

# Direct Mail Study Reveals the Impact of Print Embellishments

With all the tools that marketers employ today, statistics clearly illuminate the power of direct mail. However, to make authentic connections with a targeted direct mail audience, brand managers need to utilize tactics that will resonate. Unless a direct mail piece strikes an immediate emotional tie through relevant personalization components and highly attractive designs that feature coatings/laminates, embossing or decorative metallics, the piece likely will not receive the attention desired. Consumers react positively to printed pieces that resonate with their emotions, needs and values, and the direct mail story must be designed so that the sales message is enhanced with visual and tactile effects that invite the recipient to connect.



The following study was created to measure the impact of print embellishments on direct mail results and was conducted by a leading national car wash company with multiple locations throughout the Midwestern United States. Working in conjunction with the Foil & Specialty Effects Association (FSEA), the company agreed to share the results from a postcard mailing to a targeted neighborhood surrounding the location of one of its newest car wash facilities. The results of the study, which differentiated between printed postcards and digitally embellished postcards, are outlined below.

## >> Methodology

Working closely with the car wash company, a postcard was designed to mail to approximately 7,500 residents in the neighborhoods surrounding the opening of a new car wash location.

Of the 7,500 total postcards, 50% were printed digitally 4-color process on the front side and 50% were printed digitally 4-color process with the addition of offline digital inkjet embellishments. These print embellishments included spot raised and textured coatings and raised digital metallic decoration.

The backside of the postcard described a special offer for a free car wash if the direct mail recipient brought it to the car wash location. Separate barcodes differentiated the two types of postcards – one for the printed postcards only and one for the embellished postcards, allowing the car wash to determine how many of each postcard type were redeemed.

## >> Results

The response rates for each group were as follows:

Print-Only Postcard Mailers:

Total Sent: 3,750

Responses: 480

Response Rate: 12.8%

Embellished Postcard Mailers:

Total Sent: 3,750

Responses: 631

Response Rate: 16.8%

	RESPONDED	DID NOT RESPOND	TOTAL
Print Only	480	3270	3750
Embellished	631	3119	3750
Total	1111	6389	7500

## >> Conclusion

The result of this campaign clearly demonstrates that embellished direct mailers with tactile varnish and/or metallic finishes are significantly more effective in generating responses compared to standard print-only direct mail campaigns. The embellished car wash postcards with the free car wash offer achieved a response rate of 16.8%, which is a 31.25% improvement over the response rate of the printed-only postcard.

The statistical analysis confirms the significance of these findings, providing strong evidence to support the use of tactile embellishments in future direct mail campaigns to enhance engagement and response rates.

By continuing to innovate through the exploration of creative enhancements, new benchmarks can be set for success in marketing efforts. This direct mail study underscores the value of investing in embellished mailers as a strategic approach to improving campaign outcomes and achieving higher engagement from recipients.

## >> Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Incorporate Tactile and Metallic Embellishments: Future direct mail campaigns should include embellishments to improve response rates.
2. Expand Use of Innovative Techniques: Explore additional innovative techniques and materials to further enhance the effectiveness of direct mail campaigns. ◆

*The Foil & Specialty Effects Association (FSEA) provides a wide range of resources to help companies remain profitable today and into the future. From cost-saving programs and educational opportunities to green initiatives proving the sustainability of foil decorated paper/board, the FSEA strives to provide its members with ideas, resources and solutions to grow in today's marketplace. For more information, visit [www.fsea.com](http://www.fsea.com).*



**Foil & Specialty Effects Association (FSEA)**

2150 SW Westport Drive, Suite 101 | Topeka, KS 66614

785.271.5816 | [www.fsea.com](http://www.fsea.com)