

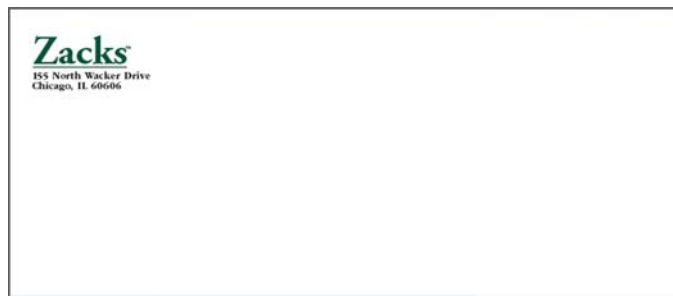
Direct Mail: 4 Counterintuitive envelope-opening strategies that could double or triple your response

By Craig Huey

The first step in direct mail to build a successful and profitable lead generation program is to ensure that your envelope gets opened and read. Studies show you only have 1.2 seconds to sell a prospect on opening your mail.

Follow these strategies to help guarantee your outer envelope gets opened by more prospects:

Strategy #1: Personalize. Direct marketing at its core is all about one-on-one communication. For some recipients, a clean envelope, like this one I created for Zacks, carries a feeling of exclusivity...



Envelopes with stark white space can enhance brand recognition while creating exclusivity.

This works well for Zacks because of the name recognition.

Another way to personalize your envelope is to print the recipient's name and address in a handwritten font. This strategy has worked extremely well for many investment marketers, including Ken Fisher, and it can work for you, too.



Using a print font that gives the illusion of an envelope that's hand-addressed is a proven way to generate increased response.

Strategy #2: Tease Copy. The only purpose of your envelope is to have it be ripped open by the prospect. To do that, you need to create a feeling of curiosity, surprise, drama or interest.

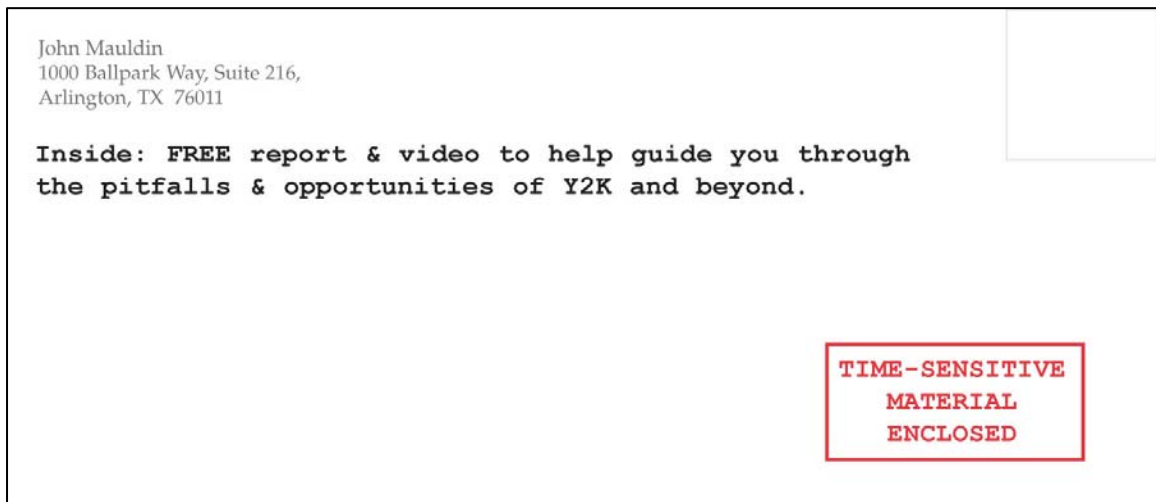
Successful copy on the outside of the envelope never tells the entire story. Recipients never have a reason to throw it away because they feel like they already know what's going to be said.

That's why so many ROI-pulling envelopes rely on the technique of bulleted copy. Take a look at these examples:

- **3 Little-known investment secrets**
- **The #1 investment blunder**
- **Little-known ways investors put their money at risk**
- **How you can be ready for the new changes in Title II**
- **7 surprising investment forecasts for 2009**

These types of tease bullets help drive reader interest. They can also be used as stand-alone headlines, or as a variety of bullet copy points as shown.

Here's a different example of teaser copy on an envelope I did for John Mauldin's Millennium Investments...



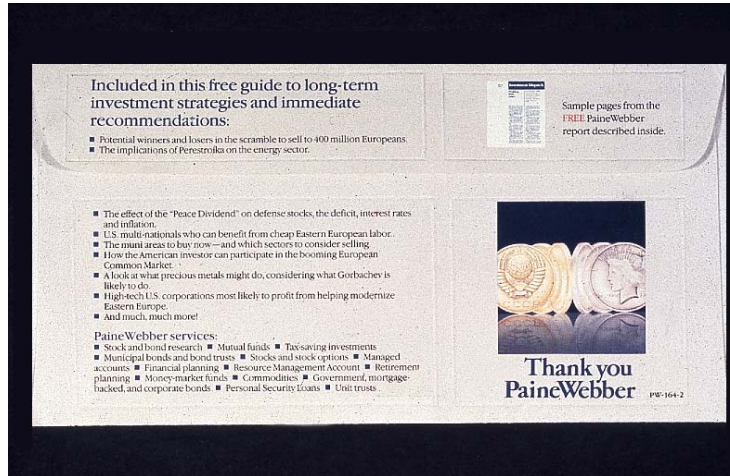
The only criteria for good outer envelope teaser copy is that the recipient will tear open the envelope to read your sales letter inside.

Great outer envelope teaser copy that increases the value of your direct mail message is short and doesn't give away too much information, avoids humor, is highly charged and emotional, can use fear as a motivator, sounds urgent, sets a theme for the promotion inside and gives your prospect a reason why he or she should open your envelope and keep reading...all within regulatory guidelines.

Incidentally, tease copy helps grab attention even if no one has ever heard of you before.

Strategy #3: Use the back side. Envelope backs can work wonders for boosting response. This is a great place to provide even greater curiosity.

Look at the backside of this envelope for Paine Weber:

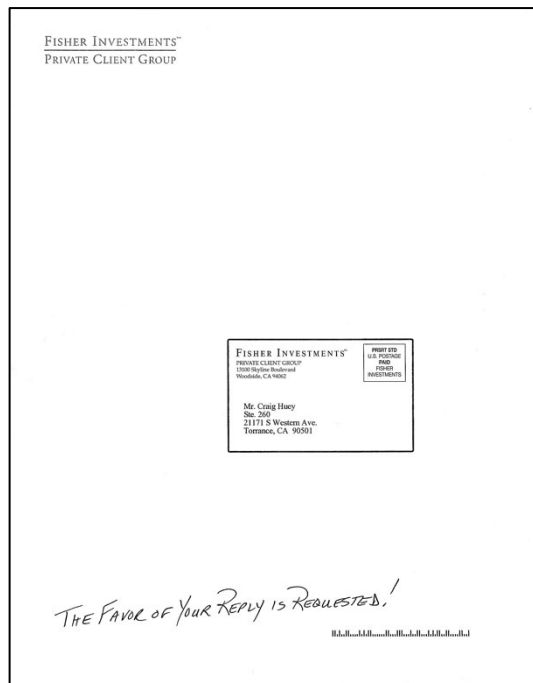


Your curiosity factor can be continued on the back of your envelope...another ROI generator.

Strategy #4: Pick the right size and type. In direct marketing, you have a variety of envelope sizes and shapes that can be used to draw attention. Each of you is familiar with the most common—the #10 business envelope. It remains a tried and true response-puller.

However, if you want to stand out in the mailbox, you might want to consider a 6 X 9 which might be able to give you an increase in response. Even more powerful is the 11 X 14 or the #14 because these dramatically stand out and almost always increase response although these envelopes cost a little more.

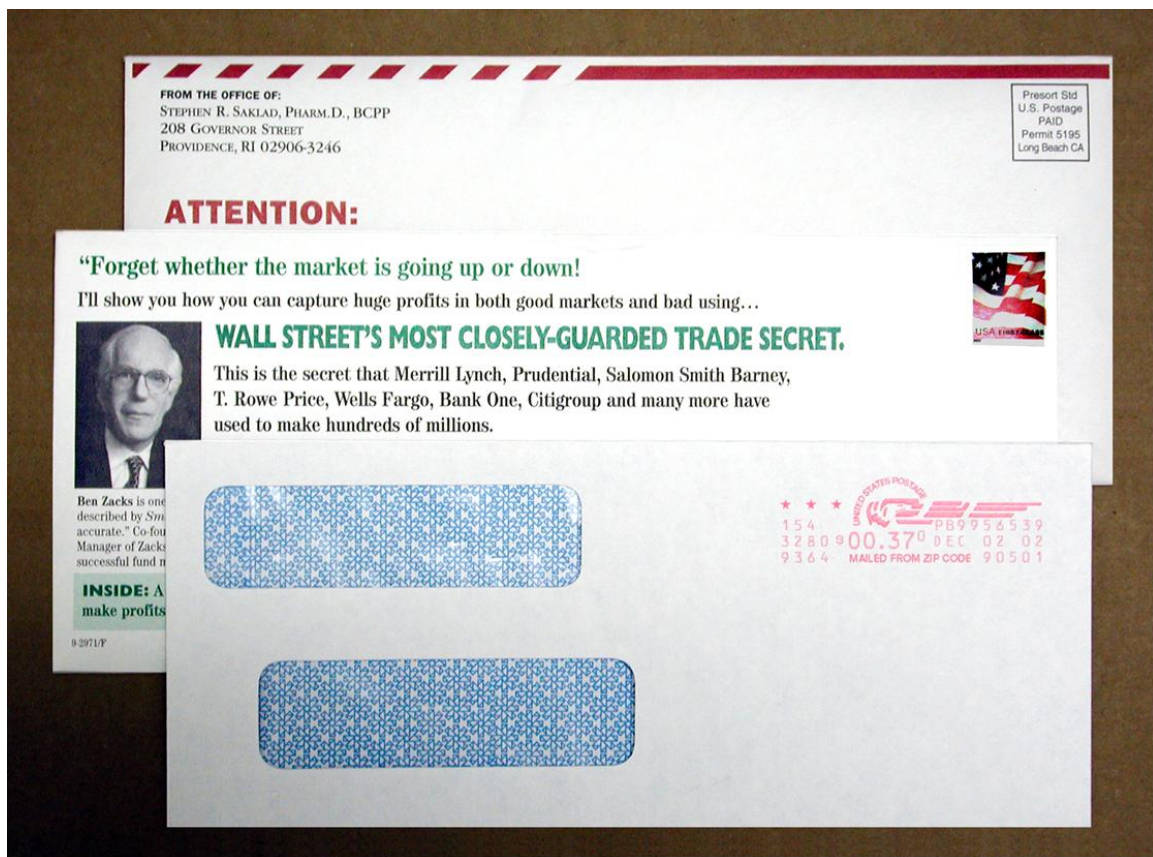
This 11 X 14 open end (or “catalog envelope”) is what Ken Fisher is currently mailing:



Ken Fisher's current envelope is a direct response triple play: over-sized, white space that enhances his brand and the use of a "hand-written" font for a personal touch.

Strategy #5: Prompt readership with postage. Here are my three postage options financial advisors should use to their advantage:

- 1) The pre-canceled stamp. A pre-canceled stamp is a real postage stamp sans a printed numerical cents value; they're also called "bulk rate." You've seen these most recently as the "American flag" stamp. A pre-canceled stamp creates the highest emotional bond with its recipient and gives you a 10% to 15% higher return than printed indicia.
- 2) Metered mail. You'll see a 10% to 12% increase in response using a metered envelope.
- 3) Printed indicia. A pre-printed indicia will give you no benefit in response and should be your last choice.



Postage choices can attract or repel readership. Shown here are the pre-printed indicia, pre-canceled stamp and metered mail.

Strategy #6. Test. Creating a compelling outer envelope takes finesse, and should always be accompanied by extensive testing.

I've seen investment marketers generate thousands of quality leads by a personalized envelope. But I've seen teaser copy usually work better, generating a lower cost per lead. You won't know until you test.

Here's an interesting test I did with money manager Jim Collins. Which envelope do you think worked best? One beat the other by 36%.

Envelope A

SNEAK PREVIEW!
 “Here’s where America’s #1 stock advisor for the past 10 years plans to invest **\$1.32 million of his own money in 1999!**”
 (HINT: One place is a stock he calls “the next Microsoft”...see page 7)
 Jim Collins, rated #1 by the *Hubert Financial Digest*, not just for one year or two years, but for **10 years**, through 8/31/98, with a 26.4%* total annual average return and a 941%* compounded return.
 * Past Performance is no guarantee of future gains. Latest one-year track record of recommendations available upon request.
 7-2365-A

Envelope B

“#1 for 10 years!”
THE TOP 5 PERFORMANCES
FOR 10 YEARS—67 NEWSLETTERS MONITORED

	Total Return
1. OTC INSIGHT.....	26.4%
2. MPT Review.....	19.1%
3. The Chartist.....	18.9%
4. Timer Digest.....	18.8%
5. Fundline.....	17.5%

Through 8/31/98—according to the *Hubert Financial Digest*
 Jim Collins has been editor of America’s #1 newsletter not just for one year, three years or even five years. But 10 years running!
 Open to discover little-known stocks where he plans to invest \$1.32 million of his own money in 1999 (see page 1).
 Stocks that can easily double your money in virtually all markets!
 7-2365-B

Thousands of quality leads could be riding on your envelope...which one of these envelopes outperformed the other by 36%?

Envelope choices and great copy affect your response. As does who's on your mailing list—and how you use that information. Next time we meet, I'll talk about the secrets of finding and using mailing lists to boost response. See you then.

CDMG, Inc. president and founder Craig Huey is internationally recognized for consulting with a wide variety of businesses—small, medium and large. His straightforward direct marketing advice works with turning entrepreneurs into millionaires and ideas into even larger fortunes for the multibillion-dollar corporation.

He is also a leading consultant in copywriting, Internet strategies and profit-improvement systems. Craig's articles appear in publications such as *Inc.*, *AdAge*, *Sales & Marketing Management Magazine*, *The Los Angeles Business Journal*, *Direct* and others. For more information, please visit www.cdmginc.com or call 310-212-5727.