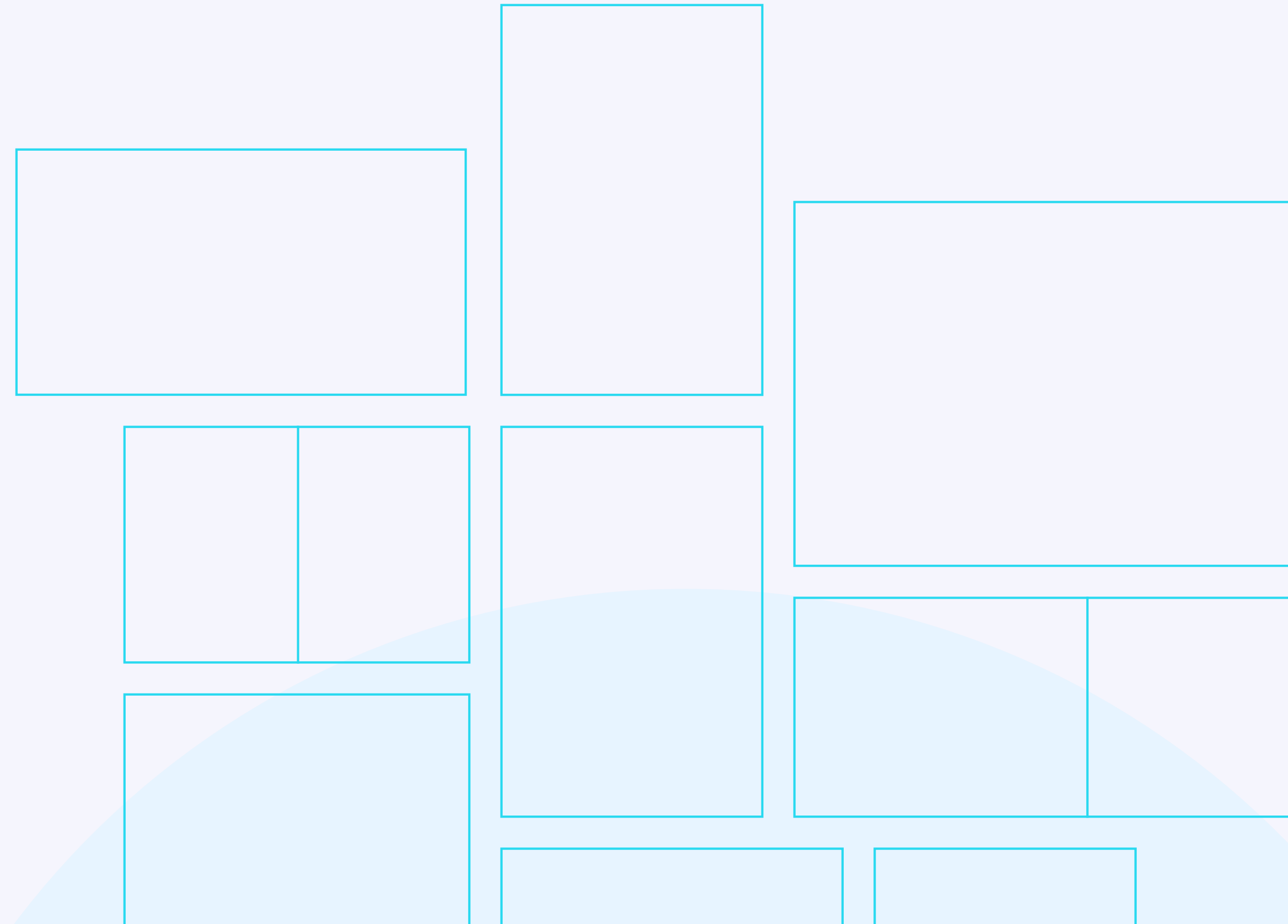


EBOOK

Direct Mail that *Converts*:

Tried-and-True Strategies from
over 1B+ Mail Sends

Lob





Direct mail is the new MVP of your marketing mix.

If you're exploring ways to make your marketing efforts more personal and tangible, you're in the right place. There's no denying that digital noise is at an all-time high – in the midst of this, direct mail has emerged as a powerful contrast. Its unique blend of tangibility and personalization is why 85% of marketers agree that direct mail delivers the best conversion rate of all channels they use.

Whether you aim to attract new customers, nurture existing relationships, or re-engage those who've become inactive, direct mail can be meticulously tailored to achieve your goals. However, the quality of mail varies widely—and no one wants their message to end up as “junk mail.” To make sure your campaigns are effective and drive meaningful action, it's a must to develop a thoughtful conversion strategy.

By blending the art of compelling design with the science of evidence-based CTAs and rigorous testing, you can use direct mail not only to reach your audience but also inspire them to act. Let's get started.

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The benefits of direct mail

Make a tangible connection.

Direct mail is like the quiet hero of marketing, overlooked but incredibly powerful when used correctly. Here's just a few reasons why it's a game-changer:

- **Less clutter, less competition:** In busy channels like social media or digital advertising, your message competes with countless others (and let's be honest, cute animal videos and other memes, too). Direct mail cuts through the noise, landing directly in the hands of your audience, no crowd in sight.
- **Tangible touch:** Direct mail is a physical representation of your brand and message. This tangibility – the ability to see and feel the message – may be one reason that print advertising has a 70% higher recall rate than online ads.
- **Direct has staying power:** Emails are fleeting, direct mail sticks around. It's the flyer on the fridge, the postcard on the desk. 80% of consumers share direct mail with their friends and family making it more viral than you may think.
- **Direct mail is trustworthy:** When it comes to operational mail, consumers trust direct mail more. Older demographics, for example, are much more skeptical of digital communications, especially for financial or medical purposes.

Direct mail results

Achieve any marketing goal with direct mail - really, any goal.

Marketers often ask us what they should be getting out of their direct mail campaigns. The good news is, direct mail can be an effective approach for a wide variety of goals. Here's a few of the objectives your program can support:

- **Customer acquisition:** Direct mail allows for a high degree of personalization and segmentation, making your offers more to each recipient. This targeted approach helps drive conversion from prospect to active customer.
- **Customer retention and reactivation:** Use direct mail to keep your brand top of mind, updating customers on new products or offering them incentives to return.
- **Upsells and cross-sells:** Introduce existing customers to new products or services in a way that feels natural and personalized. Direct mail can highlight products that complement previous purchases, tailored to the customer's purchase history.
- **Brand loyalty and LTV:** Direct mail campaigns that include useful tips, insider information, or loyalty offers help deepen the emotional connection and increase the lifetime value of customers (and in turn, your return on investment.)

How to craft your mail for conversion – from compelling copy to CTAs

While sending mail might sound simple (and it can be!), it's also a thoughtful exercise that requires a mix of visual appeal and strategic CTAs to really drive conversion. Let's explore how different components – like the layout, imagery, and call-to-action placement – contribute to making each mail piece more effective.

Design for action

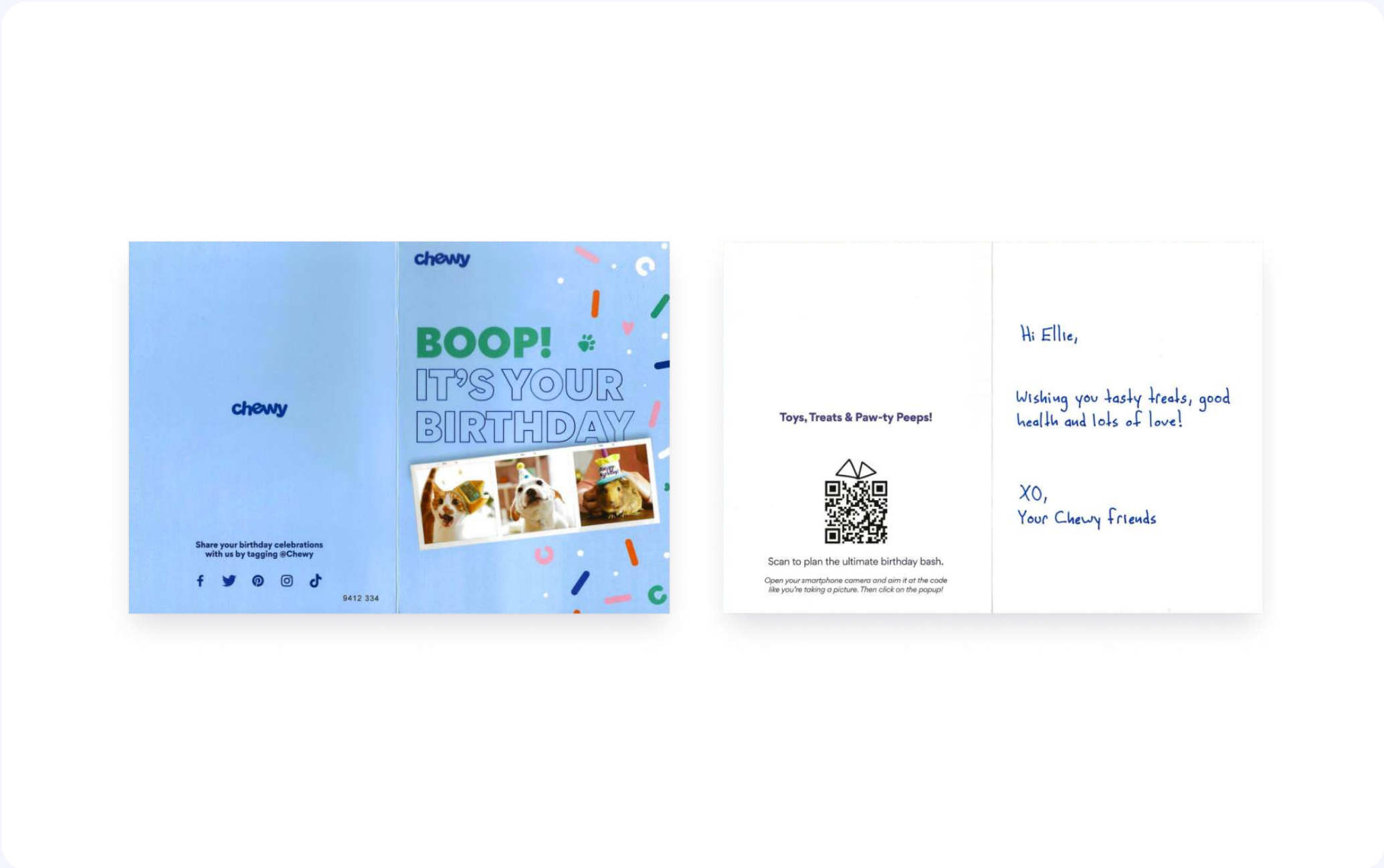
When designing your direct mail piece, the visual hierarchy and layout are crucial for guiding your reader's eye and emphasizing the most important information. Here's how to make your design work for you:

- 1. Prioritize your main message and CTA:** Use larger fonts, bold colors, and strategic placement to make your headline and call-to-action stand out.
- 2. Use whitespace strategically:** Use generous margins, line spacing, and clear sections to break up content and guide the reader's eye, creating a sense of balance and flow.
- 3. Incorporate visuals wisely:** Choose high-quality, relevant images and graphics that support your message and appeal to your audience. Use them sparingly to avoid clutter.
- 4. Maintain consistency:** Use the same fonts, colors, and design elements across all your marketing materials to create a cohesive and recognizable brand identity.

Top-tier design that captures attention and makes your message easy to digest



In this direct mail campaign, Haven Life Insurance used a postcard with a colorful layout full of customer quotes to bring the offer to life, so to speak. The eye-catching graphics, mix of colors and font sizes, and real-world testimonials all work together to draw the reader in and inspire them to take action.



Pet supply company Chewy sends personalized cards to customers' pets for their birthday. The engaging imagery and short, impactful headline on the front grabs the reader's attention, while the clean interior makes the QR code call-to-action stand out.



The exterior of this GEICO direct mail piece includes a custom envelope personalized with the recipient's university to capture their attention. Inside, the direct mail letter is engaging and easy to read with natural page hierarchy featuring varying font sizes and weights, as well as a bulleted list of benefits.



One side of Eyebobs' direct mail self-mailers boasts a clean, modern design, while the other side cleverly includes an eye chart to test your eyes as a clever way to engage readers and lead them to its site to purchase eyeglasses.

Writing headlines that catch the eye

Your headline is your first chance to capture your reader's attention and convince them to keep reading. Here's how to craft a headline that's impossible to ignore:

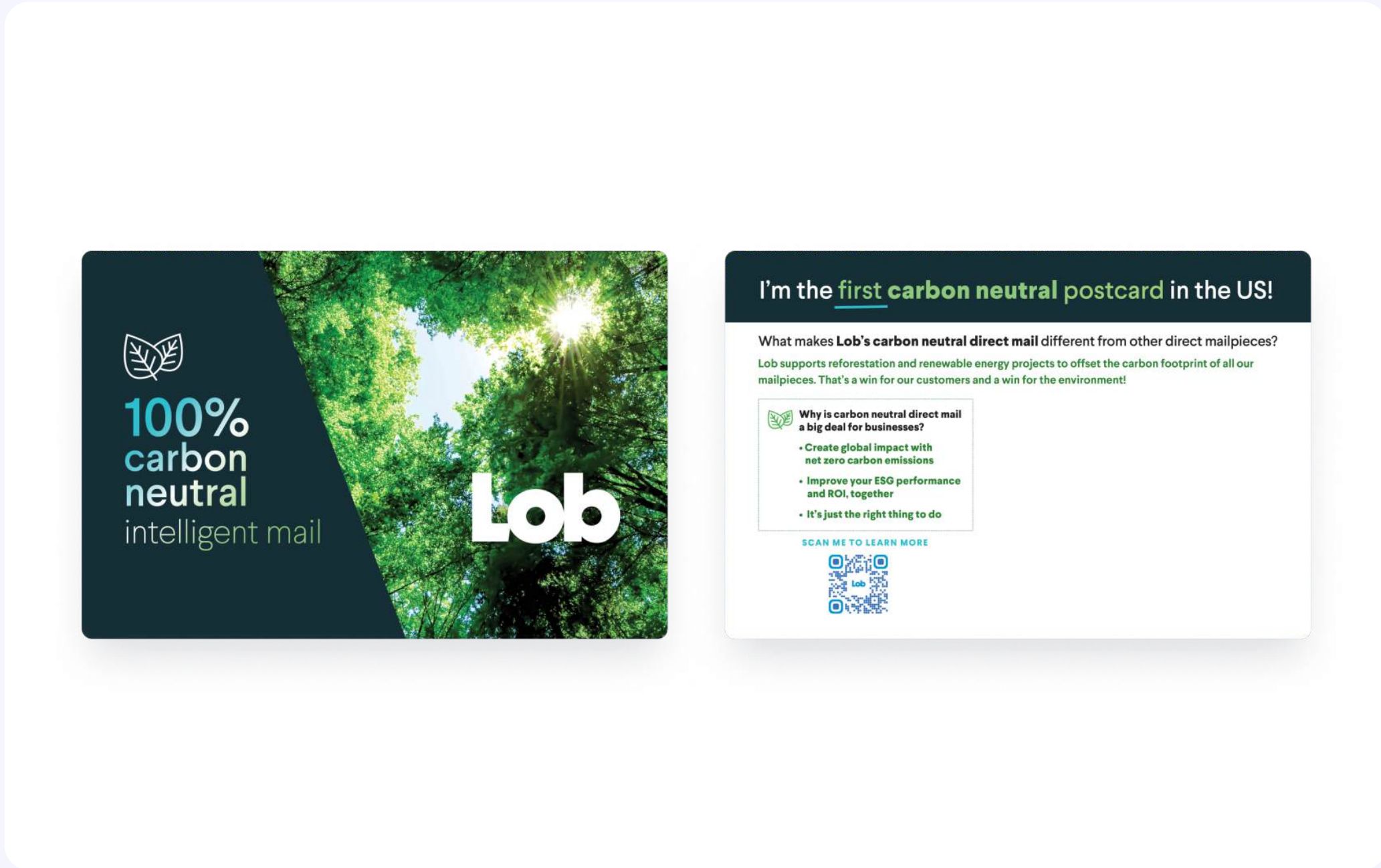
- ✓ **Focus on the main benefit:** Clearly communicate the value your product or service provides. Highlight the problem it solves, the desire it fulfills, or the result it achieves.
- ✓ **Use strong, action-oriented language:** Motivate the reader with verbs that inspire and energize, such as “discover,” “unleash,” “transform,” or “achieve.”
- ✓ **Include numbers and statistics:** Add credibility and concreteness to your offer with specific, quantifiable data. Numbers provide a measurable sense of value.
- ✓ **Ask a question:** Pose a question that relates to the reader's needs, desires, or pain points to create an instant connection and pique their curiosity.
- ✓ **Be bold and provocative:** Don't be afraid to make bold statements or provocative claims that challenge the reader's assumptions or spark their interest.

Keep 'em hooked with persuasive body copy

You've hooked your audience with a snappy headline — now it's time to reel them in with persuasive body copy that supports the headline and CTA.

- Keep it clear, concise, and focused on the reader's benefits.
- Use active voice and action-oriented language.
- Let your brand's personality shine through.
- Highlight exclusive deals or limited-time offers.
- Ensure a logical flow from headline to call to action (CTA).

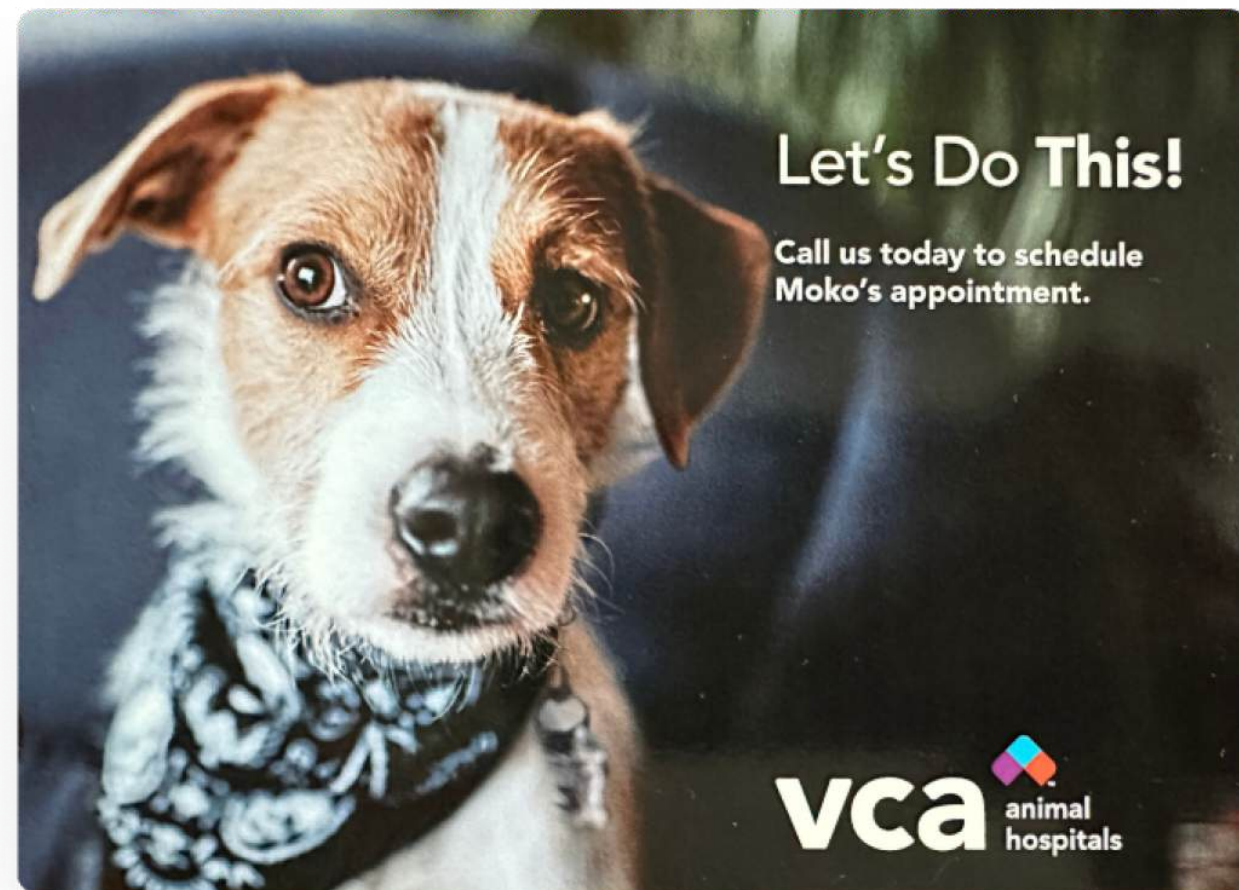
Clever headlines that pique your interest—and copy that holds it



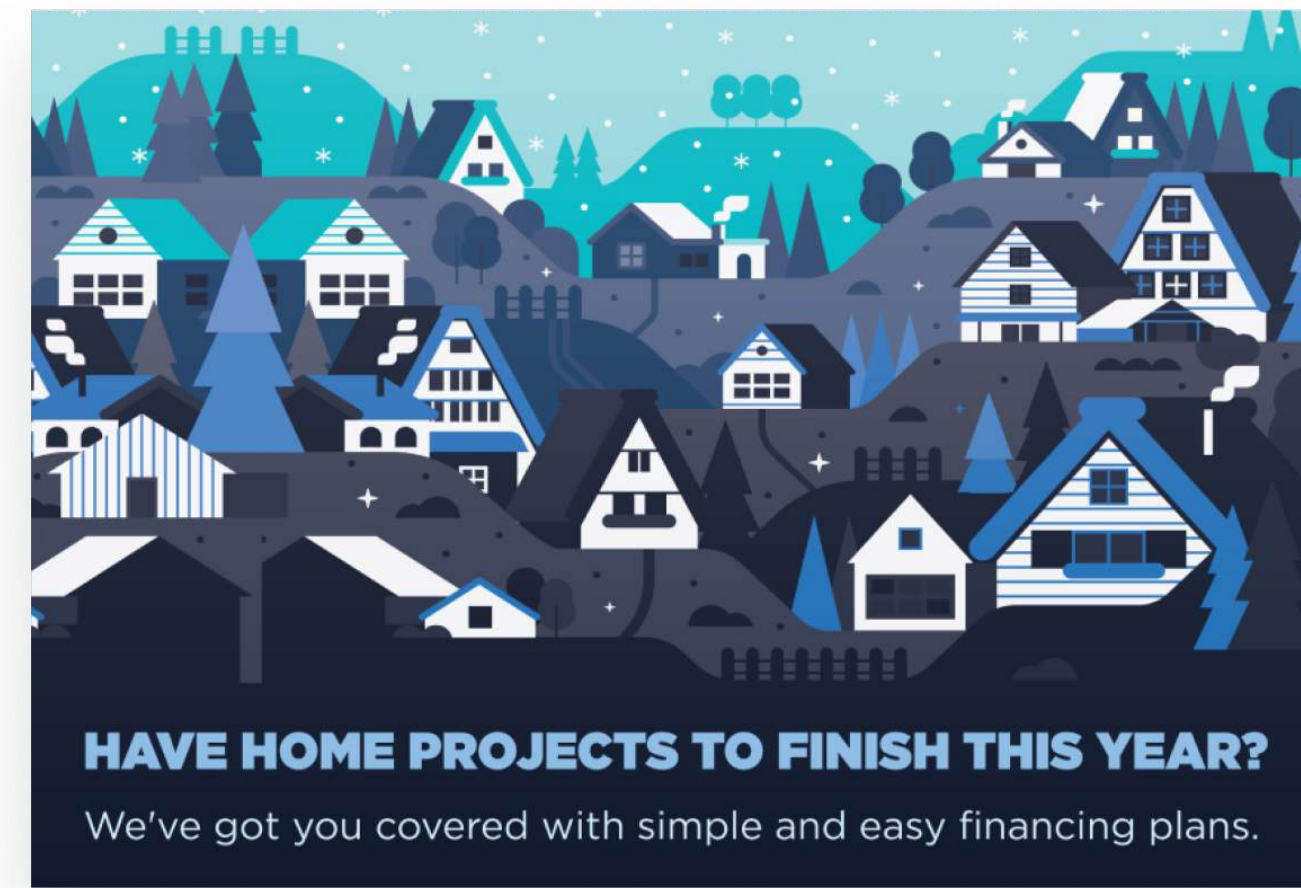
Lob used direct mail postcards to announce the launch of our carbon-neutral direct mail to our customers and prospects. The short, bold headlines make the main message immediately clear, and the minimalist design on the back invites the recipient to read more.



ZipRecruiter's recent customer acquisition strategy features bold colors and a high-impact, to-the-point headline on the outside of the mailer. Inside, the infographic layout helps the facts and figures stand out to the reader.



***VCA Animal Hospital** uses a direct mail postcard with an action-oriented headline to connect with the recipient. Personalized with the pet's first name and relying on short, direct copy, it quickly reminds the owner of any needed vaccinations and pushes them to schedule appointments.*



***Housecall Pro's** direct mail campaign connected with homeowners who may want to wrap up some important home projects before the end of the year. The headline asks a question, which pulls the reader in, and the subhead immediately offers a solution that inspires the reader to flip the piece over to read more.*

Close the deal with a high-performance CTA

Turning your direct mail piece into a conversion machine comes down to crafting a high-performance call to action that your audience simply can't resist.

Types of CTAs in direct mail

There are plenty of ways to create a CTA that gets clicks, calls, and customers. Here are some popular options.

QR codes

These scannable squares can be placed anywhere on your mailer, making it easy for recipients to access additional information, claim an offer, or make a purchase with just a few taps on their smartphone. Make sure that the destination URL is mobile-friendly and optimized for conversions, or you risk losing potential customers along the way.

Personalized URLs (PURLs)

PURLs are unique landing pages for each recipient. By incorporating the recipient's name or other personal details into the URL (e.g., www.yourcompany.com/johnsmith), you create a sense of exclusivity and relevance that continues with a tailored landing page.

Email

By including an email address on your direct mail piece and inviting recipients to reach out with questions, feedback, or to claim an offer, you create a low-pressure way for them to engage with your brand. Create an email address that's easy to remember and type (avoid long strings of characters), and put a system in place to promptly respond to inquiries.

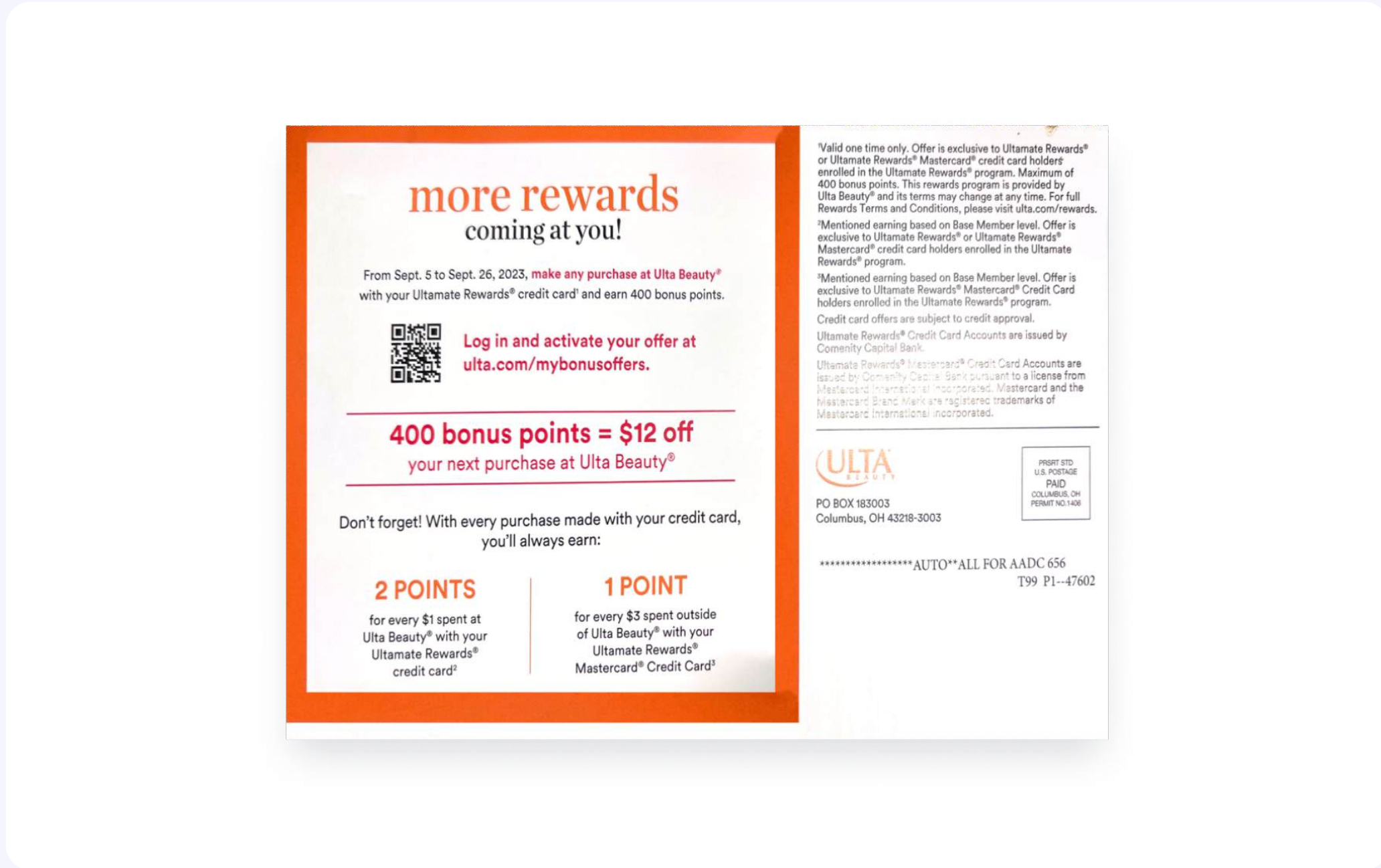
Phone numbers

By providing a dedicated phone line for recipients to call with questions or concerns or to take advantage of an offer, you create an opportunity for human connection and personalized service that can set your brand apart.

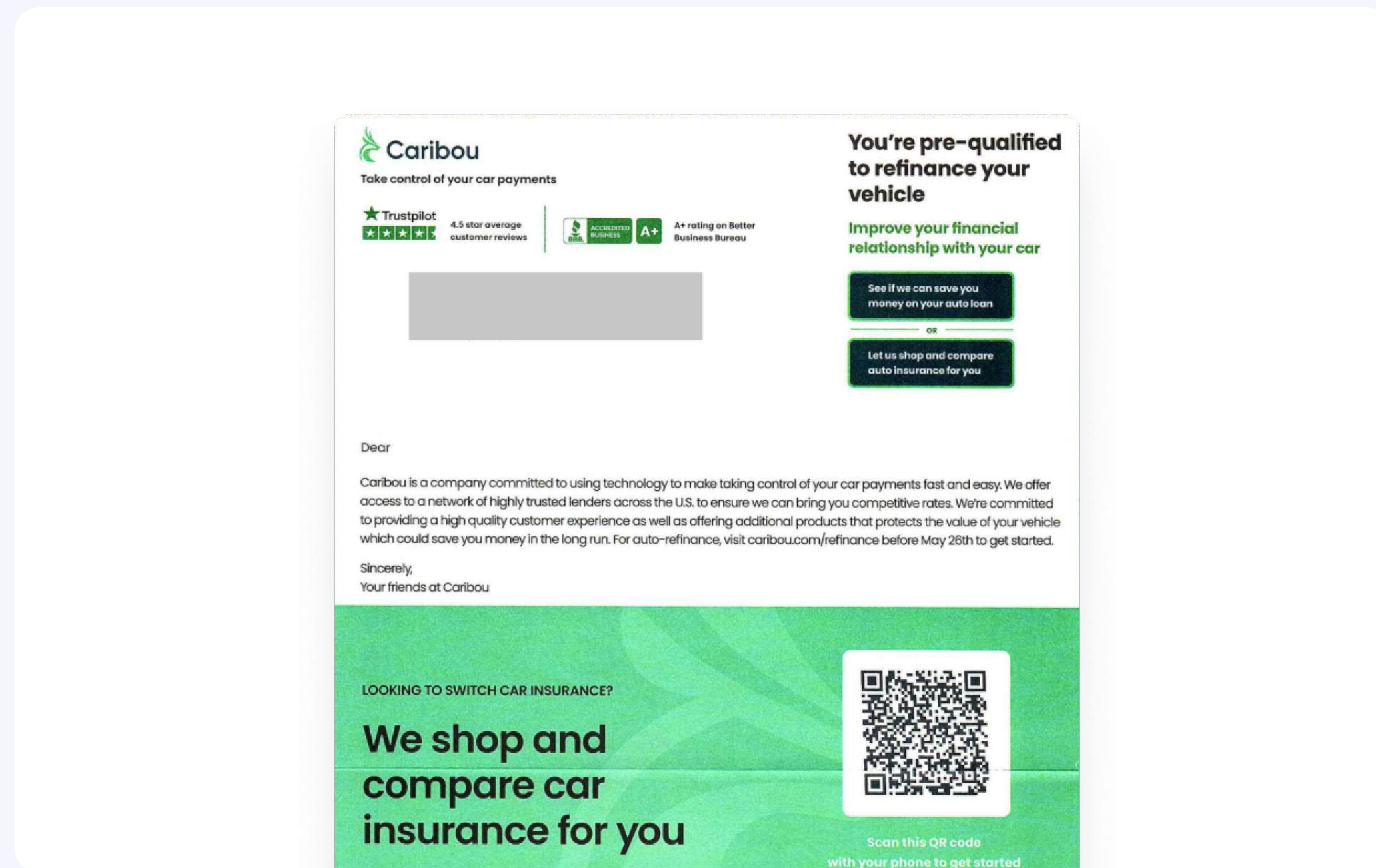
Compelling CTAs and flexible formats give readers every opportunity to learn more



Hudson Grace used a unique direct mail postcard with a sensory element to introduce and promote its Sweet Basil kitchen candle. And as for calls-to-action, the piece relied on a barcode to shop this specific candle as well as a QR code to explore the brand’s other candle offerings.



This direct mail campaign for Ulta Beauty was focused on reactivating customers. The piece offered numerous ways to take action, including a scannable QR code and a short URL that led the reader to activate bonus offers online.



In this example, Caribou uses a direct mail letter format to inform consumers that they were prequalified to refinance their cars. After opening the letter, readers could follow up by visiting a custom URL to learn more about their unique offer, or by scanning the accompanying QR code.



This tri-fold mailer for Select Home Warranty includes plenty of space to highlight the benefits of its service and explain its plan options. And for readers wanting to learn more, Select Home Warranty gave recipients nearly every option: a phone number to call, a website with a custom URL, and a QR code to scan to learn more.

4 steps to create CTAs that work

Where you place your CTA is just as crucial as what it says.

Follow these tips to ensure your CTA gets noticed:

- 1. Make it visible:** Your CTA should be impossible to miss, even at a glance. Position it prominently, typically at the end of the main body of your mail piece or as a standout element on its own. Another way to make your CTA stand out is to use contrasting colors or a bright, bold hue that draws the eye. Surround it with plenty of white space so it doesn't get lost in a sea of text or images.
- 2. Keep it simple:** Avoid jargon and complicated instructions. Use action-oriented words like "Call Now," "Scan Here," "Visit," or "Apply Today."
- 3. Incentivize:** Pair your CTA with an incentive, such as a coupon code. Phrases like "For a limited time only" or "Exclusive offer" can create a sense of urgency.
- 4. Test, test, test:** There's no need to put all your chips in one basket. Continuous testing and optimization are key to understanding what works with your audience. Send out a couple variations, compete 'em head to head and see who wins.

You've hooked your audience with a snappy headline — now it's time to reel them in with persuasive body copy that supports the headline and CTA.

Want more juicy tips on CTAs?

7 Ways to Measure the Impact
of Your Direct Mail

[Learn more](#)

Direct mail personalization

Make it personal, no matter the scale.

Personalization matters – even simple steps like adding the recipient’s name can boost response rates by 44%, according to [research by RIT](#). And, [68% of consumers](#) are more likely to engage with a message that’s personalized to them. Here are four key ways to personalize direct mail effectively for your campaign:

Name and behavioral personalization

What: Incorporate the recipient’s name and tailor content based on their past interactions or purchase history.

For example: Online retailer thredUP sends postcards with product recommendations based on previous purchases, dynamically populating each piece with the customer’s name and relevant images. They saw a massive 25% increase in order rates from customers targeted with personalized postcards.

Geographic personalization

What: Tailor mail to reflect the geographic location and community of the recipient. Use local imagery and references to connect with recipients on a community level.

For example: Inside Real Estate sends branded postcards to neighbors when a nearby home is listed, featuring an image of the seller’s home.

Trigger-based personalization

What: Sending direct mail based on specific customer actions or significant dates. Automate mail to send when customers hit certain triggers, like abandoning a cart, reaching an account milestone, or after a period of inactivity.

For example: ThirdLove targets email unsubscribers with personalized direct mail offers, finding that this group responds exceptionally well to tangible, customized offers.

Make it personal

See examples of the best direct mail campaigns using 1:1 personalization.

[Read it now](#)

Pair digital + direct – The ultimate conversion pathway

While we sing the praises of direct all day long, we also know the power of the partnership between direct and digital. When paired together creatively, the multi-touch magic really starts to happen. Here's a few ideas to pair your channel strategies:

<i>Channel pairing</i>	<i>What to do</i>
Direct mail + email	Tease a new product release via direct mail to generate pre-sale buzz and then follow up on launch day with an email that lets customers buy immediately.
Direct mail + paid social	Get in the door (literally) with direct mail and then use tracking pixels to retarget your audience with paid social media posts.
Direct mail + SMS	SMS is ideal for time-sensitive communications and can be used to help a piece of direct mail by following up if a customer hasn't taken action on a piece of mail they received. Or, if they visited a website, you could follow up with an extra incentive via SMS to get them to convert.

Direct mail testing and optimization

Fine-tune your mail machine for better results.

Another critical piece of strong conversion is testing your campaigns (and measuring results). Adopting an experiment-minded approach turns each campaign into a mini-lab, where every tweak provides valuable insights. By testing different elements of your mail, you can identify which tactics catch your audience's attention, which drive action, and which might be missing the mark. Here's two of the primary testing approaches:

- **A/B testing:** This method involves changing one variable at a time to see how it impacts performance. For instance, you could test two different CTAs to see which one generates more opens or clicks.
- **Multivariate testing:** This allows you to change several variables at once, for example, altering both the design and the messaging of a direct mail piece to see which combination performs the best. This is best supported by a direct mail solution provider so you can carefully set up the campaign and track results.

Once you determine your testing approach, here's a few practical steps to apply:

1. **Define your objective:** Clearly identify what you want to achieve with each campaign, whether it's increasing sign-ups or boosting sales.
2. **Select your variables:** Choose elements like layout, content, offers, or CTA placement to modify between test groups.
3. **Segment your audience:** Divide your audience into groups to receive different versions of your campaign.
4. **Measure and analyze:** Use tracking tools to measure the results from each group. Analyze which variations perform best and why.



TL;DR

Get more from your marketing. Period.

- 1. Direct mail is a conversion machine** that can help you acquire new customers, retain existing ones, and drive sales like nobody's business. In fact, 85% of marketers agree that direct mail delivers the best conversion rate of all the channels they use, and 84% agree it delivers the best response rate.
- 2. Crafting a killer direct mail piece is all about nailing the design, copy, and call-to-action.** Get creative, get personal, and get results! After all, 68% of consumers are more likely to engage with a message/communication from brands that are personalized to them.
- 3. Integrating your direct mail efforts with your digital marketing strategy is like the peanut butter and jelly of marketing – they're just better together.** We know that 72% of marketers use direct mail with email, and it's no wonder why.
- 4. Testing and measuring your campaigns is non-negotiable.** Embrace your inner data nerd and let those metrics guide you. Consider that 82% of marketers are increasing their direct mail spend, so ensure you get the most bang for your buck by continuously optimizing your campaigns.
- 5. Choose the right tech stack.** Modern marketers depend on tools and technology to support their efforts and get the right outcomes. The right direct mail software won't just save you time, it will help automate your campaigns, deliver personalization features and integrate with your other systems for complete omni-channel campaigns. For automated direct mail, Lob is the industry leader for and today's largest senders of direct mail. [Learn more here.](#)

If you keep these strategies in mind, the world of direct mail is yours for the taking. **And if you ever need a little inspiration or guidance along the way, just remember – Lob's got your back.** Happy mailing!

Lob

Ready to get started?

Turn direct mail into a conversion machine

Book a demo