

Secrets to Direct Response Tests That Will Give Your Profits A Kick In The Pants.

By Mike Pavlish
Profit Boosters Copywriting

In his famous book, *Secrets of Successful Direct Mail*, Dick Benson states, "Any test idea you honestly believe can economically increase response is worth testing." And he's absolutely right.

So let's break this proven advice down to bite size pieces that can help YOUR testing really pay off big.

"Any test idea that you honestly believe ..."

Too many good ideas get trashed before they are barely presented. Usually it's because the company president hates it, or the marketing director doesn't buy it, or someone's wife thought it was weird, or ... you know how it goes.

But if someone has a test idea that they honestly believe will be successful ... and can justify why ... you should test it no matter what anyone thinks.

Think about it: How many tests have you done where everyone thought it would be gangbusters, but it flopped? More than you'd like to remember, if you're like me. But that's why we TEST! We really DO NOT KNOW how our prospects and customers will react.

So if we can't predict a good idea before we test, what makes us think we can nail a bad idea? You never know until you test.

"... can economically ..."

I often scratch my head when I see some of the direct mail packages that win various awards. And usually what I'm thinking is this, "Wow, is that impressive ... and EXPENSIVE!"

I'm sure it would be nice to send every prospect something like a gold-leaf box containing a personally autographed dvd and a 24" x 36" fold-out brochure on glossy stock ... but

that's the fastest way out of business I can think of, unless you're selling jumbo jets or something.

Bottom line: no matter how excited you get about possible test ideas, do the math first. A couple times.

"... increase response..."

This snippet, I would respectfully preface with the word "SIGNIFICANTLY".

I mean, your boss may be right when he/she says that blue is better than green. But do you really think a SIGNIFICANT number of people will go from being a "prospect" to a "buying customer" simply by changing from blue to green?

This may sound silly, but lots of time, energy and money has been wasted on tests just as unlikely to make a difference that could impact the bottom line in a significant way.

Bottom line: if your idea is unlikely to have a significant impact, (say 20% to 25% or more) find something else to test that will.

"... is worth testing."

If it meets all these criteria, make sure it gets tested! Never stop looking for things that can have a significant impact on your bottom line, and never stop testing them.

To that end, here are the top 5 test suggestions we've found can economically and significantly increase your response and profits.

1. Test the big things - list, headline, offer, formats and copy - to get big results.

I hate to repeat myself, but this one bears repeating.

Not only is it unlikely that there will be any difference in response at all, but if the change you make is not different enough from the original, you cannot trust your test results even if you do see a difference in results. You've just wasted time and money for no gain.

2. Constantly test new headlines.

Thousands of tests have confirmed that changing nothing but a headline can increase response by up to 400% or more! Now if those aren't numbers that get you excited, nothing will. That's the only reason you should need for constantly testing new headlines.

3. Constantly test for new lists.

Almost nothing can impact your results more significantly than finding a great new list. You can make a mediocre package work to a great list, but even a killer package won't work to a bad list.

And when you do find a new winning package, go back and look for borderline lists from previous mailings with the old control to retest.

For example, if your new package beat the old control by 30%, lists that fell short by 25% with your old package, might now work with your new control.

4. Test new offers ... or your existing offer presented in a different way. - Buy one, get one free? 50% off? Save 50%? They're all the same, right? To you, maybe. But not to your customers. Offer tests

5. Test new copy and graphics for the outer envelope.

Envelope tests can be your most economical tests, yet can provide a significant boost to help keep a control "fresh." Things to consider testing are envelope size, copy and overall graphic theme.

6. Consider these proven test ideas to give your control a boost.

- Convert your regular envelope package to a "magalog", and vice-versa
- Use action devices like stickers
- Test a new headline
- Try a "Club" approach - maybe with a monthly shipment
- Free trial offer
- More/better customer testimonials
- Totally new theme
- Personalized letters/inserts

- "Official" looking copy and graphics

** For a FREE, no obligation evaluation and recommendations to improve sales from your website, click here: www.profitboosterscopy.com/Free_evaluation.htm