



# 2023 STATE OF DIRECT MAIL & CORPORATE GIFTING

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# INTRODUCTION

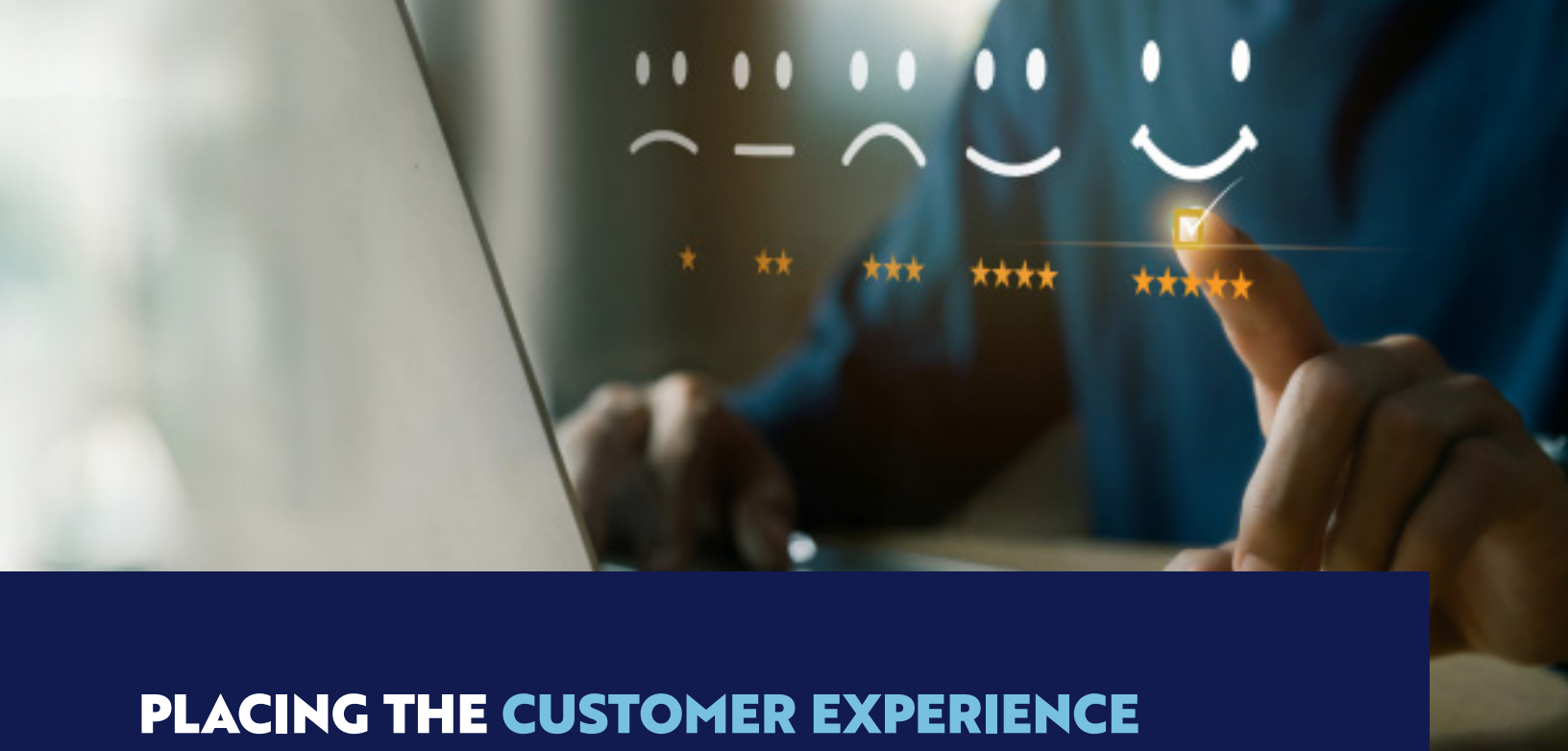
As inboxes overflow and social media feeds become more saturated by the day, direct mail generates a **37% higher response** rate than electronic mail. However, despite being a welcome break from the digital noise, it's no longer enough to toss some stress balls in a box and call it a day.

Instead, practitioners are leveraging highly personalized sending strategies to generate deeper connections with customers and prospects, which adds a human touch to the generally sterile B2B buyer's journey. In fact, **research shows** that the top two reasons marketing leaders rely on direct mail initiatives are to stand out from the competition (65%) and increase creativity and personalization of items and experiences (60%).

"The average person receives 100 emails per day, and that's not even accounting for texting and all the other channels they're getting information from," said Lydia Flocchini, CMO of **SurePoint Technologies**, a financial and practice management software for law firms, in her **#B2BMX** session. "On top of that, the B2B space is complex: There are six to 10 decision makers that now influence buying cycles, so there's a lot of people we need to touch if we want to accelerate velocity in our pipeline and think about growth."

With the use of direct mail, B2B marketers can create more comprehensive and effective marketing campaigns that will help them achieve their business goals. This report will uncover the latest direct mail and gifting trends, including:

- How marketers are turning to third-party providers to cleanse and append the data in their gifting campaigns to further personalize assets and drive more engagement;
- The types of swag and sends that generate the highest response and conversion rates;
- The tools and technologies practitioners are relying on to orchestrate their sending campaigns, personalize gifting experiences and track success; and
- Strategies for leveraging direct mail gifting and swag to increase customer retention and drive more partner engagement.



## PLACING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AT THE CENTER OF SENDING

Modern practitioners are savvy: They already know their total addressable market (TAM) and are now focused on making long-term investments to become stickier with their desired segment. As part of those investments, 56% of B2B marketers are planning to adopt a direct mail strategy over the next year, while 76% are planning to expand their direct mail strategies, according to research from the [Association Of National Advertisers](#).

But the truth is that **more than one-third (35%)** of companies are currently leveraging direct mail strategies, meaning that gifting is becoming more commonplace and, consequently, more crowded. However, volume doesn't equate to value — almost every professional has received an irrelevant or, quite frankly, *lazy*, piece of direct mail. To help craft strategies that stand out, Flocchini stressed the importance of putting yourself in the customer's shoes and placing their interests at the heart of all campaigns.

"There always should be a person in the room that says, 'Is this what the customer would like? Is this right for them?'," she explained. "And it's hard to be that person, especially when you're thinking of all the goals that a company has and the challenges of harmonizing all touchpoints. But you need to harmonize those touchpoints, personalize them and ensure that messaging is consistent across teams."

The good news is that personalization doesn't have to break the bank; simple touches such as including the prospect's name, mentioning their interests, calling out their pain points and challenges are enough to generate prospect and customer attention, Flocchini noted.

# INCREASING PERSONALIZATION & LEVERAGING SENDS ACROSS THE CUSTOMER LIFECYCLE

Opening gifts is one of life's simple pleasures: [Epsilon research](#) found that 69% of professionals like receiving gifts, and 84% of professionals say they are more likely to do business with a company that sends them direct mail, according to [Forbes](#). In turn, practitioners are working to craft direct mail strategies that touch all prospects and customers.

Jen Leaver, Director, ABM and Integrated Marketing at digital experience provider [FullStory](#), explained that she uses direct mail to:

- Start the conversation with prospects to increase **customer acquisition**;
- **Nurture prospects** throughout their buying journey to ensure they remain engaged; and
- "Surprise and delight" current customers to **promote retention and growth**, whether it's celebrating an upcoming renewal or just showing appreciation for their business.

"Direct mail helps us connect and get in closer with the sales motion," explained Leaver. "We use the strategy to develop the right plays and help pull the right levers that would start conversations and encourage meeting attendance. But once that opportunity is created, we also consider how to use direct mail to get those opportunities over the finish line."

Flocchini added that she's a "big fan" of sending out milestone gifts, whether it's a welcome kit when a customer signs or celebrating their first anniversary. Specifically, the [most popular sends in 2023 \(so far!\)](#) include:

- Food and beverages;
- Gift sets; and
- E-gift cards.

"We are currently using a lot of E-gift cards at our trade shows and events to incentivize prospects to book demos, and we're finding that they perform better than email campaigns and landing pages," said Flocchini. "We've found that the 'sweet spot' is \$50, as \$25 isn't enough for their time and \$100 is too much. We let our prospects choose the gift card, whether it's DoorDash, Amazon or even a charity donation in their name."

In fact, through SurePoint's use of E-gift cards to promote demo requests, the company has generated more than 200 demo requests over the last quarter, with "well over 50%" of those requests converting, Flocchini noted.





## PARTNERING WITH DIRECT MAIL PROVIDERS & MEASURING SUCCESS

Direct mail is a daunting task — and to orchestrate gifting at scale, practitioners can find solace in direct mail partners. Gretchen Swann, Principal Marketing Program Manager at HR software provider [Paycor](#), noted in her [#B2BMX session](#) that her direct mail provider seamlessly integrates with other components of her tech stack, which allows her to set up nurture campaigns. She continued that she structures her nurture campaigns to trigger once a prospect or account interacts with a certain piece of content.

“When the lead or account is entered into a certain campaign, they’re dropped into a weekly email nurture program and we follow up with digital retargeting,” Swann explained. “But at the same time, that nurture mailer can be automatically targeted through the campaign. I use my direct mail provider to create a custom note to include in the mailer, which is populated automatically by the existing information in our CRM. Additionally, we chose a provider that offered address verification to ensure our data was up to date.”

The other critical role that data plays is determining the success of each campaign. Swann noted that Paycor monitors direct mail delivery and acceptance rates and, from there, analyzes the actions taken after the package is opened.

“We measure the success of direct mail by the kits that are delivered and then leverage a 90-day attribution window,” Swann continued. “So, if an appointment is set within 90 days of delivery, we’re going to give the campaign that credit. From there, we track bookings, where we can see how many appointments turned into closed opportunities and actual dollars.”

In terms of auditing the swag that’s sent, Leaver added that she takes notes of what her sales team sends out to see if it progressed the deal, increased deal velocity or up-leveled win rates — “the typical metrics you look at through an ABM lens,” she explained. With those insights in hand, she said she can identify best practices or sunset strategies that aren’t generating much success.



## CONCLUSION

It's evident that direct mail strategies are a powerful and effective marketing tool in the digital age. Despite the proliferation of online communication channels, direct mail has proven its resilience and ability to cut through the clutter to capture the attention of business professionals.

When executed strategically with personalization and integration of digital technology, direct mail campaigns can drive engagement, brand recognition and, ultimately, business growth. As businesses continue to navigate the ever-evolving marketing landscape, "intentional" B2B direct mail remains a compelling and effective avenue for reaching and influencing key decision-makers.

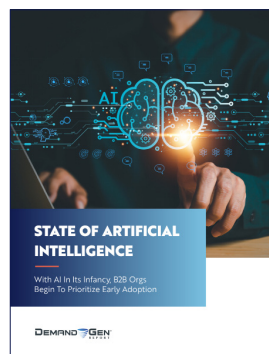
"You have to be intentional about how you're sending your direct mail," said Leaver. "You can't use it as a 'spray and pray' approach; you must be diligent about who you're serving it up to and making sure you're striking when the iron is hot."



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What's Working In  
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*Demand Gen Report* is a targeted online publication that uncovers the strategies and solutions that help companies better align their sales and marketing organizations, and ultimately, drive growth. A key component of the publication's editorial coverage focuses on the sales and marketing automation tools that enable companies to better measure and manage their multichannel demand generation efforts.

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