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5 Copy Tips for Better Direct Mail Response

Target Marketing recently published a terrific article on generating responses with direct mail. It doesn't point to data-driven personalization, multichannel integration, or psychographic targeting, although all of these are important strategies. The article talks about the basics of effective marketing. We'll summarize the points here and illustrate them with a TV commercial most of us will recognize: "[Not You](#)" from Realtor.com.

1. Create an either/or scenario. In this scenario, there are two options: use your product, and things go well, use the other guy's product and invoke disaster.

2. Use a real-world story to illustrate the consequences of the two choices. Realtor.com does a great job with this. In the TV commercial, two women are looking at online pictures of the house one of them is buying. A third woman shows up and complains that this is the house she wanted. There are two primary characters here: you, who used Realtor.com to find and purchase the house quickly, and "not you" who didn't use Realtor.com and missed out. Whether we're in the market for a new home or not, this is a scenario with which we can all relate.

3. KISS — keep it simple. Direct mail isn't the place to get technical. You are creating a scenario and tapping emotions to make your point. In the world of direct mail, simple sticks.

4. Focus on solving a problem. Realtor.com does this especially well. Problem: I don't want someone else to get the house I want. Solution: Use Realtor.com. Everyone understands this simple problem-solution scenario.

5. Use images to evoke emotion. In direct mail, you have a matter of seconds to convince the recipient that the piece is worth their time to pick up and read. People process visual information much more quickly than text, so use images to your advantage!

Direct mail is a powerful tool for getting a message into people's hands quickly. Use these tips to make the most of the opportunity!