



Tips for Writing Effective Direct Mail Pieces



Direct mail is defined as unsolicited marketing offers sent to prospective customers through the mail or by email. Direct mail encompasses a wide variety of materials, including brochures, postcards, newsletters and letters to name a few. For Retired Educators Associations (REAs), direct mail can be an effective marketing tool to help obtain new members, and it can be particularly effective during an important legislative battle to articulate and demonstrate the value your REA provides to current and potential members. A well-developed direct mail piece will illustrate the important benefits your organization brings to prospective members and entice them to join.

TARGETING

- ✓ **DO** target. Direct mail is most effective when recipients are targeted by shared demographic data like age, location and, of course, profession.
 - ✓ **DO** develop and use your own lists of prospective members.
 - ✓ You can also develop lists by working with a local post office or you can even purchase mailing lists from a direct marketing service provider.
- ✓ **DO** establish and use Social Media platforms, like Facebook, to post your direct mail pieces and communicate with potential members. Get as many people to “Like” your Facebook page as possible and then use that communication channel to market your organization to potential members who may be “Friends” with your current members.

KEY FEATURES

- ✓ **DO** keep it short. Although there is no word limit for a direct mail piece, **DO** try to keep them as short as possible while still conveying what your REA offers to potential members.
- ✓ **DO** use visuals. Photographs and images are equally powerful as the messages contained on a direct mail piece.
- ✓ **DO** feature your REA’s most appealing aspect(s) for your potential members – otherwise known as your value proposition – right away. For instance,
 - ✓ REA’s fight on behalf of their members and their spouses to protect their pensions and enhance their retirement security.
 - ✓ REA’s provide an outlet for retired teachers to

continue to serve their communities through a variety of volunteer projects.

- ✓ REA's provide a way for retired teachers to re-connect with each other and provide fun and thought-provoking social outings.
- ✓ **DO** consult your REA's mission statement that reflects who you are, what you do and why. For help in crafting your organization's mission statement, please review the "Mission Statement" section in NRTA's [Image and Branding](#) fact sheet.
- ✓ **DO** frame your direct mail marketing around how membership in your REA solves a particular problem for your prospective members.
- ✓ **DO** appeal to the emotion(s) of prospective members. Emotions play a very large role in an individual's decision to make a purchase. For each problem your organization solves for your members or each appealing aspect of your REA, consider emphasizing a corresponding emotion.
- ✓ **DO** consider highlighting how many members your REA currently has. These numbers will serve to show that many like-minded people are already members of, and see value in, your organization.
- ✓ **DO** consider including additional information pertinent to your organization, like when your REA was founded, the number of local units, your non-partisan, non-union status, etc. as selling points.
- ✓ **DO** include your organization's logo.
- ✓ **DO** provide a specific point of contact or contacts for membership in your REA and your web address.
- ✓ If sending direct mail around a legislative issue, **DO** clearly state what is at stake, how this potential policy will impact your audience, and how your REA is fighting on your members' behalf. What is the choice currently before elected officials over a piece of legislation? To keep a promise or to break one? To protect earned benefits? To protect vulnerable retirees on fixed incomes?

✓ **DO** include a call to action! Join our REA and help us fight for you!

✓ **DO** include a mechanism for potential members to join your REA within the direct mail piece. Consider including something they can fill out and send back to you.

ADDITIONAL HELP

✓ **DO** reach out to us! NRTA is here to help and we're happy to be a resource for you on all of your membership and advocacy-related endeavors!