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# 2024 Direct Mail Trends





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Direct mail is a very effective marketing and branding channel because of how it differs from online messages. In many ways, mail has an opportunity like never before to stand out from the glut of digital marketing that surrounds us.

Improvements in technologies that make mail more special and relevant, changes in the digital ad marketplace, and the optimization of the USPS delivery network give marketers options to meet the right customers in their mailbox (and inbox) at the right time with the right message like never before.

**These 5 trends provide ways to plan carefully and market more smartly in 2024.**

**Mail has an opportunity like never before to stand out from the glut of digital marketing that surrounds us.**





# 1. Data Optimization

**Let's face it:** inflation has taken a bite out of everyone's bottom line in the last few years. This means that optimizing your mail spend is no longer just a nice thing to do - it's a necessity. Paper and postage price increases, though, set you up perfectly for investing in solutions that save you money in both the long and short run on your direct mail campaigns.

The biggest factor in success - and a key in keeping costs under control - is data. With the phasing out of 3rd party cookies for digital campaigns underway, companies are turning to alternatives for enriching data for improved targeting, such as:

- Additional zero and 1st party data
- Better appending
- More precise modeling

**The data you have on customers can power Variable Data Printing (VDP)** to engage with them on your mail piece through customized offers, copy, and images. Paired with a strategy of focusing on your best-performing segments, it creates campaigns that are more relevant to your prospects and customers.

More and more, data without silos is the foundation of an omnichannel communications strategy. Instead of a generic campaign going to a large audience, it can be deployed to grab attention and prompt action in any channel - print or digital. And whether you use a QR code or a link, consumer response can be tracked, attributed - and improved.

**At mailing.com, we stand behind our decades of expertise in data management to help you with your company's strategy and reach your campaigns' potential.**

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## 2. USPS Incentives

### **BREAKING NEWS:**

In July 2023, USPS proposed a new Mail Growth Incentives program for both Marketing Mail and First Class campaigns mailed in CY 2024. The goal of the proposed incentive is to drive higher sustained usage of mail by large mailers.

The incentive will use a FY 2023 volume to set a baseline. Mailers who exceed 1 million in 2024, but did not mail 1 million in 2023, will have their incremental volume start at 1 million pieces, not their FY 2023 volume.

**Mailers can earn 30% credit on the future volume of mailings (after July 2024) for overall volume exceeding 1 million pieces** compared to their 2023 baseline.

The 30% credits will be paid out in three installments of 10% in July 2024, January 2025, and July 2025, and must be used by the end of 2025.

For over a decade, the USPS has offered been offering mailers incentives for mail campaigns that incorporate new and developing marketing and printing technologies. The idea is to “push the envelope”, to get marketers and printers to create high-value mail that drives engagement and increases ROI. The robust promotions program from 2023 will be repeated in 2024:

- Tactile, Sensory and Interactive Engagement (5% discount)
- Emerging and Advanced Technology (3-4% discount for flexible 6-month period)
- Personalized Color Transpromo (3-4% discount)
- Informed Delivery (4% discount, 0.5% incentive for eDoc Postage Statement Submitters)
- Reply Mail IMBA (3-6% discount)
- Retargeting (5% discount)





**With Informed Delivery, for example, you can reach over 57 million people who have opted in to receive a daily email notification of their incoming postal mail.**

On average, 67.4% of notifications are opened daily, and providing a digital ride-along image and link turns that notification into an integrated, attributable marketing campaign.

**Even better, enrollment for each ID campaign is free, and mailing.com can help set one up for you.**



For transactional mail, the Personalized Color Transpromo incentive aims to make mailpieces such as bills and statements more fun and impactful by using color and personalization to highlight your messages. The discount is applied to mailings for loyalty programs, renewals, and coupons, as well as ones containing personalized data visualizations.

### 3. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Recent advances in artificial intelligence (AI), such as generative AI tools (e.g., Chat GPT) have focused on the ability of these models to create new data, such as text, images, or other media, based on the structures of their input data - and do so quickly. While some caution is needed, AI does have the potential to transform how companies create mail campaigns.

**For example:**

- Automate tasks such as content creation, campaign analysis, and project management
- Analyze audience data and predict which segments are most likely to respond to specific messages
- Improve targeting of individuals with personalized messaging, offers, etc., based on behavioral and intent data
- Optimize mail campaigns based on response analysis & make adjustments, as well as use faster testing of copy, headlines, and offers

**With the power of data generated by AI, companies can enhance the value and effectiveness of their direct mail efforts and achieve higher efficiency and improved ROI.**




# 4. Triggers/Intent-Based Marketing

Trigger-based direct mail is an effective and efficient approach to improving conversions. Regardless of where customer behavior initiates action - either online or offline - it gives you an opportunity to reach them quickly with targeted, personalized messaging.

## Examples include:

- New customers or leads
- Website visitors
- Shopping cart abandonment
- Renewals/Upgrades/Cross-Sell
- Transactional mail

Leveraging VDP, mailing.com can set up year-round trigger campaigns that meet your needs and generate great ROI.



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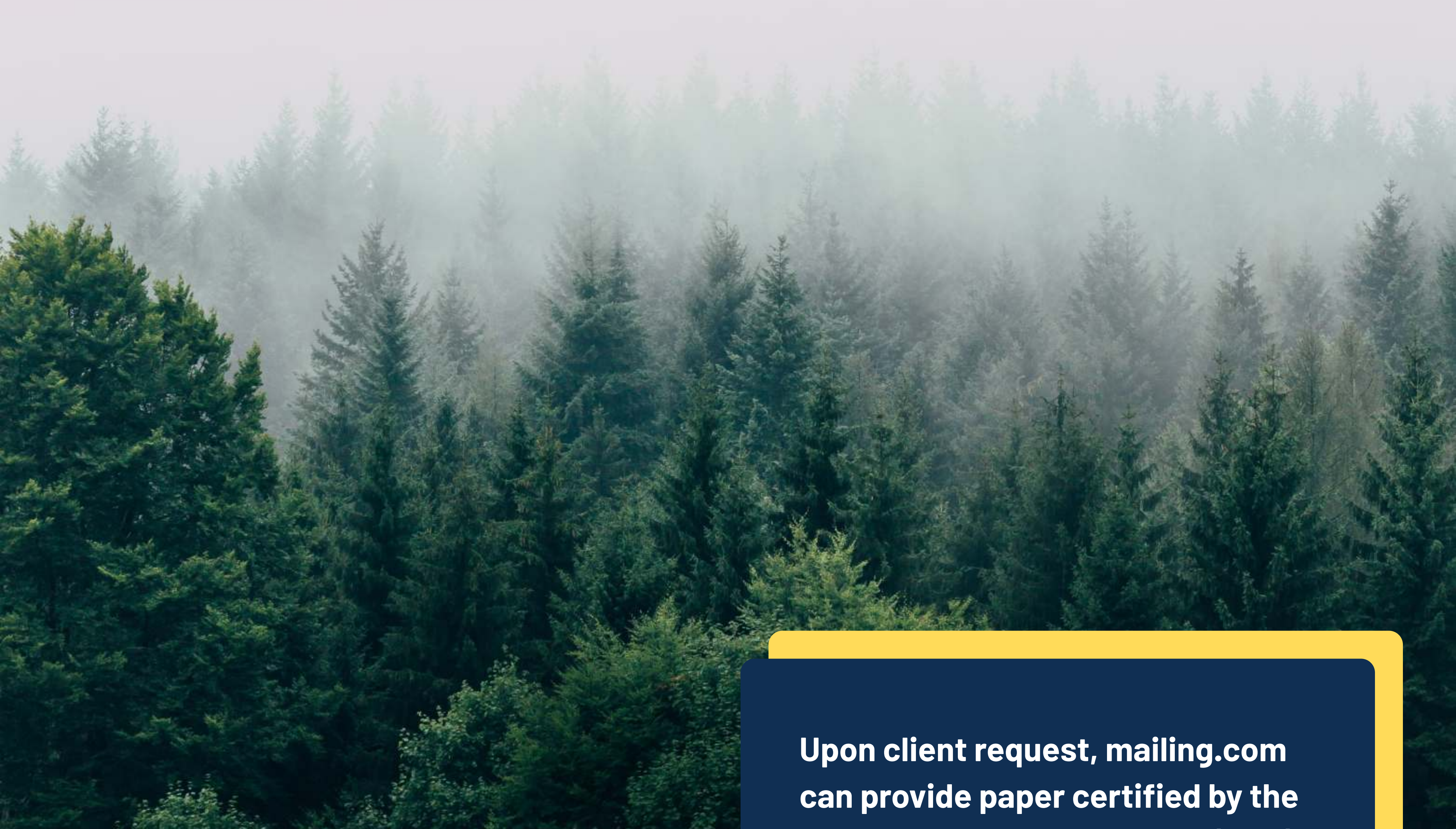
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**Upon client request, mailing.com can provide paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).**

## 5. Sustainability

Environmental concerns such as post-consumer waste, climate change, deforestation, and pollution are driving interest and innovation in all aspects of the direct mail and print supply chain. **Printers and marketers are making these changes in sustainability practices and procedures because brands are responding to consumer and marketplace demands for them.**

To meet customer expectations, companies are increasingly working with outside groups to prioritize and establish responsible and sustainable approaches to the production of paper, inks, and films. Examples include PrintReleaf and B Corporation.

**Upon client request, mailing.com can provide paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).** And to date, we've planted a quarter of a million trees through our partnership with the One Tree Planted program.

Companies that achieve certification for meeting their sustainability commitments drive further innovation in the mail and print industries. They also engage consumer support by displaying a logo of those groups on their mail.





## Conclusion

Direct mail is a vital and evolving marketing channel. When it's done well, it marries the power of personal touch and print to digital technologies. Mail helps brands to reach members of today's audiences where each of them is and drives relevant and authentic interaction.

At mailing.com, our experts can help you put together a complete and cost-effective direct mail campaign – from planning to printing to mailing – that reaches consumers in ways digital can't alone.

**Please reach out or call us! We'd love to show you how to put mail to work in your next campaign during the year ahead, deliver better ROI, and accomplish your goals.**

**Sam Jorgensen** | Business Development  
sjorgensen@mailing.com