



11 Ways to Avoid Mailing Surprises

1. **Be clear on your objectives**

- Determine the message and image you are trying to convey to your prospects and customers
- Clearly communicate your objectives to Step Direct and your other vendors; build a shared vision

2. **Be clear on your timing requirements**

- Think through your schedule and critical dates
- Make sure important deadlines are communicated to Step Direct and your designers and printers

3. **Identify unusual components**

- Some mail pieces will have surcharges related to unusual dimensions or layouts
- Work with your vendors to avoid such problems or budget for them

4. **Involve Step Direct early in the design process**

- Work with us to evaluate whether your mail piece design is suitable for both your ambitions and your budget

5. **Approve the first piece off the press with us**

- Though initially this procedure takes more time, it has the potential to save greater amounts of time and effort in the long run

6. **Make sure that your lists are managed well**

- Quality mailings start with quality data
- Even the best creative effort and cost-effective production efforts cannot overcome a poor quality or untargeted list

7. **Make sure the paper stock and sizes are machinable**

- Some paper stocks and certain dimensions of a mailer are simply inconsistent with the basic requirements of laser printers and mailing machines

8. Plan for advance postage payment

- The Post Office requires cash up front and does not accept credit card payment for discounted mailings
- Without postage, finished mail goes nowhere, and what is the point of that!?

9. Have Step Direct add your name and address to your mailing

- See firsthand the fruits of your efforts – experience what your customers and prospects experience
- An important component of the quality process; gain perspective to improve future mailings

10. Budget each job individually

- Small design changes can make a big difference
- Check and double check your plan
- Treat each job as a new one even if you have done it before; postal regulations do change, so make no assumptions
- Once a job is changed, get a fresh quote from Step Direct and other vendors

11. Leave a slight buffer period for mailing production or postage challenges

- These things take time; needless rushing is the main source for mistakes all around
- Leave a day or two of breathing room for production refinements, trouble shooting or that extra touch of quality control