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# **Direct Mail Advertising - What Are The Implications Of The Do Not Mail Registry?**

Direct mail (DM) marketers and providers are on full alert since the Senate Consumer Protection and Housing Committee addressed the Do Not Mail registry bill. However, an in-depth understanding of the bill and its implications should allay direct marketer's fear of reduced business and low response rates.

The introduction of Do Not Mail registries has been legislated in twelve states of United States including Washington, Texas, Maryland, Colorado and Michigan. If direct marketers violate the law, they are liable to pay \$2,000 as fine. This is the charge per violation. If the bill is passed, these states will maintain a database of residents that have opted out of receiving DMs.

The Do Not Mail registry will, in fact, save costs for direct marketers, as long as they avoid violations. The following points should help direct marketers take an objective view of the Do Not Mail bill.

#### Targeted mailings boost sales

Direct mails are effective only if they reach the right hands. Though the Do Not Mail registry reduces the number of DM recipients, it also brings the interested audience into greater focus. The ratio of the number of direct mails to actual sale leads will increase. This is a positive indication for the business.

#### More relevant direct mails to appropriate customers

The Do Not Mail bill boosts response rates, as customers will receive DM they are interested in as opposed to irrelevant advertisements. This is again good for the marketers as more of the mailers are reaching the appropriate audience and converting into sale leads. This saves the cost of wasted direct mails.

#### Avoiding inadvertent infractions

Direct marketers need to use advanced screening services to have a mailing list that does not include any name on the Do Not Mail registry. The information on the list should be complete, accurate and current. The list should also be able to accommodate supplementary information to drive variable elements. Direct marketers need to be extremely vigilant that they do not send a mailer to a citizen included in the Do Not Mail registry. The fine will prove devastating with repeated violations. Mailings should be extremely targeted and sent only to a select few.

#### Use VDP to make mailings more receptive

Variable Data Printing (VDP) is a modern DM technology that allows personalization of direct mail. Customers receive personalized mailers more favorably than general advertisements. Relevance and personalization increase the effectiveness of DM by almost 500%. Personalization also assures that the business does not lose out on a customer for whom the DM is actually meant, and also assures the customer will check out DMs from the company in the future too.

#### Direct mails are still popular among people

Contrary to expectations, DMs are still the most popular form of advertising amongst citizens. Even if the direct mail is irrelevant to recipients, they have a choice to not read it or throw it away. This is unlike unwanted calls where there is no way out. The Do Not Call registry is similar to the Do Not Mail registry as both intend to curb marketers. However, DM is not as intrusive or pervasive as telemarketing and spam emails. That is why DMs are still the most effective marketing tool.

If the marketing industry puts in more effort to ensure they target the right audience and send only relevant mails, many people may opt to have their name removed from the Do Not Mail registry. It is in the hands of direct marketers to stem further legislation by improving their own services and efficacy. This way, customers get only the information they want and direct marketers see increased return on investment (ROI).

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