

**Direct Mail can:**

- target** your message accurately
  - unlock** vast creative possibilities
  - allow** you to measure your response
  - speak** directly to customers via personalization
  - extend** your message through shareability
  - touch** many senses with its versatility
- which may allow your brand to:**
- differentiate** you from your competition
  - sustain** your business during economic downturns
  - attract** new employees, customers, and partners
  - expand** easily into new business arenas

**the combined strength of brands and mail**

Today, companies are using mail to fill a variety of brand-driven roles. It gives depth and dimension to a message. Mail adds another touch point to a brand campaign and creates continuity when timed with other media in the mix. Mail is an effective way to drive people to a store or website and offers the opportunity for a response device. With reply cards, surveys, invitations, and even billing statements, branded mail can create a dialogue with your customers. And mail offers the ability to measure your response rate and to collect customer data. Simply put, mail helps your brand work harder and smarter.

Here's another way to look at it: mail allows you to take your brand and put it in the hands of consumers. If they don't know it, introduce them to it. If they do know it, remind them of it. If they love it, give them a reason to continue loving it. Mail gives consumers the opportunity to interact with your brand and can give them the opportunity to respond to it.

In broad terms, mail is a free agent. You can use mail by itself to build your brand, or you can use it to accentuate other media in your branding mix. Using mail allows you to refine your audience and aggressively target your competitors and exploit their weaknesses.

Inside, we'll see examples of mail being used to reposition a brand, make it stand out in a cluttered category, and extend the brand experience through a point of sale.



**branding, mail, and the marketplace of the mind.**

mail puts your brand in the hands and minds of consumers.

Your brand's essence is consumer perception – a combination of the collected experiences, information, and guidance your company gives through its consistent values and behavior.

Just as pop art provided commentary on consumerism of the '60s, new forms of communication are impacting the marketplace of today. Blogging. Internet video. Digital video recorders. They've created an environment in which consumers have more control over marketing messages than ever.



Indeed, we're living in the Age of Consumer Empowerment. Consumers are more sophisticated, have more power, and prefer to receive marketing messages at their convenience. They've even become their own ad agencies and advocates – as evidenced by *Advertising Age* recognizing "The Consumer" as the Agency of the Year for 2006.\*

It is within this consumer-driven market that your brand must now exist. And to build and maintain your brand, you must seek ways to make a personal and relevant connection with consumers. As you're about to see, few media can help an integrated brand campaign make this connection like mail.



## discover the branding power of mail.



### Example 1 direct mail accelerates your brand

*Recruiting for military service is one of the toughest sells in marketing. You're not asking for a purchase; you're asking for a commitment of time out of someone's life. However noble the cause, the U.S. Navy faced an uphill battle. By positioning the Navy as a lifestyle and an opportunity for personal growth, mail helped the organization consistently meet and exceed recruiting goals and played a crucial role in the branding mix.*

The U.S. Navy has a very interesting brand history. Everyone knows what the Navy is – or do they? That was the challenge when the Navy decided to take the wheel of its brand and reposition itself in the minds of potential recruits. With its "Accelerate Your Life" campaign, it wanted to offer a life-transforming adventure that would lead recruits to the highest levels of achievement – in the Navy and beyond.

A momentous shift of brand position required the strength of many mediums – especially mail.

While broadcast media drove home the idea of adventure and personal growth, Direct Mail was used to reinforce the brand and accomplish the critical goal of one-on-one recruiting. National mailings were used to raise awareness, and segmented mailings were sent to recruits based on their interests.

When potential recruits raised their hands, the Navy sent them a heavily branded fulfillment mailing ranging from a letter (customized to the recipient)

to a brochure covering a Naval specialty, such as aviation, intelligence, telecommunication, or electronics. The strategy produced an annual conversion rate of about 5%. Meanwhile, a website let local recruiters select and mail preprinted brochures and letters to their local targets.



All of the mailings allowed the Navy to change its message based on its target and build upon the messages that were working. Mail gave the Navy the opportunity to interact with its recruits and, combined with other media, created the promise of a life-transforming adventure – the Navy's brand.

Based on information from the article "Full Speed," *Deliver*® magazine, March 2005

**how mail strengthened the brand:**  
Mail helped the Navy reposition and reinforce its brand by providing unique benefits – targeting and personalization – to help drive a remarkable response rate.

### Example 2 even statements make a statement

*Everything you do must reinforce your brand. In the case of Citi Cards, the company used mail to help support its other branding efforts, but it also had an extra monthly opportunity to brand with mail – through credit card statements. The humble account statements were the dry bottom line of a month's expenditures – Citi Cards decided it was high time for their statements to say more.*

Citi Cards competes in a sea of credit card offers, also-ran services, rewards programs, and the hotly contested battle for top-of-mind awareness in credit card users.

They send about one *billion* pieces of mail annually, including the often-overlooked opportunity of the card member statement. Every piece begins with the Citi brand as its primary component.

"At Citi Cards, the power of our brand starts with our focus on the customer. We begin by listening to them and then develop our products around their wants and needs," said Chairman and CEO Vik Atal. The messages are unique, such as "The best table in the city is the one with your family around it" and "Healthy credit is good but keep an eye on your cholesterol too." Citi's brand is one of commitment to the customer, and it is integrated throughout the company's massive mail efforts.



Mail doesn't just close the deal with new customers. More and more, it is used to direct recipients to the Internet. Every mail piece prominently displays Citi's website and 800 number. People can use the paper application in their mail, or they can call or apply online. Because of its reach, access, and reliability, mail remains a key component in Citi Cards' branding and marketing strategies, including their customers' monthly statements.

Based on information from the column "Last Word," *Deliver*® magazine, May 2006

**how mail strengthened the brand:**  
Citi Cards uses mail as an integral part of its branding campaign by taking advantage of mail's targeted, personal, tangible, and measurable characteristics. Mail helps Citi Cards stand out in a very competitive and cluttered category.

### Example 3 branding at the point of sale with catalogs

*With the rise of e-commerce, more than a few people in the marketing sector were ready to proclaim the death of the mailed catalog. But some savvy companies had other ideas – they saw catalogs as an excellent opportunity to create and sell their brand, not just their products.*

The rate at which companies send out catalogs is rising steadily. According to the Direct Marketing Association, during the last two years, annual catalog mailings were up 6.7% to 19.4 billion. So why are catalogs suddenly hip again?

The new breed of glossy, magazine-like catalogs – known as magalogs – is a far more personal way to convey the look and feel of a brand than any website. The new catalogs don't attempt to list every product in a company's lineup. Instead, a select group of dramatically presented items communicates the brand to the customer.

Spiegel is an excellent example of the use of catalogs to create and maintain a brand. The company launched a 400-page magalog that combined product-specific features with editorial content, including stories that would be of interest to its target. The magalog, with a circulation of 800,000, helped reposition the brand while reinforcing contact with traditional customers and broadening Spiegel's appeal across all age groups.

Tony Chivari, Spiegel's Senior Vice President of Marketing, notes that the response has been "overwhelmingly positive" and points to a "double-digit increase in customer response" since updating their catalog to magalog format.



Based on information from the articles "Catalogs, Catalogs, Everywhere," *BusinessWeek*.com, November 2006, and "A Hybrid Way to Connect with Consumers," *Deliver*® magazine, November 2005

**how mail strengthened the brand:**  
Catalogs not only provide a critical point of sale, they enable companies to build and maintain a consistent brand tone across their websites and brick-and-mortar stores, reinforcing their messages to consumers on a personal level.

## mail – essential to branding.

No matter what your product or service; no matter who your target or consumer – mail can help you build and sustain a powerful brand in today's highly fragmented, consumer-empowered marketplace. In fact, brands big and small use mail to add muscle to other media channels as they compete for space atop consumers' minds.

Mail, like fine art, works on many levels. Is your catalog simply asking customers to make a purchase, or does it expand on your brand's personality? Is your Direct Mail piece just directing recipients to a website, or is it expanding on your brand messaging from TV? Is your credit card statement just a bill, or is it also saying something meaningful about your brand?

Mail is much more than offers, coupons, invitations, catalogs, and statements. It's a powerful, private moment in the minds of customers and an opportunity to change or reinforce their perceptions – the essence of your brand – and give you an advantage in the marketplace of their minds.

### the three Cs of branding: common strengths of uncommon brands

**clarity**  
Strong brands are clear about what they are and what they aren't.

**consistency**  
Strong brands are always what they say they are.

**constancy**  
Strong brands are always visible to their customers and prospects.

A strong brand, therefore, has a distinct personality, delivers consistent qualities, and is regularly seen in the marketplace.