



Nick: Hey everybody, Nick Nanton here. Welcome to our One-on-One call for the month. And I've got a cool call for you... a super great lady named Alice Mishica is on the line. She is the owner of Specialized Mailing and she does lots of very cool stuff with mail. And so Alice, welcome to the call.

Alice: Hi Nick. How are you today?

Nick: I am doing great, thank you. So let's talk a little bit about direct mail. Obviously, you guys do a lot of pretty interesting things with direct mail. Direct mail seemingly is not the most obvious choice for a lot of people. They think e-mail is the way to go because it is free, and who sends mail anymore? And even better yet, and I love this mentality, postage keeps going up, so I'm definitely not going to send anything by mail. I love that mentality because that means there's less people mailing to the mailboxes I want to get into. While I don't love that they keep increasing postage, it does however become a competitive advantage if you can still afford to mail.

So the thing I just want to go and explain real quick is why I think mail works so well – when used correctly. And the reason why I talk about it is because a lot of us use e-mail marketing and there's absolutely nothing wrong with it. It is effectively free, though there's some cost obviously.

Now, we all get hundreds of emails a day. First, there's correspondence from family and friends. Then there's newsletters and mail blasts from other marketing gurus or from Amazon.com or Zappos – and even stuff you're interested in. Some of that stuff you will want, maybe newsletters you've signed up for because you're a big fan of photography or bird watching or whatever.

Then we'll just go to some straight junk like all the phishing scams and that stuff. So basically, we all just take the junk and the scams and we just delete them. The other category of newsletters and other things we get, is the one we're really interested in.

We're going to keep those and just read them when we can and delete the rest.

And then we're also going to go down to the personal correspondence section, which is, "Hey Alice, what date is this mailing?" All these things. That's what our e-mail inbox looks like.

I always ask people, "By a show of hands, how many of you get regular, personal correspondence in your mailbox?" Maybe one percent of hands go up and probably not even a show of one percent.

But the fact of the matter is when you do good mail pieces, whether it's a newsletter or something else, it is the closest thing to personal correspondence someone is getting in their mailbox. The difference why your value is so much higher in the mailbox is because it is the closest thing to personal correspondence as opposed to an e-mail box. Even if we use the same writing style, the same format in the e-mail inbox, it's never going to rank as high because they have a lot more personal correspondence. So you go to #1 rank in the mailbox much faster than you do in the e-mail inbox.

So Alice, let's talk a little bit about how you have been helping clients now for years with direct mail. Obviously one of the things you're known for is tear sheets.

Alice: Well, we started doing tear sheets over 20 years ago with Gary Halbert. He kind of perfected the whole ambience of recreating, basically, an article that has been written in a newspaper or a magazine. Then we tear it out, fold it up and put a little Post-It note on it with a personal message, "Nick, thought you'd be interested. J." And then, either hand-address them or ink jet address them using a handwriting font and send them out. I've been doing thousands and thousands and thousands



of those for a lot of years.

A couple of things that got their start with newspaper tear sheets are Metorex. Then there was the Doctor Atkins' diet book – that was one. Those are some of the things that really got their start a lot of years ago and are still going strong.

Nick: Awesome. So let's talk a little bit about the personalized mail, the little sticky notes and stuff in there, like the Post-It. There are real interesting angles to that. I've heard that, and you can tell us if this is true or not, that 'J' is the most common first name initial? Isn't that why it's used?

Alice: Yeah, somebody did some research and figured out that "J" was the most common initial around.

Nick: Yeah, when I first got one I kind of freaked out because I got this newspaper article. It was addressed to me, hand addressed on the front. The envelope was a white envelope with no return address, which we call Sneak Up Mailing.

It was a full newspaper, like a sheet that looks like it's torn out of the newspaper, just like you said, article on both sides. It was folded strategically so that when I opened it up, it had the article it wanted me to read, which is an advertorial or article in a sales letter format, something that is meant to sell. And it had a Post-It Note and said, "Nick, thought you'd enjoy this" or "thought you'd want to see this," or something like that and was signed, "- J". And so I was like, "Who sent this to me?" I'm trying to think who's John, Joe, Jim? And what's most intriguing about it is that it actually looks and feels like someone took a white envelope out, tore something out of the newspaper, folded it up neatly and put a Post-It Note on the inside of it and then they hand-addressed the envelope and stamped it.

Comparing hand-addressing envelopes with using an ink jet font – an ink jet font is obviously a little less expensive. You tell me Alice, based on what you've heard, I would imagine the ink jet address doesn't perform quite as well as the handwriting.

Alice: Well, I've never had a client that wanted to do a head-to-head with the two, which is a little disappointing. I've got people who will only do the handwriting. They won't even test the ink jet addressing and they just dig in their heels. And other people, because we try really hard to kind of screw it up a little bit and it's not this perfect little straight-across line and everything's not lined up in perfect order on the address. And a lot of times when people see that, right off the bat they say, "I don't even want to bother doing the regular hand-addressing. I'll just do the ink addressing." And they have fine results with it.

Nick: Cool. Some of the stuff you just said is really important for people to note, too, if you're going to send out pieces, particularly if they are Sneak Up mailings, as I call them. Again, you don't want people to know who sent them. You just want them to open them. It's really important, actually, to have some irregularity to the writing on the front and with the stamps. We've heard Dan Kennedy say multiple times that the more stamps the better! If it's a weird dollar amount you have to put on it to send it, don't just try to get a stamp machine printed to that exact amount or use two stamps. If you can, do it with four stamps.

YOU DON'T WANT IT TO BE PERFECT. You want the stamps to be a little crooked. It's also got to be legible, and certainly some people have a little bit of a problem with it, saying, "Hey, I'm a professional service provider. I don't want it to look sloppy." That is true. You usually want to use more of those types of tactics, kind of a little sloppy and a little more irregular, when you're doing Sneak Up mailings than you would something on your own letterhead or something similar.

Anything else to add there, Alice?

Alice: Well it's just always fun to go ahead and put little extra things on the envelope, and personalize it. It's effective.

Nick: That's awesome. I think the coolest part everyone needs to get out of this call is that direct mail works great. You have to know how to do it. You have to do it right. Certainly I recommend Alice to you and just how do they reach you if they want to find you?

Alice: Well I'm at SpecializedMailing.com. That has all my contact information or they can call me here at Specialized Mailing. Phone number's there. Everything's there.

Nick: Okay. Very cool. And just a reminder you heard her on this call. Alice, I appreciate it and I look forward to doing some more mailings with you. Actually, I know we have one coming up shortly. So thank you very much.

Alice: Great, great. Thanks Nick. Have a fun afternoon.

Nick: You too. Take care! ★

(This is an abridged version of this interview. For reasons of space, we were unable to replicate the interview in its entirety. The complete version with the many detailed tips and techniques you might wish to use in your own presentations is available to you for the asking. For a copy of the complete interview, contact mandy@dnagency.com and request one.)