

Savinder Mattu

Going Global

Associate Fellow Savinder Mattu has been in the list broking industry for five years. She worked three years at Direct Media International in the Netherlands as list and insert broking manager, then one year at Dudley Jenkins as the international list specialist. Currently, she works at WorldWide Media as a senior international list broker.

Ms. Mattu has written numerous articles for the trade press - such as *DirectResponse*. She attends all the international marketing fairs and is a familiar face at both the EMDA and DMA European conferences and events.

She specializes in the publishing market. Some of her clients include *The European Newspaper*, *The Economist*, *Newsweek*, *Fortune*, and *Business Week*.

ABSTRACT

There are many mailing lists available in the list marketplace. Staying local or going to the better known international files will need to be considered in light of the countries being mailed and the product offered. Each has advantages and disadvantages. Here are some helpful thoughts on using mailing lists globally.

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Introduction

"Going global" is a term which has been known to make even the most experienced domestic mailer shudder. Having exhausted their home markets, mailers are sometimes forced to examine the prospect of entering the international direct mail arena whether they like it or not! The prospect of international direct mail can be daunting, but if all eventualities are considered, it need not be.

The magazine publishers are a group that has, through years of experience, including trial and error, mastered the international direct mail route. Their experiences bring to light a number of key issues which should be considered when mailing into foreign markets.

Mailing Lists

There is an abundance of mailing lists available on the list marketplace. Going local or sticking with the better known international files will need to be considered in light of the countries being mailed and the product on offer. Both have their advantages and disadvantages and variable factors, such as quality, availability, and price.

The international lists are easier to get access to and simpler to order. Having already expressed an interest in international affairs and the ability to communicate in English they should be the first choice for the new international mailer. In the same breath there are also disadvantages to these files: they tend to be over mailed, offer limited market coverage, are more expensive than their local counterparts, and - because they are data captured from a single source - the address quality can be insufficient for local post office rebates.

Local lists on the other hand, can counter the disadvantages of the international files in that they are not as widely mailed, they are able to offer volume, especially when considering consumer lists, are less expensive, and the data capture can be done in the local language. However, list research for local lists can be timely, data quality needs to be

examined closely and - if payment is to be made in local currency - the administration must be at a local level.

A partnership with a good international list broker will mean direct access to specialized list information. View your list broker as a list consultant and benefit from his experience and knowledge of individual markets. Local DMA's will provide a list of registered brokers and suppliers.

Copy/Creative

It is not always necessary for mailers to adapt their package for a multinational audience. If English is their second language, some editing may be required, but an adapted package can be tested with a direct mail responsive international file. Also, do not underestimate the pulling power of English language. For example, *Harvard Business Review* is mailed in English internationally, and has a higher selling value in foreign markets, than within the USA.

Mailers do need to be sensitive to other cultural and language issues. For example when mailing into Belgium - consider the Flemish and French speakers and mail them individually in their own languages. Mailers should avoid the color blue on their mail pieces when mailing into China, as this is considered to be an unlucky color.

Research well the country to be mailed, so that all the cultural/language issues are observed and most importantly make sure your offer is relevant to your prospect mailing, e.g., would you offer gardening equipment to those living in high rise accommodation in central Hong Kong?

Computer Bureaux/Fulfillment

A partnership with an experienced bureau equipped and experienced to handle international campaigns should ensure the smooth process of any dedupe. Your bureau should be able to handle the myriad of

international address types, advise on the correct salutation in laser printing, correctly position the postcode and any other addressing issues which may arise. Today, the availability of European postcodes on CD-Rom also means that more resources are easily accessible.

Some international countries have restrictions on the export of data, so it may be necessary to set up local fulfillment services. This is not a viable option when considering a large pan-European mailing. However, with the increase in popularity of the pan-national campaign, we are seeing an increase in centrally controlled mailings, using local lists, local language offers and order forms. The result being increased response rates.

A competent and efficient fulfillment service is essential. Any mailing house with international expertise can advise on the most cost effective channels to reach your prospect market.

Payment Issues

Any experienced international mailer will confirm the necessity to have all payment collection procedures in place before embarking on an international campaign. Find out what the preferred payment method (s) is of your local market. A local currency offer can greatly affect response. If your mailing is in English and this is the second language, a soft offer would be a good test. If the

product is not a well-known brand then introduce it gently into the market and do not demand payment up-front. Remember that the product is foreign to the consumer, so do not expect them to part with their hard earned money without a trial. If your product demands a hard offer, be sure to provide different payment options in line with those already used in the local market. Giro and bank transfer payments are more widely used in the international arena.

Any mailer looking at globalization should remember that direct mail is a low risk route to new markets, and doesn't have to be the minefield it is sometimes portrayed to be. Be sensitive to local markets, tailor your approach where necessary, partner with the experts, and use their experience to your advantage then go forth and conquer!

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