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## Resident Lists: New Way to Reach Masses

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With the rapid proliferation of media channel choices, once-simple ways to reach a mass target audience have been lost. Commuters tune in to hundreds of commercial-free satellite radio stations in their cars. At home, they stream commercial-free music feeds online. And if you don't TiVo your favorite shows and fast-forward through commercials, trust me, you will soon. The morning newspaper is even old news by the time it hits your driveway.

This transformation has a huge effect on a mass marketer's ability to blanket a target audience with a message. There is no such thing as a mass captive audience. Saturating a target market with a message requires a multimedia extravaganza that few can afford. So how can you achieve maximum target audience penetration? Goodyear uses a blimp. That's one way to get everyone's attention. But it's hard to get them to read anything more than the logo unless you send them all binoculars.

"Send" is the operative word. You could send them all binoculars, but that would be ridiculous. However, you can put your message directly into their hands. One media vehicle still has no competition: the mailbox. People still read their mail every day, looking at each piece, lest they miss a bill, a check or the annual family letter with news from relatives afar.

Today, only one way exists to penetrate a specific mass market completely, and that is with a resident list. With a good resident list, every member of a captive audience in your mass target market will touch and possibly read your message. These "occupant" lists have come a long way since ADVO began its first shared-mail resident mailing program, and thus the whole concept of market saturation, more than 20 years ago. Yet many marketers mistakenly regard resident lists as if nothing has changed since 1983.

So let me dispel a few misconceptions and tell you what's new in saturation marketing and why it needs to be part of any campaign with mass appeal:

**Personalization.** If addressing your customers by name is important to you, then by all means ask for the names. A good saturation list should have plenty of first and last names with the ability to select names only, or where name available.

**Targeted saturation by demographics and ethnicity.** State-of-the-art saturation lists can take you into neighborhoods with seniors, families with children, high home values, high or low incomes and all other demographic criteria found on response lists. Marketers also are targeting messages to specific ethnic groups and appealing to their unique consumer preferences. There is no better way to reach these diverse groups en masse than in their neighborhoods as identified by robust saturation databases.

**Targeted saturation by lifestyle.** Lifestyle indicators such as travel, exercise and do it yourself are also appended to saturation files with the help of data appenders like Claritas and Experian.

**Mail as few or as many as you like.** With complete coverage of all carrier routes combined with

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targeting data, you can mail to groups of prime prospects as low as 200-300 households in a desired location, targeted neighborhoods in metro areas or blanket entire regions.

**Affordable to mail.** Saturation files are the cheapest, most cost-effective lists, generally priced at less than \$15 per thousand names. They offer the greatest postal discounts, calling for as low as 15.3 cents per mail piece.

**Eliminate waste.** Depending on your message, you may want to eliminate certain types of dwellings such as trailers or apartments, which can cut postage and printing by another 25 percent or more.

**Businesses.** Once reserved for consumer addresses, saturation lists now can provide business records.

**Experience.** Good saturation lists are backed by trained, experienced direct marketing professionals who guide you through the vast amount of marketing opportunities that comes with a list of 143 million records and hundreds of pieces of data on each record. They know how to get you the highest return on advertising investment.

Not all saturation lists are the same, though. The most accurate ones are housed by list owners who frequently mail the files themselves and invest resources in maintaining the accuracy and integrity of the file.

A top-quality resident list is compiled from a single source and updated monthly where there is a constant exchange of address information directly with the U.S. Postal Service. The most deliverable lists use a single source of data maintained in Enhanced Carrier Route Walk Sequence. Finally, the most complete saturation efforts require that simplified addresses on rural routes are converted to city-style addresses.

So, while saturation mailing remains the only vehicle for mass-market coverage, this tried-and-true medium has many new bells and whistles that can help your bottom line. With affordable list cost, maximum postal discounts and increased response because of targeting capabilities, you will increase your return on advertising investment. Now let me go watch that show I TiVoed last night.

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