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## DIRECT MARKETING SUPPORT SERVICES, LETTERSHOP SERVICES

Most marketing firms do a lot of direct marketing. One might even suggest it's traditionally the bread and butter of a marketing firm's income. However, in order to properly manage a direct marketing campaign your firm will need to have adequate direct marketing support services, including lettershop services. These support elements will do the grunt work in your direct marketing campaign.

Direct marketing support services many involve such things as printing, mailings database management, and campaign management. While lettershop services handle issues tied to the distribution of your direct marketing campaign. This includes many mundane tasks such as labeling, presorting, folding, tracking and so on. However, as mundane as these tasks may be they are critical to the completion of a successful direct marketing campaign.

In most direct marketing campaigns, direct marketing support services, and lettershop services are handled by an outside vendor. As with the selection of any outside vendor, we suggest you do your research. But there's a problem with this. Obviously, competitive marketing firms may be loathe to give you any information about the companies they use for direct marketing support services, and lettershop services. But we have found a way around that one, and it may sound silly but it actually works.

Call your congressman.

Stop laughing. We are serious.

Why, you may ask, we are not trying to get a bill passed? We are just looking for some good vendors for direct marketing support services and lettershop services, how could our congressmen help with that? Well, it is quite simple, political candidate do a lot of direct mailings, and they usually use local companies. Also, you are a small business in your congressman's district; he will have a reason to help you.

Okay, so now you have found a good company to handing your direct marketing support services and lettershop services. Are there any other pitfalls? Of course there are. As with many other outside vendors, those dealing with direct marketing support services and lettershop services make money on volume. Meaning that quality control, though a priority, may not be their top priority. So you need to be especially carefully that all printed material, databases and instructions are given both verbally and in writing.

In our experience, if you have never worked with the vendor, we suggest you do this in person. Although thanks to digital printing a lot may be done via phone, FTP and email, we still feel that these initial contacts should be done in person. And do not give this job to a new hire or an intern. That is just asking for trouble. This needs to be done by someone who has been at your firm for at least a year. Someone who can think on his or her feet.

Another important thing about vendors who offer direct marketing supports services and lettershop services is that they see direct marketing campaigns every day. They have a sense of what works and what does not. If they question some aspect of your campaign, listen to them. They probably know what they are talking about. And, as you and vendor build trust; you may find them giving you pointers that they only share with valued customers. We might add that the referral from you congressman, might also help grease the early client vendor relations. And you thought that was a crazy suggestion, right?

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