

Altman Dedicated Direct

STRATEGY... TACTICS... RESULTS

Column: "**After the Phone Rings ...**"

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Topic: **Benefiting from Product Package Inserts**

Every time you ship a product to a customer you have the opportunity to accomplish more than just deliver the items ordered ... the chance to start a dialogue and make another sale without paying for postage or phone calls.

Also, this communication opportunity occurs when customers are in a positive frame of mind, opening the box of a product they ordered and are happy to have. With that positive frame of mind, customers are receptive to hearing what you have to say, such as:

- Reinforce the benefits of the product they bought to ensure they are happy with it, use it, keep it (and don't return it), and thus share good word of mouth about it with friends and family.
- Share the benefits of buying from your company and predispose them to making additional purchases in the future.
- Promotions for other specific products you have to offer.

What should your insert priorities be? Every shipment should include instruction manuals/tips needed to ensure your buyer knows how to get the most of their purchase. The more quickly the buyer uses the product, the more likely they will keep it, and share their positive experience with others.

If this is the first shipment to your customer you have specific needs:

- A letter to thank the new buyer for their purchase and reinforce what a great decision they made in making their purchase. This helps overcome any potential "buyers remorse".
- Share information about the breadth of products you offer. This new customer only knows you for the single purchase.
- Promote an add-on item for the one they just received. Since this is the customer's first purchase, choose items products carefully. Promote items with the largest chance of turning a one-time buyer into a repeat buyer. And don't forget to make an irresistible offer that is hard to say no to.

If this is a second or subsequent shipment to the customer, you don't need to introduce your company and your "thank you" can be as simple as a sentence on the packing slip. However, this is an ideal opportunity to sell add-on items and cross sell other product lines. Consider multiple inserts to promote different items or product lines to these "hot" buyers. Unless you are using a catalog format, inserts tend to generate greater response promoting one product at a time.

Inserts can be any shape or size, but there are restrictions to consider. If your box is small you may have to fold any inserts to fit the box dimensions. You may have similar concerns if your fulfillment department places all printed inserts into an envelope; you



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need to ensure inserts accommodate the envelope size. It's a rare situation where inserts will impact shipping costs, but if you have an especially heavy insert such as a large catalog, it could be a concern. Whatever you do, be sure to involve fulfillment in the process so they know what inserts you are planning.

Discussing your insert plans with fulfillment will also help you to know what level of automation is available for using unique inserts for different segments of customers, such as first-time versus multi-buyers, continuity versus non-continuity buyers and so on.

Package inserts are easy to overlook but doing so is akin to throwing money away. Don't miss your opportunity to capitalize on the positive selling opportunity of a "hot" buyer opening the prized product they ordered and have been waiting anxiously to receive.

Have a question on any of this? Email me: Saltman@AltmanDedicatedDirect.com Next month we'll investigate how to woo former customers back.

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