-driven world, marketers have more information at hand than can fit on a datacard. And too many list marketers take the easy way out and show the same information as they always have, or as everyone else does.

To make outside lists work, marketers need to go beyond the datacard.

List managers and list owners increasingly are working with brokers and their mailers to customize data sets and provide tailored solutions not listed on the datacard. You just need to ask the right questions. For example: Can you provide subscribers who paid with the order or who renewed on the first effort? Surely these names will perform differently than "bill me's" or subscribers who finally renewed on the sixth effort.

Not all data are created equal. A donor who gives \$50 each year during annual fund drives is different than one who gave the minimum amount for an umbrella premium or because of a catastrophic event. A catalog shopper who orders large-ticket items several times a year is different than a customer who ordered a designer suit one month and returned it the next. Yet both customers may be classified as \$150 buyers.

Look for types of actions that mirror those you want your prospects to take. Information such as lifetime, last or largest purchase can help you home in on a universe that will be more successful for you. Managers who've changed with the times are intimate with their clients' customers and know the types of behind-the-scenes data that can be used to target them. Inquire about selections that may not be listed on the datacard or readily available.

When even the most creative approach to straight selections doesn't help pinpoint the formula for success, try modeling. Large, multititle, multiproduct marketers like Meredith, Reader's Digest and Rodale can create customized models that can make marginal lists perform better,

allow mailers to go deeper into good lists and yield significant new universes for mailers who may not be able to test with straight selects.

Smart list managers and list owners work with mailers to craft specific segments or models based on offer type. They interview the mailer to discover what it is trying to accomplish and craft a true one-to-one solution.

Many large marketers, such as Harry and David, acquire customers successfully from a myriad of list sources. It offers the ability to select names from its file based on the type of list that generated the customer—catalog, publishing, etc. So publishers, for example, will see a real performance lift when targeting catalog buyers originally sourced from publishing files.

Every bit of granular data tells you something more and can influence the way prospects perform for a specific offer. There is gold in every large, successful marketer's list for most mailers. It's just a matter of discovering it. That means rolling up your sleeves and digging deep.

Fran Green is chief revenue officer of American List Counsel (ALC), a customer acquisition and leveraging firm. She can be reached at (609) 580-2764 or by e-mail at fran.green@alc.com.

Copyright 2007 | North American Publishing Company | All Rights Reserved
1500 Spring Garden Street, 12th Floor | Philadelphia, PA 19130 USA | (215) 238-5300