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35. Direct marketing like one of the most effective way to increase sales

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Introduction: Direct marketing is a sometimes controversial sales method through which advertisers approach potential customers directly with products or services. The most common forms of direct marketing are telephone sales, solicited or unsolicited emails, and mailed catalogs, leaflets, brochures and coupons. In most cases, the goal is to inform customers of products or services that they may need without waiting for customers to initiate contact. Particularly online, the practice has received a lot of criticism when it comes to personal privacy and data tracking. The practice is nevertheless very successful, however, which motivates many marketers to continue despite the possible risks and downsides.

Resources and methods: Different companies have different ways of getting information about customers, but the process is often easier than it seems. Magazine subscriber lists, association membership rosters, and professional conference attendance directories are often publicly available. This data can give marketers a baseline sense of what certain people's interests are. Over the Internet, marketers can sometimes collect data based on webpages viewed or purchases made.

For many companies and service providers, particularly those that are small or very nuanced, traditional forms of advertising — radio, newspapers, television, and the like — may not be the best use of promotional budgets. For example, a company that sells a men's hair loss prevention product would have to find a radio station whose format

appealed to older male listeners who might be experiencing this problem. There would be no guarantee that this group would be listening to that particular station at the exact time the company's ads were broadcast.

Direct marketing, by contrast, would allow the company to pre-select customers who meet the right demographics. These people could be targeted with specialized mailings or phone solicitations. In this way, the company could spend the same amount of money on advertising but reach a higher percentage of potential purchasers.

Results: Many people are unaware of how the personal information they include on an order form or survey may be used for targeted advertising later, which can open the direct marketing industry up to criticism — people usually want full disclosures of how their information can or will be used before providing it. One prevailing philosophy in direct mailing circles is the idea that if a customer orders one item — swimsuit from a clothing catalog, for example — he or she might naturally be interested in related items like swimming pool supplies or exercise equipment as well. This could lead to direct marketing overload as potential customers become overwhelmed with catalogs, unsolicited emails and unwanted phone calls.

Conclusions: Direct marketing is one of the most effective way to increase sales, but of courde has some disadvantages. People who engage in online shopping or even just casual web browsing do not usually like the idea that their movements are being tracked by companies hoping to sell them specific goods or services. Many privacy experts and advocacy groups have tried to lobby for rules against aggressive online tracking in order to preserve personal privacy. In most countries, customers also have the right to unsubscribe to unsolicited catalogs and to block bulk emails from their in-boxes. A number of anti-spam and anti-tracking initiatives are also prevalent online. Customers cannot usually completely prevent targeted marketing, but they can often do a lot to help keep the information stored on them in check.

References

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