

CUSTOMER MAIL

The physical connection that
transforms Customer Experience





Contents

Foreword	5
Executive Summary	7
How we approached this report	11
Is your CX focused on your customers?	13
Let's get physical	15
Matching the medium to the message	25
Getting the best out of Customer Mail	35
Conclusion	45
Appendix	47

“

The commercial imperatives to brands of delivering great CX is clear. Our latest research showcases the breadth of opportunities available to brands to gain advantage through investing in Customer Mail, and how using it will bolster their CX strategy.

**Philip Ricketts, Commercial Director,
Marketreach**

”

“

Experience is critical to enhancing brand image. Mail offers a unique and differentiated customer experience for businesses and organisations.

**André Pharand, Global Post & Parcel Industry Lead,
Accenture**

”

Foreword

Customer Experience (CX) – the impression an organisation gives its customers of the brand at every touchpoint – is now the #1 priority for building brand equity. CX is the new competitive battlefield for 89% of companies, according to a Gartner survey.¹

Doing CX well benefits not only the customer, but also a business' bottom-line. It can increase revenue growth and profitability by decreasing customer churn and cost-to-serve, and can attract new customers and offer deeper loyalty for existing ones.

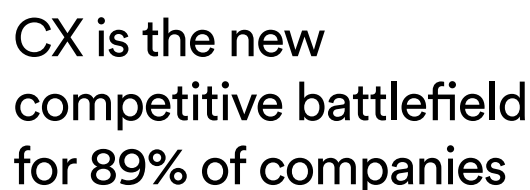
Every point of contact has the opportunity to improve – or destroy – how customers feel about a business. Many businesses think they are doing this well, but most of them aren't. Over the last few years, even as channel choices have increased exponentially, we have seen organisations defaulting to a more limited view of CX. At the extreme, it is seen as synonymous with digital. This limited view puts the very essence of CX – thinking from the customer's perspective – at risk. And what customers want has shifted.

More and more, they want to feel recognised and valued, by organisations they can trust, through goods and services and relationships that are personal and relevant, and provided in a manner of their choice. The research on which this report is based shows that 83% of people want a choice in how brands communicate with them.²

Businesses need to consider these customers' needs, assess respective strengths of all communication channels and understand which ones provide the maximum impact. Royal Mail Marketreach, working collaboratively with Accenture, has conducted its biggest research programme in five years to understand how businesses can leverage every opportunity to reinforce key values and messages and enhance their relationship with customers.

One way to do that is through a good understanding and execution of Customer Mail – defined in this report as mail sent to a named individual, who has some level of relationship with the organisation, for the purpose of providing information, support or reinforcing the relationship. Mail provides a differentiated way for businesses to deliver their brand messages. It is a channel that offers unique benefits thanks to its tangibility, trustworthiness, and the way customers appreciate and interact with it.

We want to help organisations to effectively optimise their mail communications the same way they have done with their digital ones, as a valuable and integral part of building good CX.



**CX is the new
competitive battlefield
for 89% of companies**

1 Gartner, <https://blogs.gartner.com/jake-sorofman/gartner-surveys-confirm-customer-experience-new-battlefield/>

2 Royal Mail Marketreach – Trinity McQueen, July 2021

“

Any organisation that cares about its CX and brand will want to leverage every opportunity to reinforce key values and messages.

”



Executive Summary

We are on the threshold of a customer experience (CX) renaissance. Customers are now firmly in control of their relationship with brands. Their expectations have shifted and they judge brands based on how well the brands meet those expectations.³

Organisations think they are managing this well, but most of them aren't.

It has become harder to stand out in the market. Not every message is the same, or requires the same treatment. Companies have spent a lot of time and money in recent years optimising their digital channels, but don't do the same for their mail – and they should. Strategic, well-planned and well-executed mail plays a powerful role in delivering CX that stands out.

Research by Accenture and Adweek found that 80% of companies believe they are delivering superior CX – but only 8% of their customers agree⁴

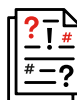
Good CX doesn't just make the customers happy; it makes the C-suite happy too. When comparing across companies, CX leaders have higher revenue opportunity – as much as 4.4x – than CX laggards, according to Forrester research.⁵

So, now is a perfect opportunity for brands to re-evaluate their CX strategy across all media, messaging and touchpoints. With that in mind, we conducted a wide-ranging and in-depth review of CX and multi-channel communications, including mail. This new and exciting research sought to understand, over a two-year period, what consumers and business decision makers think about CX, and how to deliver impactful communications.

Our research has demonstrated that Customer Mail is particularly strong when:



The information is important



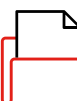
The information is complex



Communication needs to be read thoroughly




The recipient needs to take action




It needs to be kept for reference (or used in the future)



Security or privacy are possible concerns



Nothing makes the brand more tangible and real than the personal and physical impact of mail




Done well, it is a powerful way to break through the clutter and digital overload and show customers that companies value them. JICMAIL insight shows that people read mail – 99% of Customer Mail is opened, read, filed and shared with others.⁶ And this applies to all age groups – 77% of Gen Zs and younger Millennials rate mail favourably.⁷ Mail is trusted by 71% of our survey respondents.⁸ 43% of it leads to commercial actions such as buying, donating or planning a purchase.⁹ Mail more strongly conveys that the sender cares about or values the recipient – twice as much as email.¹⁰

Customer Mail's success depends on doing it well. It is essential to know the customer, their journey, and where mail fits in. It is critical to measure it meaningfully as it is an impactful investment whose returns go far beyond marketing metrics. Design matters, a lot – it's a statement of a company's brand. Multiple teams have a role in building brand equity through client communications – bringing together key cross-discipline decision-makers and avoiding silos. This helps to ensure brand consistency across all


touchpoints. And finally, it is important to integrate mailings effectively as part of the overall media mix; customers will tell you how and how often they want to be contacted. This last point cannot be overstated – 83% of our respondents said they want that choice.¹¹

And today, doing it well also means doing it sustainably. Paper is one of the most sustainable and recycled products in the world. The current European recycling rate of all paper stands at 74%, very close to the practical theoretical maximum recycling rate of 78%.¹²

Businesses can harness advances in data science, neuroscience, demographic segmentation and technology, and over 25 years of CX best practice, to craft state-of-the-art communications that build their brand equity. Customer Mail should be an essential component of it.



43% of mail leads to commercial actions such as buying, donating or planning a purchase





There is a place for physical media; it is noticed. You are more likely to open a document and branded envelope. It creates an affinity to that brand.

Decision Maker,
Retail Sector



3 See Salesforce, <https://www.salesforce.com/resources/articles/customer-expectations/>

4 Accenture, Fjord Trends 2022, accessed at <https://www.accenture.com/gb-en/insights/interactive/fjord-trends-2022>

5 See Forrester, Improving CX Through Business Discipline Drives Growth, accessed at <https://www.forrester.com/report/improving-cx-through-business-discipline-drives-growth/RES137906>

6 JICMAIL, Item Data Q2 2017 to Q4 2021, base 85923

7 Royal Mail Marketreach – Trinity McQueen, July 2021

8 Ibid

9 JICMAIL, 7 Essential Insights on Business Mail, accessed at <https://www.jicmail.org.uk/data/business-mail/>

10 Ibid

11 Ibid

12 Royal Mail Marketreach, Print and Paper Myths and Facts, 2021, accessed at https://www.marketreach.co.uk/sites/default/files/Print_and_Paper_Myths_and_Facts_Report.pdf

All quotes in this section unless specified otherwise are from Royal Mail Marketreach – Trinity McQueen, Ibid



How we approached this report

This report is the culmination of more than two years of in-depth review of CX and multi-channel communications including mail, and what consumers and business decision-makers think about them. The work was wide-ranging, rigorous and recent.

It included a six-part research programme conducted by Trinity McQueen, an award winning, full-service market research agency whose bespoke solutions uncover insights to create better products, communications and experiences. This provided new and contemporary insights to build on what we already knew about Customer Mail. The goal was to ensure that organisations were making the best choices for their brand and its future success.

Marketreach, the marketing authority on commercial mail, collaborated with Accenture to leverage its wide-ranging experience and insights across all aspects of business, from consumer insights to communications, customer service and integrated CX campaigns. This included its reports such as Fjord Trends, the Business of Experience, Accenture Life and others. Together, we sought to understand consumer relationships with brands, and the impact of Customer Mail within a good CX programme.

We considered a variety of perspectives, including the views of those who send mail (decision-makers) and those who receive it (consumers). Our surveys had a very large sample size – over 6,000 consumers in the UK – which provided us a very granular demographic view. The fieldwork was done during and after the COVID-19 lockdowns, to capture shifting consumer

sentiment on brands, marketing and expectations. All survey research was compliant with Market Research Society and GDPR guidelines.

We conducted an extensive deep-dive into the specific types of Customer Mail that respondents received across important industry sectors, such as financial services, government, utilities, telecoms and retail. We ensured that all population sectors were included by conducting telephone interviews with those who could not be easily accessed online.

As part of our work with consumers, we held co-creation workshops to uncover the principles of what makes great Customer Mail. Additionally, in the survey we tested responses to the same message using different creative treatments to understand how best to optimise Customer Mail communications.



Is your CX focused on your customers?

We are on the threshold of a CX renaissance. Customers are now firmly in control of their relationship with brands. Profound shifts in their expectations have altered how they connect with brands: what they want, how they are contacted, and whether they stay or switch.

Customers now judge brands based on how brands meet their needs. They want positive, personalised interaction. A 2021 Accenture Consumer Pulse survey, *Life Reimagined: Mapping the motivations that matter for today's consumers*, of more than 25,000 people in 12 countries, revealed that they want to do business with brands that make them feel valued, that offer a seamless service, and that respond rapidly with tailored experiences.¹³

The Accenture report also revealed that 77% of CEOs said their company will fundamentally change the way it engages with its customers.¹⁴ They increasingly understand that good CX is no longer limited to just the marketing teams or digital channels but, rather, encompasses all actions that connect the brand to customers, including strategy, finance, operations and facilities management.


That's because good CX doesn't benefit just the customers; it benefits the C-suite, too. When comparing across companies, CX leaders have higher revenue opportunity – as much as 4.4x – as that of CX laggards. This manifests in both top-line and bottom-line areas: retention, acquisition of new customers, up-sell and cross-sell opportunities as well as lower cost-to-serve, and lower acquisition costs.

Now is a perfect moment for brands to rethink their CX strategy. It has become harder to stand out in the market. The world has never had more choices for


communication, or a greater need to choose the right ones for the right message. Marketreach research has revealed that customers want a range of both digital and physical contact.

Consumer participants in our research expressed strong sentiments that physical channels communicate trustworthiness, importance and an extra investment in the relationship; this can help brands differentiate themselves.¹⁵ Not every message is the same, or requires the same treatment. Context is important. As life is returning to something resembling normal, there is a deeper desire for physical points of contact, not only in-person and in-store, but across communication channels, too.

Any organisation that cares about its CX and brand will want to leverage every opportunity to reinforce key values and messages. And Customer Mail should be included as a key part of distinctive, compelling CX.



**77% of CEOs said
their company will
fundamentally change
the way it engages with
its customers**



13 Accenture, *Life Reimagined*, accessed at https://www.accenture.com/_acnmedia/PDF-161/Accenture-Life-Reimagined-Full-Report.pdf

14 Business of Experience, accessed at https://www.accenture.com/_acnmedia/Thought-Leadership-Assets/PDF-4/Accenture-Interactive-Business-of-Experience-Full-Report.pdf#zoom=50

15 Royal Mail Marketreach – Trinity McQueen, July 2021



Let's get physical

Customer Mail bolsters brands and cements customer connections

Companies can deploy a multitude of tools as part of an integrated CX approach. Businesses can build brand equity by addressing basic customer concerns around feeling valued; this includes communicating important information in a personalised and impactful manner that is easy to understand.

Mail can offer a tangible and real way to express these sentiments. It is seen as more trustworthy. Its tactile connection results in more memorable experiences. And, it is particularly influential in signalling to customers that this is a message they should open and take seriously. Here we explore these unique attributes.



How we define Customer Mail

Customer Mail, as the name suggests, starts with the customer, or any named addressee, which can also include citizens, donors, students and supporters, among others.

The assumption is that a relationship already exists between the recipient and the sender. There is at least some familiarity with the sending organisation's brand and communication is accepted or welcomed.

Customer Mail's main objective is to share information, offer support and develop the relationship. This is done through a range of

communications such as bills, statements, appointments, terms and conditions (T&Cs), customer relationship management (CRM), policies and welcome packs. This makes it different to Advertising Mail, where the addressee might not be known, and the primary focus is to 'sell'.

As a channel, it is an opportunity to support an organisation's objectives of building retention, advocacy, net promoter score (NPS) and lifetime value (LTV). Because the mail is personal, Customer Mail makes people feel recognised, informed and valued by the sender.

Mail enhances the brand

Mail is three-dimensional. Giving, receiving and handling tangible objects offers direct sensory experiences for humans. Mail's tactility can evoke specific feelings and images associated with the brand through creative and considered uses of messaging, paper quality, print, finish, and stunning visuals. This makes it a persuasive way to intrinsically reinforce values and messages.

Our research shows that physical mail builds a positive perception of an organisation. Mail practitioners know how to make great mail that works and leaves a lasting impact. Recipients recognise that effort and thought have gone into sending mail. And this drives positive brand connections and actions.¹⁶



Anything landing on a customer's doormat with a strong branding element can give a good impression.

**Decision Maker,
Financial Services Sector**



Case Study

Transforming first impressions from ordinary to extraordinary

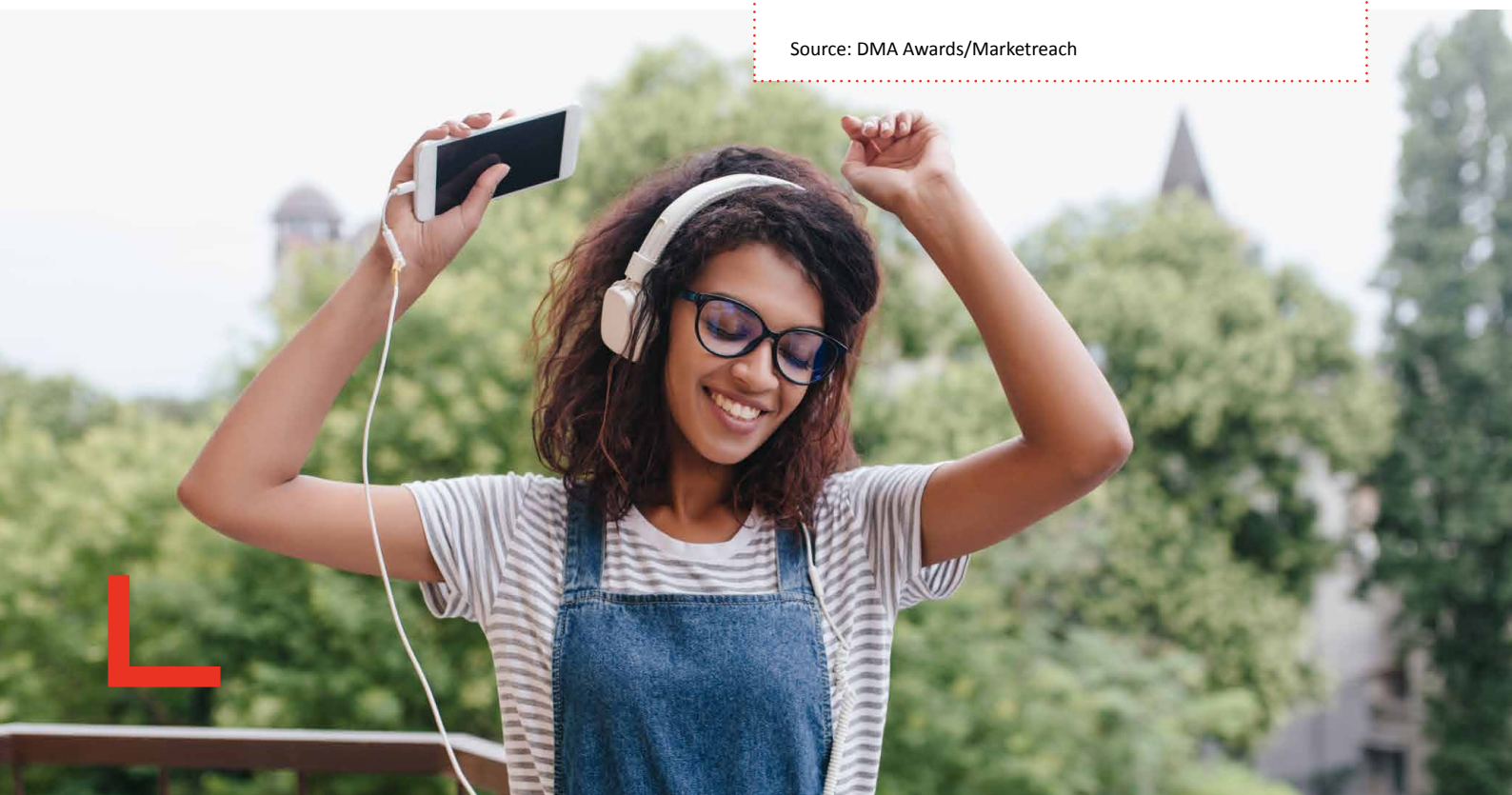
EE needed to improve its welcome journey – when customers receive their handset. Research told them their NPS dipped after the first impression and continued to decline.

One reason was that the customer's brand-new, shiny phone showed up in an unmarked, scruffy, slightly damaged bin-liner-looking package. Certainly not befitting the UK's number one network.

EE upgraded the welcome mailing to show its customers the possibilities inherent within its network. It switched to premium materials. It included a link to an augmented reality video in the welcome letter that customers could play on their fancy new phone. The video featured EE's pitchman Kevin Bacon talking through some of the extraordinary things customers could do with EE.

With over 175,000 AR views, EE outperformed the market during the campaign duration in 'Better level of service', 'Reliability' and 'Customer service'. This clever new experience welcomed new customers into the EE family in an incredible new way.

Source: DMA Awards/Marketreach





Mail shows that companies are committed

Considered, personalised mail lets customers know how important they are to the business. Neuroscience research shows that mail from companies makes them feel valued more (70%) than email (30%)¹⁷ does. Think about it: we all love to get cards and presents. It's that physical, personal engagement that feels 'human and real'. Mail's tangibility can touch people – literally – in a way that digital cannot

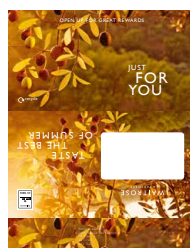
Case Study

Mail made loyal customers feel Waitrose was just for them

Waitrose noticed that its extremely valuable loyal customer base was slowly eroding.

So it created the *Just for You, Best Customer* programme that rewarded its high-value customers. It sent targeted, personalised mailings 5-6 times a year, offering vouchers or incentives based on shopper history.

Voucher redemption was over 50% and Waitrose's net promoter score (NPS) increased by more than 55 points.



“

Well, for me, personally, a letter in general always feels more official and urgent. I will always open and read straight away whereas an email I will judge on the subject line and sender

Female Consumer, age 24

”

How does mail do it?

Mail's distinctive attributes make it particularly powerful. It remains the UK's third-largest media channel.¹⁸ Mail has a life in the home. People engage with it in very particular ways, with specific times they open and go through it, and specific locations they keep it as a reminder to respond. This offers ways of reaching customers that other channels cannot.

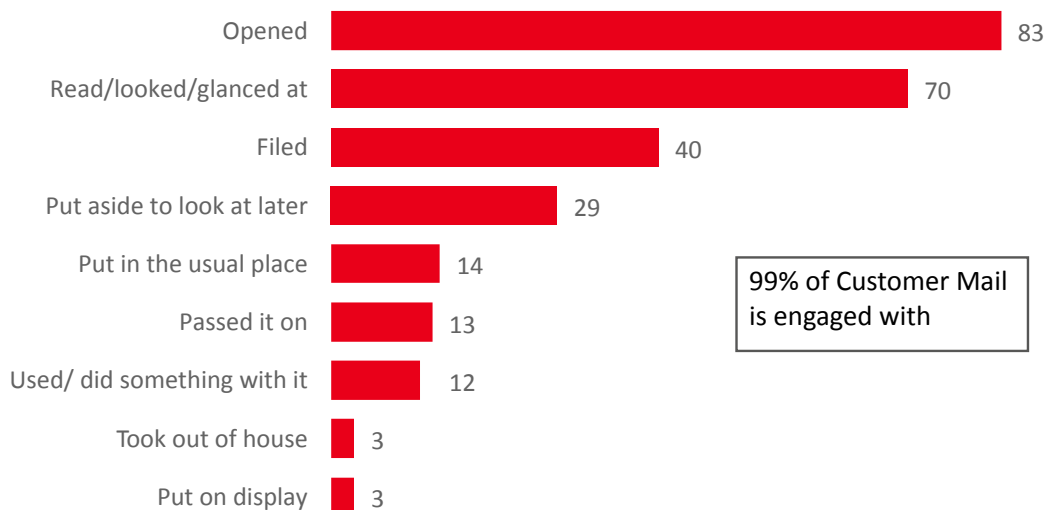
1. People engage with mail

Customer Mail receives more attention than equivalent digital messaging. JICMAIL, the

independent industry body that provides mail metrics, has data showing that 99% of Customer Mail is interacted with, from opening it, reading it, to storing it for later. See Figure 1.

Mail has an average lifespan in the home of 8.8 days.¹⁹ People keep it – for a variety of reasons. Our consumer survey showed higher interaction levels for mail than for email, and this includes all aspects of dealing with it: discussing or showing it to others; taking some sort of action, such as using a benefit or going online for more information; and then keeping the information accessible for later use.²⁰ This keeps a brand alive in the home.

Figure 1: Customer Mail interaction rates



Source: JICMAIL (Item Data Q2 2017 to Q4 2021, base 85923)

2. Mail works across all age groups

Mail is just as relevant with younger Millennials and Gen Zs, contrary to the conventional wisdom that says that they only like digital channels.²¹

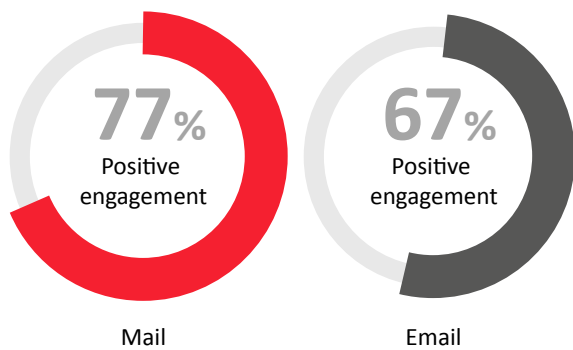
They appreciate the tangible and personal touch of Customer Mail. They engage with it more than email: 85% of them open it; 65% store it for future reference; 49% put it somewhere to action later; and 40% show it to others in their household.

See Figure 2.

This was a surprising finding – we suspect that ‘digital natives’ receive so much digital messaging and relatively less physical mail that the latter truly stands out.

Figure 2. Customer Mail and email positive engagement*, 18-34 year-olds

Mail vs email - All, most or about half of them(%)



**Positive engagement is defined as customer actions indicating a strong level of interaction with a channel. For mail this was defined as: Store/file for future reference, put in a pile to action later, show to others, put on display. For email: Store/file for future reference, mark as read or unread, flag or 'star' as important, print it out, show to others*

Source: Royal Mail Marketreach/Trinity McQueen

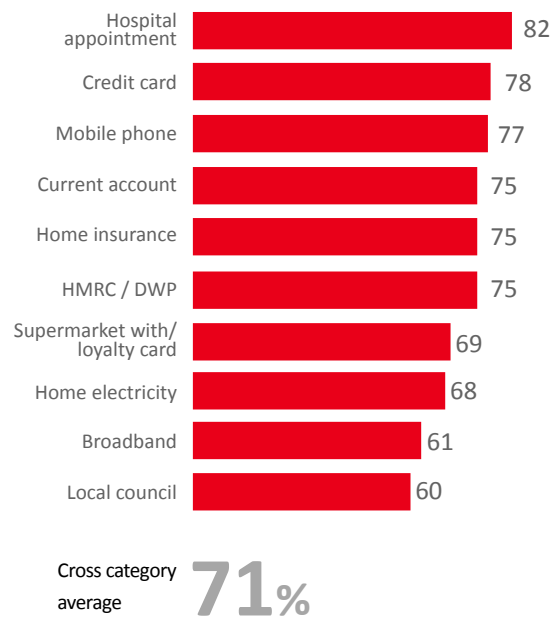
3. Mail is trusted

Brand equity is largely about trust. Good relationships are built on trust. And more and more, the trust factor is what motivates consumers to do business with brands – and to stay loyal to them.

Consumers consider mail as one of the most trusted communication channels across all sector categories.²² See Figure 3.

Figure 3: Perceived trustworthiness of Customer Mail, by sector

Completely trust the mail I receive
Agree or agree strongly %



Source: Royal Mail Marketreach/Trinity McQueen



Mail embodies trust, so it will endure.

Decision maker,
Government Sector





4. Mail has commercial impact

Customer interaction with mail prompts them to take action. In fact 43% of Customer Mail drives some form of commercial result, as shown in Figure 4 below.²³ We note that mail was the original response medium and has always excelled at getting people to take action. Now, it's particularly effective in sending people online to get more information or take further steps.

Customer Mail's commercial power is built by the reach it generates and the multiple impressions it delivers – creating ever more opportunities for consumers to see and engage with the messaging. JICMAIL estimates that one million items sent generate 5.4 million opportunities to be seen. This multiplier – over five times – can lead to many more opportunities for engagement and sales.



Impressions

x5.4 opportunities to deliver brand messaging.

Because Customer Mail is looked at frequently and shared often, 1 million customer mail items will drive 5.4 million opportunities to get your customer messaging seen.

1_m = 5.4_m
items impressions

Customer Mail

Source: JICMAIL, 7 Essential Insights

Figure 4. Commercial actions driven by Customer Mail



Visit the
company's website



Buy
something



Use a
voucher code



Tell others
about it



Plan a
large purchase



Visit the
company's shop



Make a
donation



Order a
catalogue

Source: JICMAIL



There is a role for both mail and digital. Address diversity of audience by using more than one method.

Decision Maker,
Government Sector



‘Phygital’: A potent pairing

Mail and digital used together deliver a powerful partnership and one that is central to successful CX. Precisely because they are distinct channels with unique strengths, when used together they reinforce and enhance each other. Mail sends customers online and digital is more responsive when linked to mail. As technology develops, QR codes, augmented reality and voice activation all build the power of ‘phygital’ (physical + digital). Businesses should not see mail and digital as interchangeable channels but rather as complementary ones, each with respective attributes.

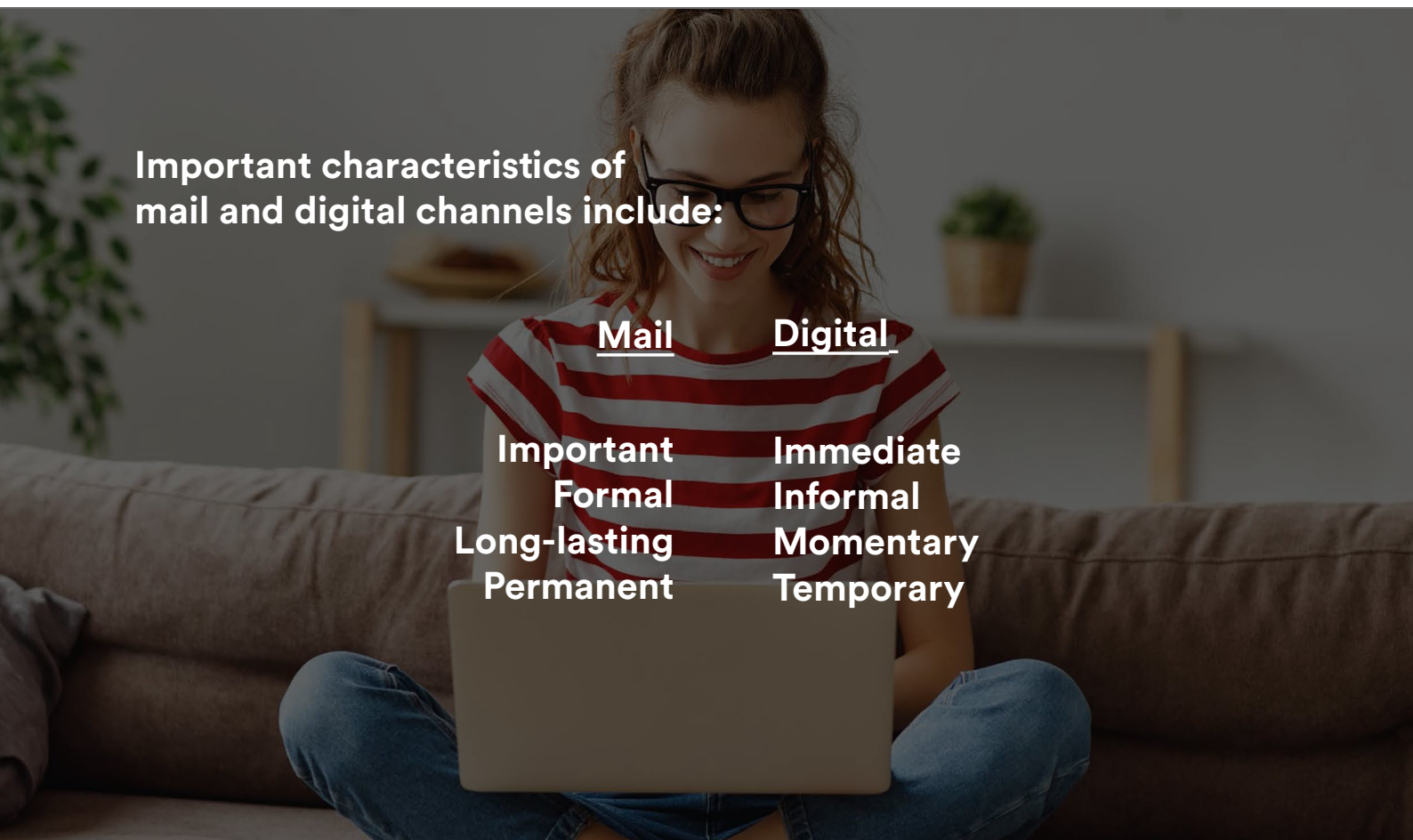
Both are held in high opinion by consumers, which gives brands formidable options in a wider CX plan of

action.²⁴ When used together they make messages stronger, and more likely to be remembered. This can generate stronger responses in consumer behaviours.²⁵

Marketreach’s research using neuroscience to investigate the effect on marketing channels showed that physical and digital channels together are more than the sum of their parts. For example, a person who has seen a piece of mail from a company will look at a social media ad from the same brand for 30% longer. And, the memory recall of a social media ad is given a 44% boost by a person who has already received mail from that brand.²⁶

Important characteristics of mail and digital channels include:

<u>Mail</u>	<u>Digital</u>
Important	Immediate
Formal	Informal
Long-lasting	Momentary
Permanent	Temporary





Case Study

Digital-physical-digital sequencing spurs increased uptake

The **National Education Association (NEA)** is America's largest education union, established to support education professionals. NEA Members Insurance Trust and NEA Member Benefits, both nonprofit entities, offer and market insurance, financial products, student loans, travel and everyday discounts to NEA members. It wanted to increase engagement for its term life insurance programme.

Accenture developed a fully integrated campaign that reached members across multiple channels: mail, email, social and display. The two-step approach started with email and social to increase awareness and generate interest in the insurance product. This was followed up with a relevant product offer using mail.

The top deciles of likely respondents were targeted with physical mail, to expand reach and drive interest online. The mailings were grouped into age-based segments, then personalised based on historical insights.

The results were noteworthy: a 24% increase in applications along with a 60% increase in total annual premium was gained for the test group compared to the control group. Mail was the primary driver of applications for this particular effort. Mail also enhanced the digital side of the campaign; the second, product-focused email generated a 418% increase in open rates and a 316% increase in click rates amongst those who engaged with the initial content.

All digital, all the time?

Our research, and other work done by leading industry experts including the IPA, the Advertising Association, Les Binet and Peter Field, and the DMA, all proves the power of multi-channel. Therefore, it is imperative that businesses understand the pros and cons of each channel when building their communications strategy. Customer Mail is a forceful way to break through the clutter and digital overload and deliver important information.

In our experience, many decision-makers see digital as the whole of CX. This is unfortunate; it means that organisations miss opportunities to use differentiated channels to connect with customers – and thus miss delivering state-of-the-art CX.

The next section will demonstrate how to make best use of Customer Mail's unique attributes – across all sectors.

16 Ibid

17 Royal Mail Marketreach, Neuroscience: Why mail cuts through, 2018, accessed at <https://www.marketreach.co.uk/resource/neuroscience-why-mail-cuts-through>

18 <https://www.marketreach.co.uk/resource/direct-mail-effectiveness>

19 JICMAIL, 7 Essential Insights on Business Mail, accessed at <https://www.jicmail.org.uk/data/business-mail/>

20 Royal Mail Marketreach – Trinity McQueen, July 2021

21 Ibid

22 Ibid

23 JICMAIL, 7 Essential Insights on Business Mail

24 Ibid

25 Royal Mail Marketreach, Neuroscience: Why mail cuts through, 2018

26 JICMAIL, 7 Essential Insights on Business Mail

All quotes in this section unless specified otherwise are from Royal Mail Marketreach – Trinity McQueen, Ibid

“

“Mail is excellent when people are in the right mindset. They can read the information calmly and better take in the information.”

Decision Maker,
Telecoms Sector

”

Matching the medium to the message

Six areas where Customer Mail really stands out

Brands seek to communicate modern, memorable messaging to customers, at many levels and about many things. Some are critical, others less so, which is why it is important to have the right medium for the message. This section explores what our research respondents say are the messages best served

using mail and how to maximise its trustworthiness, tangibility, and targeting capabilities to create captivating CX.

Our research has demonstrated that Customer Mail is particularly strong when:



1. The information is important



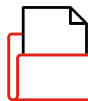
2. The information is complex



3. Communication needs to be read thoroughly



4. The recipient needs to take action



5. It needs to be kept for reference (or used in the future)



6. Security or privacy are possible concerns

1. The information is important

Physical mail sends an immediate, visceral message to recipients that the information inside is something they need to read and understand, take action on, keep for reference or is deeply personal content.

This was confirmed in our research, where twice as many people assume that information communicated through physical mail is important, compared to digital. See Figure 5.

Figure 5. Perceived importance of content

I would pay careful attention to this, applies more to mail or digital (%)



Source: Royal Mail Marketreach/Trinity McQueen

2. The information is complex

People are twice as likely to say that they understand complex information when it is presented to them in physical mail compared to digital formats. See Figure 6.

Figure 6. Perceived utility for complex content

A good way to help me understand complex information, applies more to mail or digital (%)



Source: Royal Mail Marketreach/Trinity McQueen

People like physical formats for a number of reasons: the layout is often easier to read, which makes it clear what is expected of the recipient; it can be held onto and referenced; and the message can be delivered across pages. This matters for documents such as welcome packs, insurance or mortgage policies, or government communications.²⁷ See Figure 7.



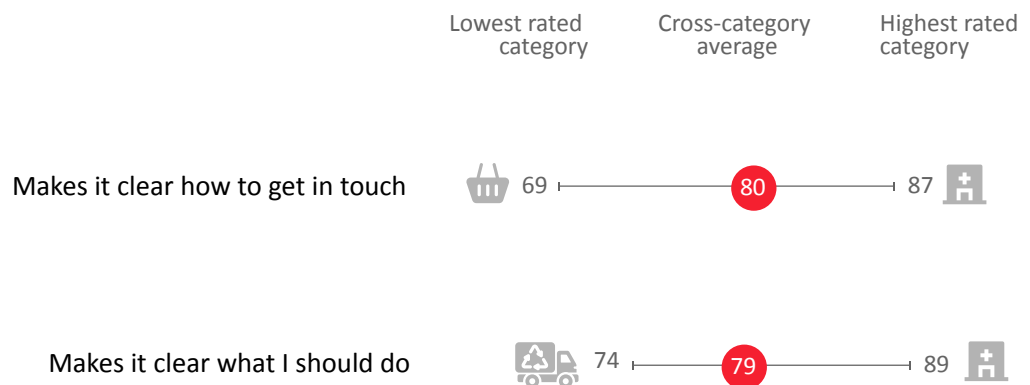
Mail will always have a place... I think people like to receive mail.... When reading in detail, they like to have the physical copy in their hands

Decision Maker,
Government Sector



Figure 7. Consumer attitudes towards mail

Attitudes towards the mail I receive
Agree or agree strongly (%)

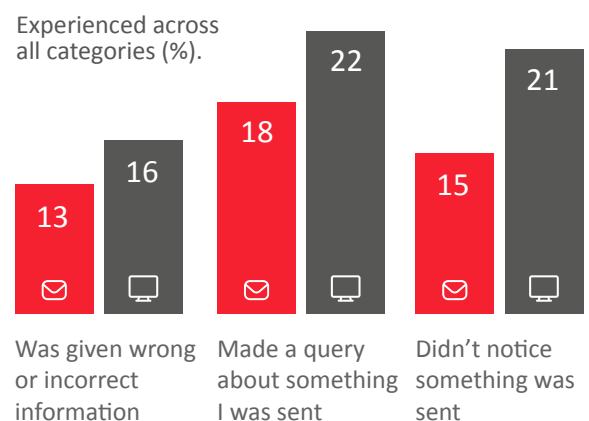


Source: Royal Mail Marketreach/Trinity McQueen

Our research shows that mail has a higher comprehension rate, and thus requires less follow-up than digital communications. See Figure 8. When asked about specific recent communications by mail or digital channels, 57% of respondents report that they are less likely to miss something if it comes to them in a physical format.²⁸

Using mail can have real and measurable secondary impacts. By increasing consumer understanding and confidence, mail can reduce costs and lost revenue by lowering calls to contact centres, missed appointments or even customer lapsing.

Figure 8. Negative experiences with mail and digital communications



Source: Royal Mail Marketreach/Trinity McQueen



Mail is more reassuring. We get fewer inbound calls.

Decision Maker,
Utilities Sector





Case Study

Close Brothers curtails the cost-to-serve

Close Brothers Premium Finance (CBPF) works through a network of over 2,000 brokers to help 2.1 million clients spread the cost of their insurance premiums into monthly instalments. Yet the welcome pack they were sending out was confusing to customers, leading to both a large volume of inbound calls to CBPF, and around 10% of credit agreements being completed incorrectly or not returned at all.

CBPF invested £10,000 to redesign the layout and content of the welcome pack to be more customer-focused. They added the name of the insurance broker and provided simple instructions on next steps.

The number of inbound calls and credit agreements that were completed incorrectly or not returned reduced from 10% to 3%, resulting in annual savings of £270,000.

Source: Go Inspire

“

It's easier to ignore an email. Somehow it doesn't feel as real, even though I do know that eventually I have to pay the bill or give a meter reading or whatever. It doesn't have the same significance [as paper mail].

Male Consumer, age 30

”

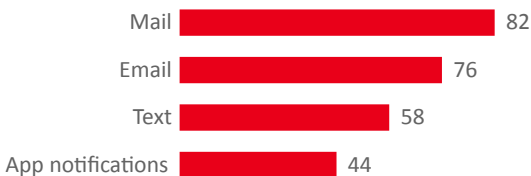
3. The communication needs to be read thoroughly

People are more likely to read all or most of their Customer Mail compared to similar sorts of emails, texts or app notifications. See Figure 9.

This applies across all sector categories too, from government/official, financial, utilities, retail and medical. See Figure 10, which shows the average across the 11 categories



Figure 9. Open and read rate (%), mail vs digital

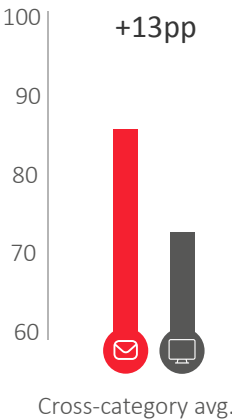
Open and read – all or most of them (%), mail vs digital channels



Source: Royal Mail Marketreach/Trinity McQueen

Figure 10. Read rate, physical vs digital

Read all or some of it in detail - About a recent  mail or  email communication from category (%)



Source: Royal Mail Marketreach/Trinity McQueen



Case Study

TSB and its T&Cs

TSB wanted customers to read their contract terms & conditions (T&Cs) because the T&Cs protect them. Most T&Cs are dry and hard to understand and go unread.

TSB humanised its T&Cs by using a warm tone, clear language and simple icons. The bank helped make customers feel valued by creating something easy to understand, that makes banking better, and changes how clients bank. When asked, 82% of customers agreed it was easy to understand the changes. In fact, TSB received its first ever thank you letter for a T&Cs document!



Source: DMA Awards/Marketreach

4. The recipient needs to take action

Mail leads to more responsive action. In our survey, more than twice as many people assume Customer Mail is something that requires action, compared to email. See Figure 11.

Figure 11: Perceived need to take action

It's likely to be something I need to take action on, applies more to mail or digital (%)



Source: Royal Mail Marketreach/Trinity McQueen

These actions range from specific commercial actions, such as buying something or making a payment, to going online to a business' website, to increased word of mouth.

JICMAIL data shows that 17% of Customer Mail sparks conversations about the brand; 9% drives visits to the sender's website; and 6% leads to a purchase or payment. In total, Customer Mail elicits 43% of commercial actions, meaning it works harder for businesses than people think.²⁹



6%

of Customer Mail drives consumers to buy something / make a payment



9%

of Customer Mail drives visits to the sender's website



17%

of Customer Mail drives brand conversations



We simply have better pay rates when we use mail.

Decision Maker,
Government Sector



Case Study

Mail helps save lives

The **North East Bowel Cancer Screening Programme Hub** is one of five in England tasked with getting over 60s to participate in screening. It had an extensive, rolling mailing programme that used a national database to invite men and women to a biennial screening. In the North East, approximately 3,000 invitation letters were mailed every day followed by a testing kit eight days later.

Mail was integral to the success of the programme. It was the preferred channel for many reasons: the trustworthiness of mail to communicate the highly personal nature of the programme; the age of the target population; and the physical presence of the testing kit 'nudged' people to complete and return the test.

The national minimum uptake target was 52% and the North East Bowel Cancer Screening Programme Hub consistently hit that target, even reaching uptake of 57.48%.





Mail is particularly useful in situations requiring multiple steps, where a range of options is available or for infrequent actions. Mailed communications highlight important behaviours, guide decision-making and signpost next steps. The accompaniment of a physical reminder that sits in the home, and not on the phone, is especially successful at propelling people to make smarter or more pro-social choices. This is hard to emulate in digital formats, which often require multiple contacts to generate the desired action.

Case Study

Fighting fat blocks with mail drops

Thames Water customers were flushing cooking fat and wet wipes down drains, causing blockages and sewage back-ups at their homes.

Thames Water created an integrated campaign, *Bin It, Don't block it*, and sent a mailing to over 260,000 households in the highest risk areas. It set out to change behaviour by detailing the sequence of events that starts with flushing the wrong things and ends with a flooded home. The information pack included a free cooking fat trap, which created a strong visual reminder every time the resident used the sink. It is at such key moments, when 'the brand is in the hand', that physical mail can really outperform digital in responsiveness.

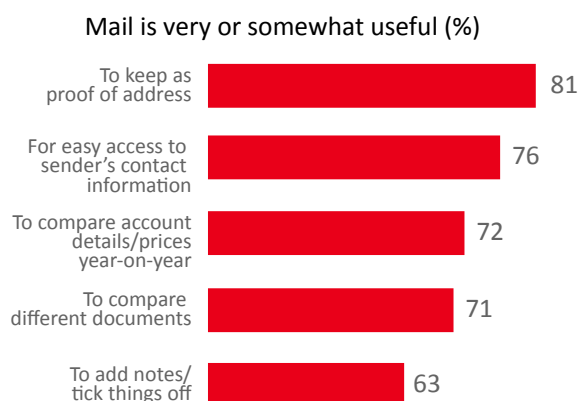
The result was a 26% reduction in sewer blockages in targeted areas and 70% of residents surveyed afterwards saying they had changed their behaviour.

5. The information needs to be kept for reference (or used in the future)

Consumers across all age groups appreciate physical mail for the ease of reference, the ability to organise and to make notes or comments. 54% say physical copies help them feel more organised.³⁰ See Figure 12.

Customer Mail has staying power, with 72% remaining in the home after 28 days.³¹

Figure 12. Perceived utility of mail (useful, very useful)(%), by action



Source: Royal Mail Marketreach/Trinity McQueen

6. Security or privacy are possible concerns

Customers still prefer physical documents for content that is sensitive or of a personal nature. More than twice as many people feel that physical mail is private and secure. More people associate scams with digital channels than physical ones, by a 4-to-1 margin. See Figure 13.

Figure 13. Perceived levels of security

Applies more to mail or digital (%)

Feels private and secure



I would think it might be a scam



Source: Royal Mail Marketreach/Trinity McQueen

Our research shows that for organisations whose relationships with clients involve important, complex, or official information that recipients can return to repeatedly, Customer Mail is the only channel that can break through the digital overload and generate high response rates. By facilitating such specific behaviours, organisations can expand their productive involvement with consumers.

When customers feel that a brand's communications embody trust, importance, and cutting through complexity, the result is a much more positive and memorable CX.

27 Royal Mail Marketreach – Trinity McQueen, July 2021

28 Ibid

29 JICMAIL, 7 Essential Insights on Business Mail.

30 Ibid

31 JICMAIL

All quotes in this section unless specified otherwise are from Royal Mail Marketreach – Trinity McQueen, Ibid



Getting the best out of Customer Mail

Customer Mail's success depends on doing it well. Too many organisations have mail systems in place and working but either don't use them or continue to send poorly designed mail. They should be more clearly focused on using the medium to maximum effectiveness.

This section provides some specific recommendations for organisations looking to upgrade their Customer Mail. Businesses can make use of advances in data, neuro and behavioural sciences, demographic segmenting and technology, and over 25 years of CX best practice, to craft state-of-the-art communications that build their brand equity.

Know thy customer

Good CX depends on the ability to connect on a personal level. Knowing what the customer wants, and Customer Mail's role in providing it, is key.

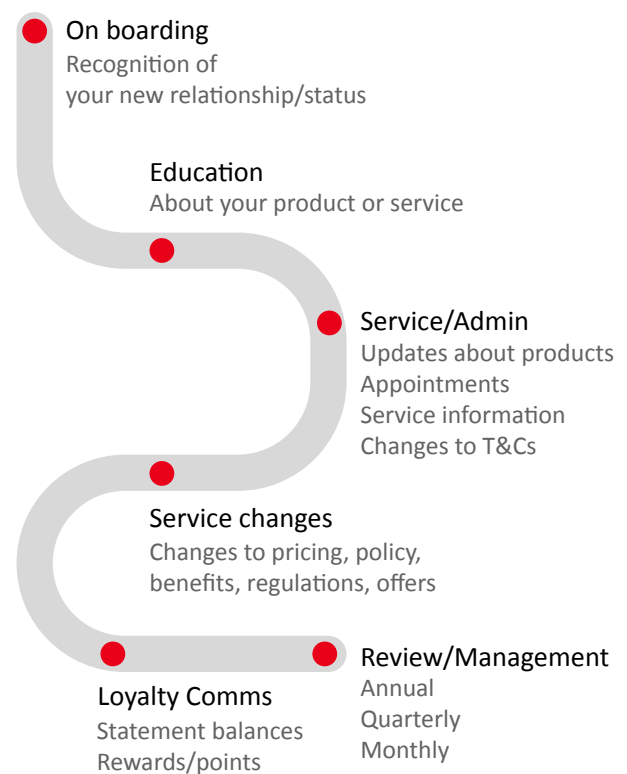
The point is personalisation. Businesses usually have a lot of great behavioural data that can be used to better understand customers and trigger the right touchpoint. They should invest in insight and design research, combined with data-driven segmentation, to spot user-driven opportunities. Content propels results and successful Customer Mail depends on collecting good first-party data and using it well.

This includes understanding how best to stay in touch – and when it might be too much. In our survey, consumers made it clear that they want to have a choice on how, when and why they receive all types of mail and digital. This last point cannot be overstated – 83% of our respondents said they want that choice.³²

Know the customer journey – and where mail fits in

Map the customer journey with a clear understanding of what role Customer Mail plays – to welcome, to inform, to spur to action, to engender loyalty – and then target mailings accordingly. The aim is to connect customers to the business' brand at critical moments. See Figure 14.

Figure 14. Customer Mail insertion points at crucial moments



Source: Marketreach



Case Study

Virgin Media knows what makes customers (s)tick

Customers were defecting from **Virgin Media** because they didn't feel they were getting value for money. Virgin conducted extensive market research and learned that discounts alone did not change people's perceptions; customers expected to have to change suppliers to get rewards.

So, it gave those customers most likely to leave more product for their money. Virgin Media mailed them highly tailored rewards that would stand out to existing customers, whose expectation were that good rewards only went to new customers.

Virgin mailed them an envelope that read, "We've added Even More to your bundle. Just because", which reinforced its perceived generosity. This message was followed up with emails expressing the same idea.

In the month of the campaign the number of people leaving Virgin Media dropped significantly, with a return on marketing investment (ROMI) of 179:1.



Source: DMA Awards/Marketreach



“Mail pays for itself... it costs more but it reduces churn and calls to the contact centre.”

Decision Maker,
Financial Services Sector



Measure mail meaningfully

Organisations should regard Customer Mail as an investment in their broader CX approach. The value goes beyond the costs of the specific mailings and should include wider thinking around all the relationship opportunities it generates. The overall return on investment (ROI) metrics should capture the many intangible benefits that Customer Mail can bring, such as improved brand recognition, loyalty and retention, and even costs deferred.

Unfortunately, we see too many cases where decision makers consider Customer Mail as something much narrower: limited to the advertising budget, an operational cost to be managed and justified. With this view, Customer Mail can seem relatively expensive compared to digital channels. And this perception is often skewed by measurement biases: a focus on a narrow set of statistics with immediate results, or overlooking the 'hidden' costs of building digital infrastructure.

Measuring Customer Mail effectiveness does require some understanding of how to do it right. There are a number of tried and tested techniques that businesses can use. Most involve selecting relevant KPIs and metrics for the mail channel, such as coupons and address match-backs, or mail-to-digital measurements, such as channel-unique phone numbers, web traffic, vanity URLs or QR codes. These results can then be compared with a control group. Figure 15 shows some steps that can be taken.

Organisations can gauge CX through conversion and response rates, and similar metrics. They should not use the same 'baked in' methods readily available for digital channels, such as open rates or click-throughs.³³ Businesses should also have a clear idea how the results will be actioned.

They should endeavour to capture all costs across the entire lifecycle. 'Direct' metrics that can measure Customer Mail's impacts include reach, lifespan, and conversion to commercial actions.³⁴ But more 'indirect' metrics should be captured too: reduced customer service costs such as inbound/call centre calls, churn, or cost-to-serve. Mail 'owners' should work with measurement partners to ensure that mail metrics are included in all other ongoing measurement activity, such as brand tracking.

When doing a side-by-side ROI of physical and digital interaction that accounts for all metrics included in broader CX, decision-makers can see that Customer Mail can be as cost-effective and impactful as digital.

Figure 15. Ways to measure mail

3 key steps for measurement

Identify relevant metrics

Identify KPIs and metrics for channel performance. Deciding how the results will be actioned is also vital.

Choose appropriate techniques

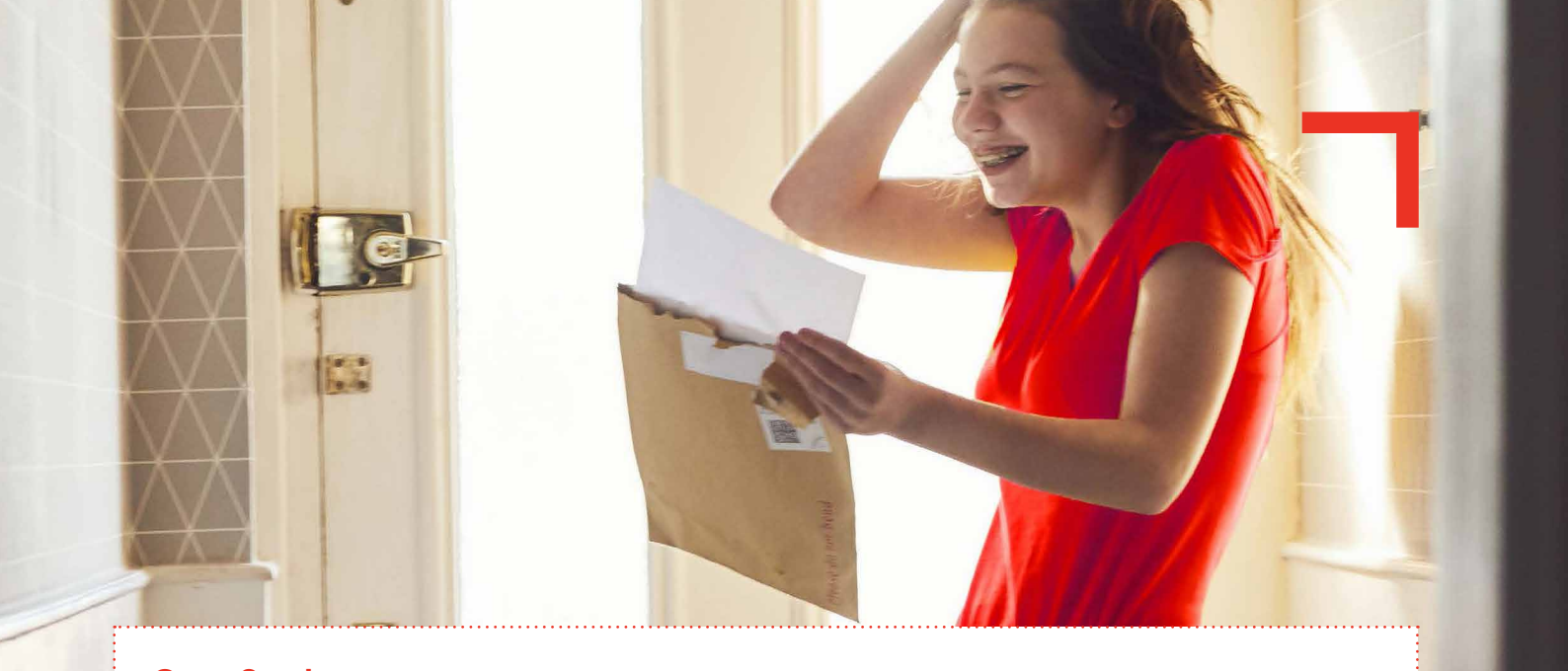
Select short and long-term measures that suit the objectives; QR codes, AOV, offers, donations or unique telephone numbers, address match-backs or comparison to control group.

Measure the impact

Evaluate the campaign using conversion rates, response rates, ROI and a host of other impact metrics.

Ensure all media is integrated into ongoing measurement activity such as brand tracking and econometric modelling.

Source: Marketreach



Case Study

An optimised letter made the call centre smile

The UK's leading dental payment plan, **Denplan**, needs to inform patients whenever their dentist updates their fees. Mail is the preferred channel for nearly 80% of patients, often because they prefer reading detailed information in print, they trust mail more than email for policy information; and they like to keep and file their plan details.

In 2021, Denplan sought to reduce call centre demand by encouraging patients to go online and find the answers themselves. The December 2021 Fee Rate mailing needed to clearly announce fee increases and reduce the number of inbound calls that this would generate.

The letter and accompanying leaflet mailed to patients was fresh and uncluttered. Copy was kept to a minimum. Coloured headlines showcased key messages. A table clearly laid out new prices and applicable discounts. It also included a prominent QR Code on the FAQ page that helped policy holders to seamlessly navigate to their portal, should they have any further questions that the mailing hadn't answered, or if they wanted to make changes to their details or marketing preferences.

The Denplan call centre saw a 2% drop in call volume when benchmarked against previous campaigns, with webchat increasing by 7%. There were also 236 fewer policy cancellations when compared to the previous year's mailing.

Your Denplan 2022

Your Paygroup Number 8765432

Mr Joe Smith
Sample House
123 Sample Lane
Sample City
S4M9 1ES

999/79372FSP_00001
02/71750/00029

Your monthly Denplan fee for 2022 is £51

Your Denplan fee from 1st January 2022

You can see details on our website. If you've let us know, we'll collect your details. We call each month, so that we can update your details. We'll collect your details. We call each month, so that we can update your details. We'll collect your details. We call each month, so that we can update your details.

Advance notice

We'll collect your details. We call each month, so that we can update your details. We'll collect your details. We call each month, so that we can update your details. We'll collect your details. We call each month, so that we can update your details.

If you have a question

If you don't find your question, call 0800 844 999. If you don't find your question, call 0800 844 999. If you don't find your question, call 0800 844 999.

Denplan is a leading dental payment plan. Denplan is a leading dental payment plan. Denplan is a leading dental payment plan. Denplan is a leading dental payment plan. Denplan is a leading dental payment plan.

Your Denplan fee from 1st January 2022

Your fees are set by your dental practice, and take into account a variety of factors that are specific to them. If you have any questions about your fees, please contact your practice.

Name	Patient Registration Number	Products held	Monthly price before discount	Discount applicable at 10%	Monthly Total
Mr Joe Smith	1234567	Denplan Care Supplementary Insurance	£14.40 £0.00	£2.16 £0.00	£12.24
Mrs Jane Smith	1234568	Denplan Care Supplementary Insurance	£14.40 £0.00	£2.16 £0.00	£12.24
Mr John Smith	1234569	Denplan Care Supplementary Insurance	£14.40 £0.00	£2.16 £0.00	£12.24
Ms Helen Smith	1234570	Denplan Care Supplementary Insurance	£14.40 £0.00	£2.16 £0.00	£12.24

Total monthly payment: £12.24

Thank you.

Both your dental practice and Denplan hope you are safe and well after another challenging year. We would like to extend our thanks to you for helping us keep your oral health a priority.

Keeping the focus on your oral health

Your oral health can have a significant effect on your general wellbeing, so the best time to look after your mouth is now. With Denplan, you can be confident that your oral health is in good hands. Denplan spreads the cost of dental care throughout the year, so your practice will be making every effort to reschedule any cancelled or postponed appointments you may have had this year.

We at Denplan are proud of the way our member dentists and practice teams have adopted extra measures into their already stringent cross infection controls and continue to do so. Denplan dentists, and their practice teams, have always been experts in upholding the highest safety standards and have proven their dedication to protecting your overall health, no matter the circumstances.

Denplan will continue to support you, now and in future

Your questions answered

How are my fees set?

Your dental practice determines your fees. The team carefully calculates your fees to ensure they maintain the high quality of care you receive. They take into account many factors, such as the cost of equipment, staff training, and building maintenance, among others. If you have any questions about your fees and why they have increased, please speak to your dental practice.

How does my plan work?

Your Denplan payment plan spreads the cost of your routine dental care for the year across 12 months, so you can come to your appointments with the confidence that you've already paid. You can also add dental supplementary insurance to your plan, but your main plan is not an insurance policy because you do not have to pay and claim back.

Can I keep my Denplan payment plan if I change my dental practice?

As your contract and plan is directly with your chosen dentist, you will need to cancel the plan you are on and start a new one with a new dentist. It's important to complete all outstanding treatment before moving. Follow the process here at www.denplan.co.uk/changingdentist

How can I update my details?

You can visit www.denplan.co.uk/MyDenplan to update your details online. Alternatively scan the QR code below which will take you straight to the My Denplan portal. While you're there you can also download and print a history of your payments and submit insurance claims. Your T&Cs haven't changed and can also be accessed via the link or QR code.

Scan here to access the Denplan portal

What do I do in a dental emergency?

If you're within 40 miles of your dental practice, call them and seek help from your registered dentist.

If you're more than 40 miles away from your dental practice and you have Denplan Supplementary Insurance, you can call our 24 hour helpline on 0800 844 999, or +44 1962 844 999 if you're abroad.



Case Study

Maserati makes it meaningful

Maserati North America includes physical mail in many campaigns. Mail is seen as a critical part of the customer loyalty programme, a highly beneficial medium that amplifies results when part of integrated channel communication. It helps Maserati reinforce the brand power in ways that digital alone cannot, with creative mailings that incorporate high production values to connote luxury, prestige and the quality of the Maserati brand. It also enables the company to reach the large group of owners who have not provided email permission.

Accenture executed a campaign strategy, which includes targeting, data, creative and production, for Maserati. Bespoke customer journeys were created for owners including a mix of email and mail based on permission status. This was further personalised by recognising length of ownership, vehicle type, demographics and geotargeting to dealer location.

Post-campaign analytics demonstrated the effectiveness of mail in generating a meaningful return on investment. Both the mail-only and combined mail-and-email programmes had a response differential as much as 40% higher than email alone.

After creating and posting a video of his Maserati direct mail piece, one owner stated: “With treatment like this, I will never get rid of my Maserati Ghibli...”

“

“We spend a lot of time getting the tone of voice just right for these end-of-contract notices... it can make a huge difference.”

Decision Maker,
Utilities Sector

”

Design matters

In workshops exploring what customers want and expect from Customer Mail, respondents confirmed that communications should align to the brand in look and feel; they should not confuse or contradict brand values; they should be trustworthy and credible; and they should demonstrate a level of care and personal attention.

Design matters because it reinforces a customer’s experience of the brand in a sensory and significant way. Mail design has been measured and proven for decades, and this learning is especially critical to spur successful CX. Everything about the communication is reinforcing the brand via colour, tone, message, imagery, design and production quality. It should be produced to the same standard as all brand messaging.

It should be clear, so that the reader can easily find information or instructions and know how to respond. It should look appealing, so that the recipient wants to read it, with a simple layout and obvious visual hierarchy. The information should be in

accessible sections with contact details and next steps prominently displayed. The language should be easy to understand and strike the right tone.

Done well, it signals care and consideration and shows that the business respects its customers and the relationship. Done badly, it implies lack of effort and importance and dilutes the overall brand image. A surprising number of companies do think of it for advertising or marketing but not for more regular communications.

Our research identified a number of best practices specific to Customer Mail for how best to attract the audience. See Figure 16.

The research also explored customer responses to four original letters compared to the same letters redesigned using best practice (respondents saw only 1 letter). The redesigned versions were consistently rated more highly for: having the right amount of information, making it clear what to do, being easy to understand and looking easy to read. See Figure 17.

Figure 16. Design Dos and Don’ts for Customer Mail

Do

- ✔ Use in combination with other channels for maximum impact and support (serves as reminder to take action)
- ✔ Use personalisation where possible (first names, personal info) to maximise impact and relationship
- ✔ Keep letters visually interesting; use tables, process visuals, bullets, boxes and bolding to ease comprehension
- ✔ Sign off from a named individual to humanise the message

Don’t

- ✗ Include unnecessary and irrelevant information (risks overshadowing main message)
- ✗ Use overly complex language and information
- ✗ Cram wording or lines, or use small font
- ✗ Make your customers feel forced to switch to digital; ensure they feel they have their choice of channel

Source: Royal Mail Marketreach/Trinity McQueen

Figure 17.

Original Letter

TPB SAVINGS
39 Bishopgate Street
Howe
KW1 5SJ

Jane Smith
86 Main Street
London
W2S 1JB

February 2021

Dear Mrs Smith,
ISA Number: 45678724

As you already save with TPB Savings, we know you appreciate the accounts and services we offer. Your current TPB Savings Fixed Rate ISA matures on 28 February 2021. This means you'll have **£2351.27** (excluding final interest) available to re-invest for your future.

What happens next...

We have a Fixed Rate ISA available, which pays a fixed interest rate if you're prepared to commit your money for a fixed term. You can use the enclosed Maturity Instruction Form to tell us what you would like to do. If we don't hear from you before your account matures, we'll put your savings into the ISA Maturity Funds Account for the time being. The rate of interest for the ISA Maturity Funds Account is currently 0.20% tax free/AER variable. You have unlimited access to your money by post with no loss of interest. Interest is calculated daily and paid yearly on the anniversary of the first deposit.

To ensure you receive the interest rates indicated in this letter, please return your Maturity Instruction Form to us by 15 April 2021. **If we receive instructions after this date the rates quoted may not be available.**

Re-invest in a TPB Savings Fixed Rate ISA to keep your savings working hard

- From 1 February the overall ISA limit is £20,000 for the 2020/2021 tax year.
- If you're topping up your maturing ISA with this tax year's ISA allowance (2020/2021) remember to complete section F of the instruction form.
- Choose to have interest paid yearly or monthly. Yearly interest can be paid back to your account, to another TPB Savings account or another UK bank or building society account that accepts faster payments. Please note, if you have your interest paid away, these funds will lose their tax free status.
- Manage your account by post.
- Withdrawals are allowed by post subject to a charge. The charge will depend on the length of term remaining at the time of access and is the equivalent of a number of days' tax free interest on the amount withdrawn. This charge will be taken from the account balance and depending on when the withdrawal is made, may result in you getting back less than you originally deposited. See the summary box in the enclosed brochure for specific withdrawal arrangements.
- We will write to you before your account matures giving you instructions on what to do next. If no instructions are received we will transfer your money to a variable rate easy access cash ISA of our choice.

Fixed Term	Save from	Yearly Interest		Monthly Interest	
		Tax Free %	AER%	Tax Free %	AER%
2 Years	£500	0.68	0.68	0.67	0.68

Continued...

Redesigned Letter

TPB SAVINGS
WATCHING YOUR MONEY GROW

39 Bishopgate Street
Howe
KW1 5SJ
tpbsavings.co.uk

February 2021
ISA no. 32905480

Jane Smith
86 Main Street
London
W2S 1JB

Let us know what's next for your savings

Dear Mrs Smith

When your 1 Year Fixed Rate Yearly ISA matures on 10 March, 2021, you will have choices about how you want to re-invest your savings. You just need to let us know what you'd like to do next by 15 April 2021.

Your current balance is £2351.27 (which excludes final interest).

The choice is yours

- Re-invest in a new Fixed Rate ISA for 2 years at 0.68% tax free AER
- Transfer your money to an existing TPB ISA or other TPB savings account
- Close the account

If you do nothing your money will be moved to an ISA Maturity Funds Account. This account is currently paying 0.02% tax free/AER variable. Details are on our website tpbsavings.co.uk

What to do next

Choose whether to re-invest or close the account

Complete the enclosed form

Return it to us in the pre-paid envelope so it's back with us by 15 April

Call us on **0845 123 4567** if you want to discuss your options

We offer a range of savings options. You can call our team on **0845 123 4567** if you want to discuss or visit tpbsavings.co.uk where you can find more information about the options available and other Frequently Asked Questions.

Yours sincerely

Adam Dawson
Senior Manager, TPB Savings

Source: Royal Mail Marketreach/Trinity McQueen

Get all the relevant teams on board – marketing and more

All communications with the customer are an opportunity to build the brand and contribute to a positive CX. And all functional areas across the firm should approach Customer Mail this way, integrating it into their business activities where appropriate, and using best practice to ensure it aligns to broader brand visuals and messaging.

Our research shows that functional teams as diverse as finance, product, and technology often have specified communications with customers. Yet they might not understand the importance of look, feel, content and tone in reinforcing the brand when they send out mailings. It is critical that the whole firm understands and recognises mail's role in good CX. Simplifying internal processes to bring together marketing with functional teams, establishing a designated 'owner' and measuring it better can bring significant improvement to mail ROI.

Incorporating advances in technology, data, design and delivery can benefit required Customer Mail programmes, giving them a fresh feel and bringing beneficial outcomes.³⁵

Many organisations already use well known digital automation platforms to manage marketing. These data-driven, multi-channel, technology-based systems, such as Salesforce, Oracle, and Iterable, can quickly and easily be deployed to deliver personalised and relevant Customer Mail – when and how the customers want it.

Technology also generates a range of data that can be harnessed to enhance the customer experience and maximise communication impact. For example, companies can track mail once it has been sent and they know delivery dates. They can then optimise support, such as call centre capacity, and the timing of follow-up communications, such as digital reminders.³⁶



Mail's sustainability stands out

Paper mail gets caught up in broader cultural trends that see cutting down on paper use as a big part of reducing environmental impact. Our survey showed that 42% of respondents were encouraged to go paperless last year and nearly half of them were offered incentives to do so. Yet, only about 24% did. Only half of our respondents were happy to be required to go paperless.³⁷

Very high numbers of respondents appreciate paper's sustainability: 77% believe paper is one of the most recycled products in the world; 65% see it as a renewable product; and 55% appreciate that the wood that makes paper is grown and harvested in a sustainable manner. Over 61% conscientiously recycle their own mail.³⁸

This belief in mail's sustainability is borne out in reality. The amount of recycled paper used has increased greatly. The European recycling rate stands at 72%, making paper one of the most recycled materials in the world, according to print and paper sustainability experts Two Sides. In fact, between 2005 and 2020, European forests grew by 58,390 square kilometres – that's an area bigger than Switzerland and amounts to over 1,500 football pitches every day!³⁹

The fact is, all channels have a carbon footprint, including mail. Yet the environmental impact of digital communications is something most people do not understand. Our data shows that 40% of people do believe digital technology is a significant part of the climate change problem but 38% – almost the same number – do not believe this.⁴⁰

The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) industry accounts for more than 2% of global greenhouse gas emissions and this is predicted to rise to 14% by 2040. 'The paper, pulp and print sector is one of the lowest industrial emitters of greenhouse gases, accounting for 0.8% of European emissions,' according to Eurostat data.⁴¹

Yet there is so much more we can all do to tackle climate change. Businesses can definitely highlight the sustainability of Customer Mail and can feel confident addressing customer sentiments on this topic when choosing the channel. In addition to sourcing paper from sustainable sources, mail producers now offer alternatives to polythene plastic bags and have introduced a range of different inks and production materials to enhance recyclability.

Judicious use of mailings

Mail continues to be influential for specific types of messages and reasons. It should not be used for everything, and is best deployed when it can facilitate desired outcomes in the customer journey to enhance the customer experience.

Above all, consumers want to remain in control of how they communicate with companies. Preferences depend on the person and the context, yet most agree that important communications should use physical mail.

Businesses that care about their customer relationships will understand mail's role as a modern, worthwhile channel and leverage it accordingly. Done right, it is a convincing way to get messages noticed at important moments.

32 Royal Mail Marketreach – Trinity McQueen, July 2021

33 Ibid

34 JICMAIL, 7 Essential Insights

35 Ibid

36 See Effectiveness in Context, A Manual for Brand Building, Les Binet and Peter Field, accessed at <https://ipa.co.uk/knowledge/publications-reports/effectiveness-in-context>; IPA Advertising Association/WARC Annual Expenditure Reports, accessed at <https://expenditurereport.warc.com/>; Making Measurement Meaningful – The DMA's New Intelligent Marketing Databank Whitepaper, July 2021, accessed at <https://dma.org.uk/article/making-measurement-meaningful>

37 Ibid

38 Ibid

39 See Two Sides, <https://www.twosides.info/european-forests/>

40 Ibid

41 Royal Mail Marketreach, Print and paper, Ibid

All quotes in this section unless specified otherwise are from Royal Mail Marketreach – Trinity McQueen, Ibid



Conclusion

Now is a great opportunity for businesses to re-examine their approach to CX. Any organisation that cares about how customers experience their brand will seek to enhance their relationships with them. Good CX is a lot more than just digital. Businesses should take advantage of every channel to promote their brand, attract and retain customers, and increase loyalty. This not only creates commercial value for the business, but personal value for customers, too. Win-win.

The medium needs to match the message. In the right circumstances, mail is the most efficacious way to communicate. Mail is tangible, trustworthy and measurable. Done right, it can be as cost-effective and can deliver even more impact than digital channels. But this isn't an either/or choice. There is an important role for both and our research highlights that this is what customers want too.

Mail's unique strengths make it critically important as part of an integrated CX programme. Mail in partnership with digital and other channels truly delivers powerful effects.

When the brand takes care of how it communicates, customers can trust that they know what the issue is and how to deal with it. This makes them feel confident in their choices. This is the essence of effective CX.

Companies should understand the specific purposes and contexts for which mail is appropriate and then build it into a wider strategy. Where the message needs to stand out, is important or complex, requires action or sustained, considered involvement, Customer Mail is the right choice.



Mail is an incredibly powerful brand touchpoint, trusted and valued by consumers, that delivers tangible financial outcomes to businesses.

Philip Ricketts, Commercial Director, Marketreach





Appendix

Marketreach research

Marketreach is the marketing authority on commercial mail.

It provides evidence of mail's effectiveness as a media channel and gets brands and businesses excited about mail's creative and strategic possibilities. In a digital age, mail is changing fast. Marketreach keeps the industry up to date on the latest innovations and opportunities, and works with brands and agencies to help them use mail effectively. This includes regularly publishing research and providing both thought leadership and practical support for brands and their mail campaigns.

Marketreach's extensive insight into the role and impact of mail is available from [marketreach.co.uk](https://www.marketreach.co.uk) and includes:

Driving effectiveness with direct mail, in partnership with WARC: a fresh look at the unique role of direct mail in the marketing mix, demonstrating how the channel is helping brands to deliver ROI and sustained growth
https://www.marketreach.co.uk/sites/default/files/insights/WARC_Direct_Mail_Effectiveness_Report.pdf

Physically Irresistible: how leading brands are using the power of physical to create unforgettable campaigns that build stronger audience connections.
<https://www.marketreach.co.uk/resource/physically-irresistible>

Mail Matters More than Ever: a compelling picture of how mail provided high performance in a Covid world and the vital role physical mail plays in today's advertising media.

<https://www.marketreach.co.uk/resource/mail-matters-more-ever>

The Private Life of Mail: an unprecedented look at what happens after mail enters the home

<https://www.marketreach.co.uk/sites/default/files/insights/The-Private-Life-of-Mail.pdf>

The Marketreach website also features 100 case studies from our library of over 500 case studies exploring the power of mail

<https://www.marketreach.co.uk/>

Accenture research

Fjord Trends focuses on customer behaviour and its resulting impact on society, culture and business for the coming year. It is crowdsourced from across Accenture Interactive's global network of 2,000+ designers and innovators in more than 40 locations.
<https://www.accenture.com/gb-en/insights/interactive/fjord-trends>

The Business of Experience (BX) responds to continually changing customer expectations and needs by realigning the entire organisation around the delivery of exceptional experiences.
<https://www.accenture.com/us-en/insights/interactive/business-of-experience>

Life Reimagined: Mapping the motivations that matter for today's consumers

<https://www.accenture.com/gb-en/insights/strategy/reimagined-consumer-expectations>

Accenture identifies three opportunity areas to improve customer experiences in the communications industry and reimagine connectivity.

https://www.accenture.com/_acnmedia/PDF-157/Accenture-Communications-Experience-Reimagined-Full-Report.pdf

Every organization must deliver exceptional experiences for their customers. Companies must reimagine their entire business through the lens of experience.

<https://www.accenture.com/gb-en/insights/interactive/customer-experience-index>

Industry research

Where to learn more about the mail industry and the role of mail media:

JICMAIL (Joint Industry Committee for Mail) is an independent body that delivers industry-standard audience measurement data for mail and door drops. Tools such as JICMAIL Essentials and JICMAIL Discovery give access to mail performance data by industry and type of mail.

<https://www.jicmail.org.uk/>

Effectiveness in Context, A Manual for Brand Building, Les Binet and Peter Field IPA

<https://ipa.co.uk/knowledge/publications-reports/effectiveness-in-context>

Advertising Association/WARC Annual Media Expenditure Reports

<https://expenditurereport.warc.com/>

Making Measurement Meaningful – the DMA's new Intelligent Marketing Databank whitepaper, July 2021

<https://dma.org.uk/article/making-measurement-meaningful>

Two Sides

A not-for-profit organisation whose goal is to promote the sustainability of the graphic communications supply chain (including forestry, pulp, paper, inks and chemicals, pre-press, press, finishing, publishing, printing, envelopes and postal operators) and dispel common environmental misconceptions by providing users with verifiable information on why print and paper is an attractive, practical and sustainable communications medium.

<https://www.twosides.info/resources/>

IDM Award in Direct Mail

Qualification on how to use mail for marketing success, providing a complete understanding of how to plan, target, create, measure and implement mail campaigns.

<https://www.theidm.com/qualification/award-in-direct-mail>

Royal Mail and the cruciform are trade marks of Royal Mail Group Limited. © Royal Mail Group Limited 2022. All rights reserved.
Royal Mail Group Limited, registered in England and Wales, number 4138203, registered office: 185 Farringdon Road, London, EC1A 1AA.

Accenture and its logo are trademarks of Accenture.
This report makes factual reference to marks owned by third parties.
All such third-party marks are the property of their respective owners.
No sponsorship, endorsement or approval of this content by the owners of such marks is intended, expressed or implied.