

# The Power of Direct Mail

Engage. Personalize. Act.



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Physical mail that's personalized, targeted, and integrated with your martech stack is more relevant than ever. Here we explore the three core ways you can integrate direct mail marketing into your digital strategy to stand out from the crowd and connect with prospects and customers.*



# Introduction

Some things are too good to be forgotten. Just because a concept has been around for a bit doesn't mean it's any less informative or useful today. This is certainly true for the insights gathered from [a virtual roundtable based on the Forrester-PFL report, "Direct Mail for the Digital Age."](#)

Forrester's research found that most of the content buyers receive from sellers fails to deliver what they need or value. The majority of buyers say they are inundated with material from vendors and often turn to other sources for information. Most agree that what they get is not very useful, contributing to a "sea of sameness" in marketing content.

When people make decisions, they are influenced by what sticks in their memory. For content to be memorable, it must stand out—but this is increasingly rare in today's saturated digital landscape. So, what makes content stand out, and what is the role of direct mail in that equation?

This e-book, drawn from the aforementioned roundtable and report, explores three core ways marketers can integrate direct mail into their digital strategy: the Power of Engagement, the Power of Personalization, and the Power of Action. The bottom line: Physical mail that's personalized, targeted, and integrated with your martech stack is more relevant than ever. Read on to find out how.



“

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## First, Fight Fatigue

Forrester's research has long tracked how B2B buyers prefer to engage with business content. The findings are clear: buyers are overwhelmed by undifferentiated, irrelevant messaging. When content isn't targeted, sellers struggle and opportunities are lost. Buyers don't recognize themselves in generic outreach, so the message simply doesn't register.

### Digital Fatigue: The Modern Challenge

Digital fatigue is a persistent challenge. Buyers report that they get most of their information online, and digital channels have become the default because they are easy to measure and optimize. But with everything moving in this direction, buyers are now bombarded with digital touchpoints. The din is deafening, and, as a result, customers and prospects are tuning out. This is digital fatigue in action.

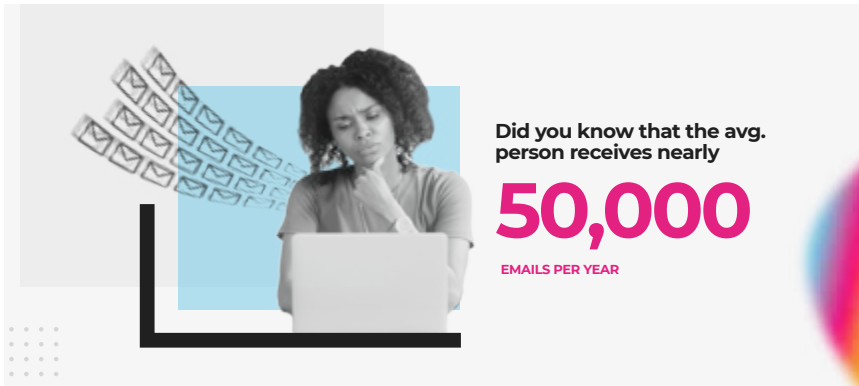


# The Power of Engagement



People are spending more time online than ever, with meetings, events, and communications all happening through a handful of digital channels. The number of touchpoints in the buyer's journey has increased from around 17 to 27 in just a few years, reflecting a more [complex and saturated landscape](#). A [2025 Harris Poll survey](#) found that 81 percent of Gen Z and 71 percent of all consumers crave more authentic, tactile brand experiences, with print catalogs and physical mailers making a significant comeback as consumers seek relief from screens and digital overload.

[Marketers are seeing diminishing returns from email](#). In 2025, the average B2B email open rate is between 15 percent and 22 percent (with some reports slightly higher). Click-through rates hover around 2 percent to 2.4 percent. [Engagement has trended downward over the last decade](#), challenging marketers to break out of the inbox with more personalized and relevant content. The growing use of templated and AI-generated emails has only increased the sense of sameness, making it even harder to stand out.



### Direct Mail: The Engagement Multiplier

This is where direct mail enters the picture. While digital channels are easy to scale, they often lack the engagement needed to truly connect. Direct mail, by contrast, boasts open rates as high as 80 percent to 90 percent and delivers a median ROI of 112 percent—[the highest of any marketing medium in 2025](#). Direct mail response rates are five to nine times higher than digital channels, and 39 percent of consumers try a business for the first time [because of direct mail](#). Marketers who

## Personalization and Physical Touchpoints Help Brands Stand Out and Drive Conversions



integrate direct mail into their multichannel mix report a 12 percent lift in ROI over digital-only campaigns.

Modern direct mail is anything but cumbersome. Automation and integration with martech stacks allow for “set it and forget it” campaigns that are both scalable and measurable. Real-time delivery alerts mean marketers can engage recipients at the moment of delivery—something email simply can’t match.

Direct mail’s hybrid nature makes it a powerful complement to digital programs, supporting every stage of the customer lifecycle. [Brands using direct mail report deeper customer relationships and increased advocacy](#), as recipients feel valued and are more likely to reciprocate with reviews, referrals, and event participation.

## That Unique Feeling

Personalization in marketing is more than just a trend—it's an imperative. When done right, it speaks directly to the individual, making the recipient feel seen and valued.

### The Rise of Hyper-Personalization

Today's direct mail is undergoing a transformation as marketing teams discover the power of true personalization. [Modern account-based marketing \(ABM\) strategies](#) now allow sales and marketing teams to combine digital signals, behavioral data, and individual engagement notes to create mail that feels unique to each recipient. Crucially, [personalization in 2025](#) has moved far beyond simply addressing

# The Power of Personalization



someone by name; it now leverages in-depth insights—such as purchase history, browsing habits, and specific interests—to deliver messages and offers tailored to real needs and preferences.

This shift toward hyper-personalization is delivering tangible results.

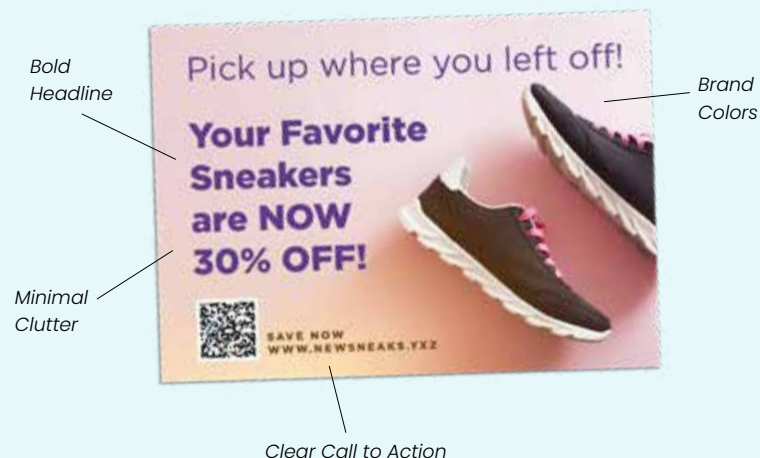
Campaigns that incorporate meaningful personalized information—such as relevant offers, dynamic images, or even handwritten notes—can boost response rates by as much as 135 percent compared with generic mailings. In fact, research shows that targeted, data-driven direct mail averages a 4.9 percent response rate, versus just 0.3 percent for untargeted campaigns. Most important, 65 percent of consumers report that direct mail feels more personal and authentic than do online interactions, and nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of those who respond to direct mail ultimately make a purchase.

Marketers who harness advanced personalization techniques find not only higher engagement, but also deeper brand loyalty. Whether it's using individualized offers, milestone acknowledgements, or interactive elements such as QR codes and personal URLs, direct mail is becoming an interactive, data-powered channel—bridging the gap between online and offline to create real connections and measurable results.

### Creative Formats and Intelligent Targeting

Creativity is key. Automated, handwritten notes, thoughtful content, and unique formats—such as interactive mailers and mailers that include a sample or treat—can all help your message stand out. Some brands have seen success by sending personalized packages to decision-makers before key meetings, or by using triggered mailers based on digital behaviors (such as cart abandonment or milestone achievements).

When customer data is leveraged to tailor messaging, direct mail becomes a truly intelligent marketing channel. Advanced technology now allows for full-color digital printing, efficient production, and formats that meet modern consumer preferences, making hyper-personalization both scalable and cost-effective.



# Create Memorable Moments

Marketers need messaging that captures attention, stands out, and avoids the “sea of sameness.” Personalization helps, but action is what drives results. Many marketers are rethinking their digital-heavy strategies and rediscovering the power of direct mail to create memorable moments of connection.

## ROI and Business Impact

Direct mail is not just impactful—it delivers a robust ROI. In 2025, direct mail campaigns are achieving average ROIs of 112 percent to 161 percent, [with some studies reporting](#) \$42 in revenue for every \$1 spent. Eighty-two percent of marketing executives plan to increase their direct mail investments this year, and [companies are doubling their mail volumes](#) despite rising costs. Financial services, healthcare, nonprofit, and retail are among the industries leading this charge—with direct mail volumes projected to increase by more than 10 percent year-over-year.

Combining direct mail with digital campaigns produces even better results. Marketers who include direct mail in their multichannel mix [see a 12 percent bigger ROI](#) than those who



**Direct Mail Improves Efficiency And Effectiveness Of Use Cases Across the Customer Lifecycle**

| Customer Success   | Marketing  | Sales   |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer welcome</li> <li>• Business milestones</li> <li>• Life events</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Live events</li> <li>• First meetings</li> <li>• Influencer engagement</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First meetings</li> <li>• Cold opportunities</li> <li>• Deal acceleration</li> </ul> |


# The Power of Action



don't. Direct mail response rates are five to nine times higher than those of digital channels, and 39 percent of recipients try a business for the first time [because of direct mail](#).


### Real-World Successes


Modern direct mail solutions, [including those offered by PFL](#), make it easy to automate, personalize, and measure campaigns. Barriers to entry are lower than ever, and the impact is clear: brands are seeing higher engagement, better retention, and more conversions. Some programs actually report a 16 percent win-back rate for lapsed customers through targeted direct mail, and customer advocacy and loyalty initiatives are also thriving.



**1,300%**  
Return on Investment

**Personalization**  
Helped with Campaign Success





For example, [LTN Global Communications](#) wanted to increase visibility and strengthen audience engagement with the featured solution. The marketing team ultimately sent out 86 personalized kits on behalf of the sales team to their chosen recipients. The reaction was very positive, and the campaign was considered a success, both by driving engagement and delivering a 1,300 percent return on investment (ROI). The effort reinforced that direct mail was an effective way to break through the digital noise and connect with clients in a personalized, memorable way. The LTN marketing team credited much of the campaign's success to its personal touch.



**Digital fatigue drives marketers to increase spend on direct mail.** Analog direct mail experiences help campaigns stand out from overused digital touchpoints, leading to increased marketer investment.



**Strategies must evolve with the channel.** Most don't recognize the availability or value of modern hybrid platforms that marry the best of digital physical, and make direct mail even more effective.



**Personalization is a critical component of modern direct mail.** Getting it wrong harms the business. Hybrid experiences are the solution to making direct mail more engaging and measurable.

# Conclusion

## Lasting Impressions

In our modern world of seemingly endless digital assault, direct mail stands out as a channel that truly engages, gets personal, and drives action. The data is clear: direct mail delivers industry-leading ROI, boasts exceptional open and response rates, and creates lasting brand impressions. As digital fatigue grows and buyers demand more relevant, memorable experiences and pertinent information, marketers are rediscovering the value of physical, dimensional mail.

The future of marketing is not about choosing between digital and physical—it's about orchestrating both in a way that leverages their unique strengths. Direct mail, when integrated with digital strategies and powered by automation and personalization, offers a powerful alternative to the “sea of sameness.” It's measurable, scalable, and proven to move the needle at every stage of the customer journey.

For marketers ready to break through the noise and build deeper, more meaningful relationships, now is the time to embrace direct mail for the digital age. The results speak for themselves—and the opportunities are just beginning.



The average office worker receives approximately

**121**  
EMAILS PER DAY



**Executives/managers:**  
Often receive 200–300 emails daily, with some Fortune 500 execs reporting

**400+**  
EMAILS PER DAY

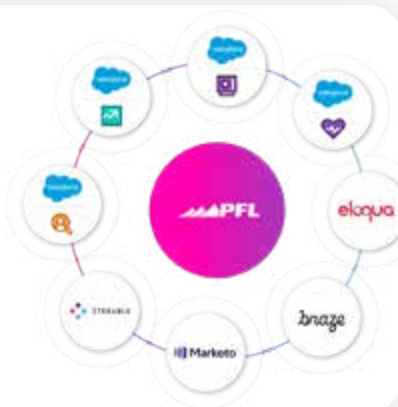
**Knowledge workers:**  
Reports vary, but studies show they typically spend 2.5–3 hours per day reading and responding to email (McKinsey & Microsoft research)

# Maximize Your Impact

For maximum effectiveness, consider these key principles as you implement your direct mail strategy:

- **Integration is essential.** The most successful campaigns don't exist in isolation but, instead, create seamless connections between your physical mail and digital channels. QR codes, personalized URLs, and clear online calls-to-action can transform a simple mailer into the starting point of a comprehensive donor journey.
- **Measurement drives improvement.** Track response rates, donation amounts, and engagement metrics for each campaign to understand what resonates most with your audience. Organizations that consistently measure results can refine their approach over time, leading to increasingly effective campaigns.
- **Real stories create real impact.** Throughout this guide, we've emphasized the power of storytelling. The nonprofits that achieve the greatest success with direct mail are those that share authentic stories of transformation and impact, creating emotional connections that inspire action.
- **Testing reveals opportunity.** Even small changes in messaging, design elements, or timing can significantly affect your results. Consider testing different approaches—perhaps comparing two versions of a donation appeal or experimenting with various seasonal themes—to discover what works best for your unique audience.
- **Budgets need not be barriers.** While some formats might require greater investment than others, effective direct mail campaigns can be designed for organizations of all sizes and budgets. Start with simpler formats, such as postcards or letters, then expand your approach as you demonstrate positive returns.

PFL Technology seamlessly integrates with your CRM/MAP, allowing you to easily incorporate direct mail into customer journeys and other engagement programs for personalized and communication. If you are not ready for such automation, We can help you build personalized direct mail experiences without the use of technology across the customer journey that create interest and engagement to support your mission.



This in-depth guide will be your go-to resource for mastering direct mail in 2025 and beyond.

[Download Now](#)



Direct mail remains a powerful marketing tool because it creates a tangible connection. Here's a look at how to harness its power and integrate it into broader marketing strategies for optimal results.

[Download Now](#)

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## About PFL

PFL, a leading direct mail technology company, increases engagement for brands with their key audiences, using data to automate direct mail and create more authentic human experiences at infinite scale. PFL delivers personalized direct mail programs that are measurable and relevant so organizations can earn attention and amplify growth.

READY TO GIVE YOUR ENGAGEMENT A BOOST?

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an email to [inquire@pfl.com](mailto:inquire@pfl.com).

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