

# Why direct mail is not dead (and how it's making a comeback)

By [Kathryn McKay](#)

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The move towards a digital economy over the past 10 years has seen digital marketing rise to prominence, often at the expense of traditional forms of marketing.



Source: [www.unsplash.com](https://www.unsplash.com)

It's easy to see why because the digital options seemed to offer so many benefits: improved analytics and better ROI potential among others. But in the last few years, we've seen saturation take hold, resulting in many digital marketing tactics being unable to deliver on expectations.

And this has resulted in many rethinking their strategies for 2022 and beyond.



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At a stage in 2014, we were putting over a million flat mail packs through the postal service every month. Despite great results, interest in direct mail started to dry up shortly after. But as of right now, we've seen a definite resurgence – with flat packs in production for two of our major blue-chip clients.”

So why is direct mail back and is it here to stay? Well, here are four reasons why direct mail has made a comeback and why it has the power to stick around for years to come:

## Response rates are higher

Clients in South Africa have finally caught on to the international trend that is taking place. They are now realising that direct mail delivers better response rates and ROI than email. As email boxes get flooded and consumers pay less attention, marketers are using direct mail to cut through the clutter and get their messages noticed again. And the stats speak for themselves. In 2021, standard direct mail open rates globally reached nearly 90%, a stark contrast to a 17.38% open rate for Mailchimp in the marketing and advertising field.

## Less mail means less competition

The post box used to be full of direct mailers, but now it's a relatively empty space, and the inbox is what's most cluttered.

Although applicable internationally too, South Africa has seen a huge decline in the overall amount of mail delivered to homes across the country. This is due both to the ineffectuality of the South African Post Office and businesses redirecting marketing spend into digital.

So, as marketing mail volumes decline, this thins out your competition and opens up a whole new avenue for grabbing your audience's attention. And remember, the post office isn't the only way to get mail into boxes today, there are many services that offer a much safer way to conduct direct mail campaigns.

## Direct mail is more personal

Although personalisation is already widely used to enhance and improve email marketing, display ads and other digital marketing tools, I believe audiences have largely become desensitised to these. Unlike its online counterparts, direct mail is totally one on one. And it can spark an emotional response because it is tactile. Gen Zs, in particular, seem to be fond of direct mail internationally, probably because they don't remember the era of junk mail, and letters are now a bit of a novelty for them.

And again, the numbers don't lie. According to a 2021 survey shared by Fundera, 70% of American consumers said that direct mail is more personal than online interactions and that 54% of consumers said they wanted direct mail from brands that interest them.



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## Direct mail can integrate with digital campaigns

Direct mail obviously takes place offline, but it can bring consumers online via the promotion of unique phone numbers, dedicated websites and social media pages, QR codes and online promo offers, all of which are trackable. And non-digital

response channels still work too – call centre numbers, SMS shortcodes – giving the customer the option to choose the channel they prefer.

Every great marketer knows that a successful marketing strategy uses multiple channels and direct mail should no doubt be part of their arsenal of tactics.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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