

Traditional direct marketing more likely to drive new customer web traffic than online

Pitney Bowes consumer survey reveals that UK marketers need to combine offline marketing with e-commerce for best results

More than twice as many UK consumers say traditional direct marketing is more likely than digital marketing to encourage them to go to a website and seriously consider a purchase from a company for the first time, a new poll from messaging specialist Pitney Bowes reveals.

The survey reveals that 60% of the respondents believe offline marketing, in the form of addressed mail or direct response advertising, is most likely to get them to visit the website of a company they have not bought from before with the intention of buying a product or service. Only 24% of the consumers surveyed said that a marketing message delivered through digital media such as email, a sponsored web link, or an ad on a social networking website would drive them to a company site with a first-time purchase in mind.

The figures came out of a broader European study conducted by Pitney Bowes, which involved a survey of 10,000 adults in the UK, Germany, France, Scandinavia and Benelux. The sample was balanced by age, gender, region and social class.

Pitney Bowes found that UK women were more likely to seriously consider a first-time purchase from a website after being directed there by a traditional marketing message than men – 63% compared to 57% of men. But when driven to a website through an online platform, men were more likely to visit with a purchase in mind with 25% saying so, compared to 23% of the women surveyed.

Direct marketing was more effective at driving serious consumer traffic than digital activity across all age groups, with UK consumers aged 25-34 (67%) most likely to visit and consider buying from a website for the first time after being directed there by an offline message. The next most likely age group was 35-44 at 64%, followed by 45-54 at 60% and the 18-24 and 55+ age groups both at 56%.

When it came to UK respondents picking up on digital messages and considering buying from the website of a company they had not bought from before, the 18-24 age group was most responsive at 41%, followed by 25-34 at 37%, 35-44 at 25%, 45-54 at 16% and 55+ at 14%.

Overall, the UK figure lagged slightly behind the European total of 62% for respondents who said that direct marketing was most likely to drive them to go to a website and consider buying from a company they had not dealt with before, while the figures for digital achieving the same goal was the same at 24% for both the UK and Europe.

Gareth Stoten, General Manager, Pitney Bowes DMT, UK and Ireland, says: “These figures demonstrate how critically important it is for businesses to find the right marketing mix. Online channels such as social networking are a hot topic, but it is the traditional print and mail channels that are driving people to make web purchases. A digital presence on its own does not provide a strong enough impetus for brands seeking to make a connection with prospects – even when it comes to those consumers looking to buy over the internet.

“Marketing activities such as mail, inserts and direct response advertising can help companies to reach new customers in a very targeted and personal way and then entice them onto a website. Digital channels are all too often just not as engaging, and targeting as precisely can be difficult given the lack of depth and detail in the online prospecting data that’s available.

“Mail remains a particularly powerful tool for moving consumers to take action – either offline or online. Developments in areas such as document composition software and inserting technology make it possible to create more creative and tailored communications packages than ever.

“Those Industries focused on growing the e-commerce side of their business need to take note of the best ways to drive web traffic. These sectors include retail, banking, insurance, hospitality, utility and charity – all of which are looking to further build their multi-channel service offerings. These businesses should be looking at how best to drive their digital initiatives – and offline direct marketing methods are proving captivating for UK consumers.”

Charts with survey results:

Thinking of companies that I do not yet buy from, traditional direct marketing in the form of direct mail and direct response advertising is most likely to get me to visit their website and seriously consider a purchase								
	Age					Gender		Total
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Male	Female	Grand total
UK	56%	67%	64%	60%	56%	57%	63%	60%
Germany	57%	65%	65%	58%	57%	55%	64%	62%
France	58%	66%	66%	62%	71%	59%	62%	65%
Benelux	59%	70%	67%	63%	59%	60%	66%	63%
Scandinavia	53%	64%	61%	57%	53%	54%	60%	57%
Average	57%	67%	65%	60%	59%	57%	63%	62%

Thinking of companies that I do not yet buy from, digital advertising – such as on a social networking site, or sponsored links, or email adverts – is most likely to get me to visit their website and seriously consider a purchase

	Age					Gender		Total
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Male	Female	Grand total
UK	41%	37%	25%	16%	14%	25%	23%	24%
Germany	38%	37%	22%	16%	11%	22%	22%	23%
France	44%	36%	27%	19%	13%	27%	22%	23%
Benelux	37%	33%	20%	12%	10%	21%	18%	19%
Scandinavia	49%	45%	32%	24%	22%	33%	30%	31%
Average	42%	37%	25%	17%	14%	25%	23%	24%

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About Pitney Bowes

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