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9 direct mailing ideas that your list will love — and remember

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Key Takeaways

- If you put some effort into your direct mail and turn it into something that recipients will find useful, they'll keep it -- and you'll get to be top-of-mind for them.
- Consider sending direct mail about food, arts and entertainment options or sports and the outdoors. If it's good, recipients will treasure it.

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When a good friend of mine got her real estate license and started working at [PorchLight](#) in Denver, she asked if she could add me to her mailing list.

I said “sure” and told myself that I would throw any fliers into the recycling bin instead of the trash can. You know, for the good of the planet.

To my surprise, the first piece of direct mail that I got from my agent friend was something I stuck on my refrigerator to keep. So was the second, and the third.

Some agents might believe that direct mail is going the way of the dinosaur. No one even reads it — it just goes straight into the trash. (Or the recycling bin.)

I don't believe that's true. If you put some effort into your direct mail and turn it into something that recipients will find useful, they'll keep it — and you'll get to be top-of-mind for them...and also anyone who happens to wander through the kitchen and peruse the fridge.

Showcase how well you know your recipients' neighborhoods.

As a former food, music and arts-and-entertainment writer, I've had plenty of opportunities to think about useful information to share with readers. Here are some ideas you can take for yourself and run with.



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They might require a little bit of research and extra effort on your part, but I guarantee more people will be hanging on to your direct mail and posting it where they can easily refer back to it.

Food-and-drink-related ideas

1. **Send a list of a certain type of restaurant in a certain neighborhood.** Include a map, delivery information and phone numbers. Pizza is always a popular option; if your recipient lives in a big city with lots of options, consider just including top-ranked restaurants. Ice-cream parlors are nice to include in the summertime.

There's a lot you can do with this idea. Best places to find breakfast under \$10 in your neighborhood. Best upscale eateries for an anniversary dinner. Best family restaurants.

2. **Send a recipe.** Cookies are popular during the holiday season; consider something like a potato salad in the summertime.

Think outside the recipe book, too, though. Anyone who bakes or cooks regularly could use a handy, sleek-looking measurement conversion chart to post where it's easy to see.

And it took me about three years of baking in Colorado to figure out how to make my high-altitude goods as palatable as the sea-level versions. If you're in a mountain region, a summary of how to adjust recipes for high altitude is something readers would probably love. (I just use a tad more flour.)

3. **Send information on local treasures.** Is your city known for microbrew? Does an orchard near your town grow the best peaches in the land? Send recipients maps and information about where to find them — or lists of brewery tours or farmer's markets, complete with times and dates.

Entertainment-related ideas

4. **Collect and print out events information for popular venues in your area.** One small boutique shop below Red Rocks Amphitheatre prints a concert and film schedule every summer with the store's branding and logos on it. Every person in town grabs one so they know when to expect heavy traffic through Morrison.

5. **Is it party season?** Tips for Halloween party decorations or the best way to lay out an Easter egg hunt can be fun seasonal ways to help out your mailing list.

6. **It's movie time!** Too late to try this one, but there are definitely enough Star Wars fans out there that a mailer including information on movie theaters screening the latest film — especially those that are showing marathons of all the films — contains valuable information for a large segment of your list. Keep tabs on the next pop-culture phenomenon and take advantage of it.

Outdoors or sports-related ideas

7. **Give readers a list of places to hike or enjoy nature.** This was the first thing [PorchLight](#) sent me — a list of hiking trails within a quick drive from the city center. Many of them were brand-new to me, someone who's lived around Denver most of my life.

Add in campsites, boat docks and other places to spend time outdoors, and you could probably fill an entire calendar year's worth of mailings.

8. **Think seasonally.** I spend more time than I care to think about Googling “splash parks” and “swimming pools” in the summertime and “sledding hills” in the wintertime. Collect this information for your mailing list and they will remember you for it.

9. **Do you work in an area with a big sports presence?** Whether your neighbors go nuts over high-school football or you're selling condos near a baseball stadium, telling them when the games are (and including what channels are airing them on television, if applicable) can help make your mailer a household favorite.

If you can segment your mailing list further, you'll see even more opportunities to send your sphere-of-influence valuable information that they might not even know they need. Married couples will be looking for different weekend activities than singles or young families.

Showcase how well you know your recipients' neighborhoods — and how well you can anticipate their need for information about the place where they live — and you'll be building your own value in the eyes of all your mailing list recipients, whether they've bought or sold through you or not.

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