

Learn how you can boost your catalog performance by targeting your ideal customers

TARGET YOUR AUDIENCE BOOST PERFORMANCE



Introduction

One of the greatest benefits of including a mail order catalog program in marketing strategy is the freedom it allows to target a specific group of customers. Research can help you narrow down a specific group of people who are most likely to purchase your brand. By targeting a select customer base, your catalog will be more successful than you might think.

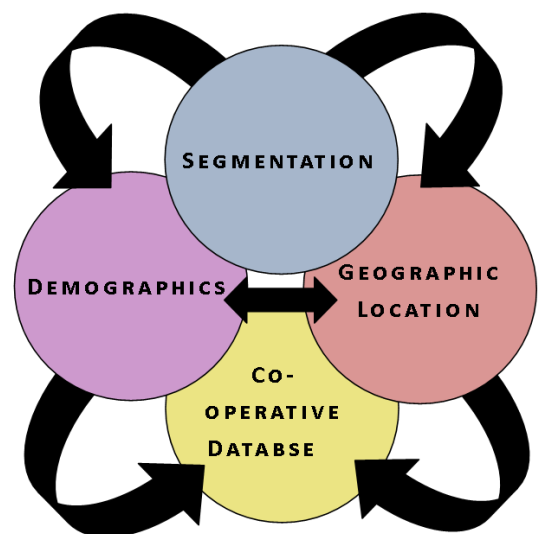
Target Your Audience

Let's go back to grammar school. "Know thy audience." It is one of the first things we learn about writing. It is also one of the most important rules. The same applies with any art and that includes marketing. If you want to reach someone, you must first know who you're reaching out to. Some success may come from blind reaching; however, if you can target your customer the success rate is much higher. An article on the *Small Business Resource Network* titled [Why Marketing Fails; Why Marketing Works](#) explains that "reaching the target market is fundamental to the success of a marketing program." The article continues: "Too many companies purchase large mailing lists, spend a great deal of time and effort developing a quality direct mail piece, send it out, and then nothing happens. Failure, in this case, is the result of using the wrong mailing list. If the recipients aren't interested in your message, nothing will happen. The key is to identify an audience that's interested in your message."

In order to target your customers, you must first identify their needs. Good advice. But, how on earth does one succeed at that? With a large mailing list how do you target market to individuals rather than just blind mail to them? Let's take a look at one way that will help you *target market* your mail list and get the most out of your catalog. After all, if you're going to spend all that money and disburse all that creativity then, let's face it, you deserve to see a **Return On Investment (ROI)**. So let's get those catalogs on to the coffee tables of your intended shoppers.

Consider the following from PSPrint [How Do I Make a Mailing List?](#)

Amateur marketers often make the mistake of mailing to a broad list, falsely believing that the more types of people they send their offer to, the better their chances of success. But smart marketers take few risks. They know not only who their target audience is, but who their target customer is. They give this customer a name, a biography, a life; and they market to that one person. Your target customer is your very best customer – the one responsible for most of your success. The perfect mailing list is then comprised of carbon copies of this customer.



Segmentation

A great way to achieve at target marketing is through segmentation. It is much easier to target a market after you've done your research. Social media sites come in handy for studying a brand's followers or network. So the first thing to do is to begin by segmenting your network. An article [What Are the Benefits of List Segmentation to Direct Marketers?](#) explains "If you use direct marketing to market

your business and generate sales of your products or services, you may simply send marketing materials to each person on your list every time you want to make sales. However, segmenting your list may offer several advantages that can help increase sales and sustain your business." There are many ways to achieve segmentation, however, for the purposes of this paper we're going to look at three models of segmentation: *demographics; geographic location; and cooperative databases*. Three extremely beneficial pieces of information that can help you target your shoppers.

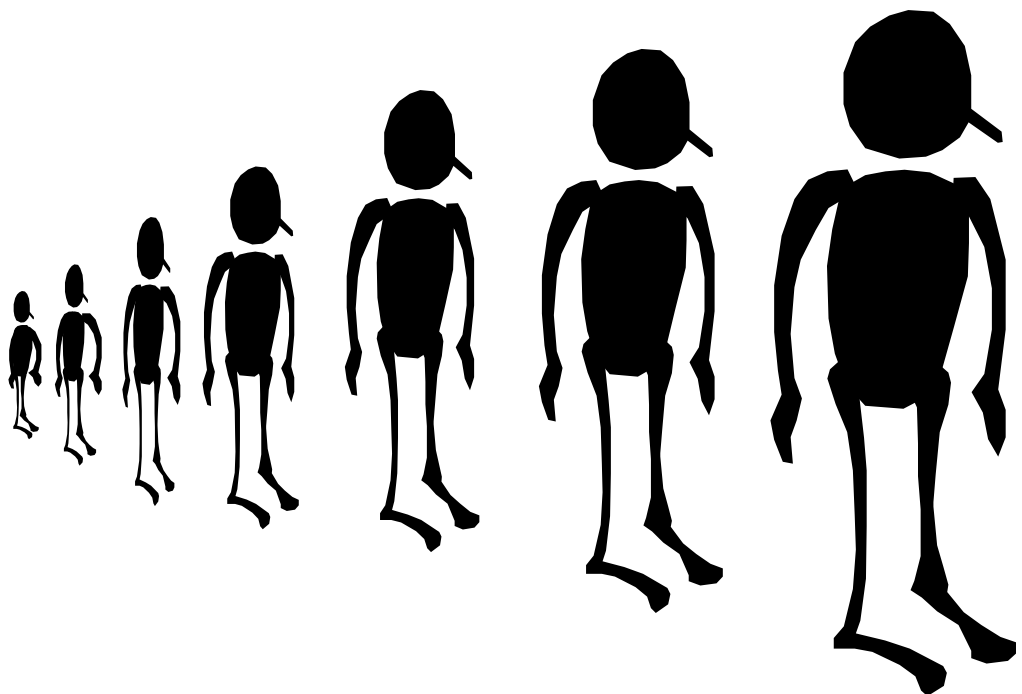
By testing your own list over multiple mailings you can begin the segmentation process, getting an idea of who is buying your products by performing demographic and geographic research.

Segmentation means to divide the marketplace into parts, or segments, which are definable, accessible, actionable, and profitable and have a growth potential. In other words, a company would find it impossible to target the entire market, because of time, cost and effort restrictions.

From [Economic Times](#)

Demographics: An article from the [Business Owner's Toolkit](#) explains that demographics "can help you in two very important ways. First, it can help you make changes to your product or service itself, to better match your customer's needs. Second, this information can also tell you how to reach your customers through advertising, promotions, etc." For the purposes of this article we are focusing on the second benefit. We want to know how to target your group through direct mail marketing (AKA catalogs) by segmenting our mail lists by demographics. What exactly is this "demographic information" that is so useful. Consider the following information about your customers:

- Gender
- Occupation
- Income
- Age
- Education
- Race/Ethnic Identity
- Religion
- Single/Married
- Size of Family
- Residency



All of the above is information that will determine not only *who* your target audience is, but how you will market to them as well. You probably wouldn't want to try and sell a swimming pool to a single woman who lives on a third floor apartment and makes less than \$40,000 a year. It just doesn't make sense. If you haven't researched the demographics of the customers who have purchased from your mail lists then think about what you are doing because if you get your catalog to a direct buyer you are twice as likely to get a sale. One of the best ways to find this out is to take the customers you have gained from your diverse mail lists and perform demographic studies on them in order to segment them from the non-buyers.

The big question then is how do you do research on these so called buyers? How do you know who is buying and who is not? Moving back to an earlier article we posted [Don't Kill the King: How to Target Your Audience and Save Money](#), we talk about how the most practical thing to do is to test your mail file by measuring your ROI. If hiring a specialist is not an option for your business then there are a few studies you can do on your own to determine who is buying from your direct mail list. Here are a few ideas:

- Insert personalized tracking codes to individual catalogs and document to which household they are sent to
- Use different phone lines and URLs on your catalogs to see who is ordering from where
- Use promotions and promotion codes to track investment
- Segment your house file by zip code and run traceable promotions and see which segment is stronger.
- Cross reference your social media files with your house-files and longtime purchasers

With this now segmented list you can create a customer profile for what will be the ideal customer you want to expand your list to include. You create the customer profile based upon demographics: their household income, their marital status, their age, and gender. How?

There are lists for purchase that have demographic information included, so that is one option. A list purchased with demographics included might look something like this:

Last Name	First Name	Demographic
Walker	Jennifer	Whatever the category may be

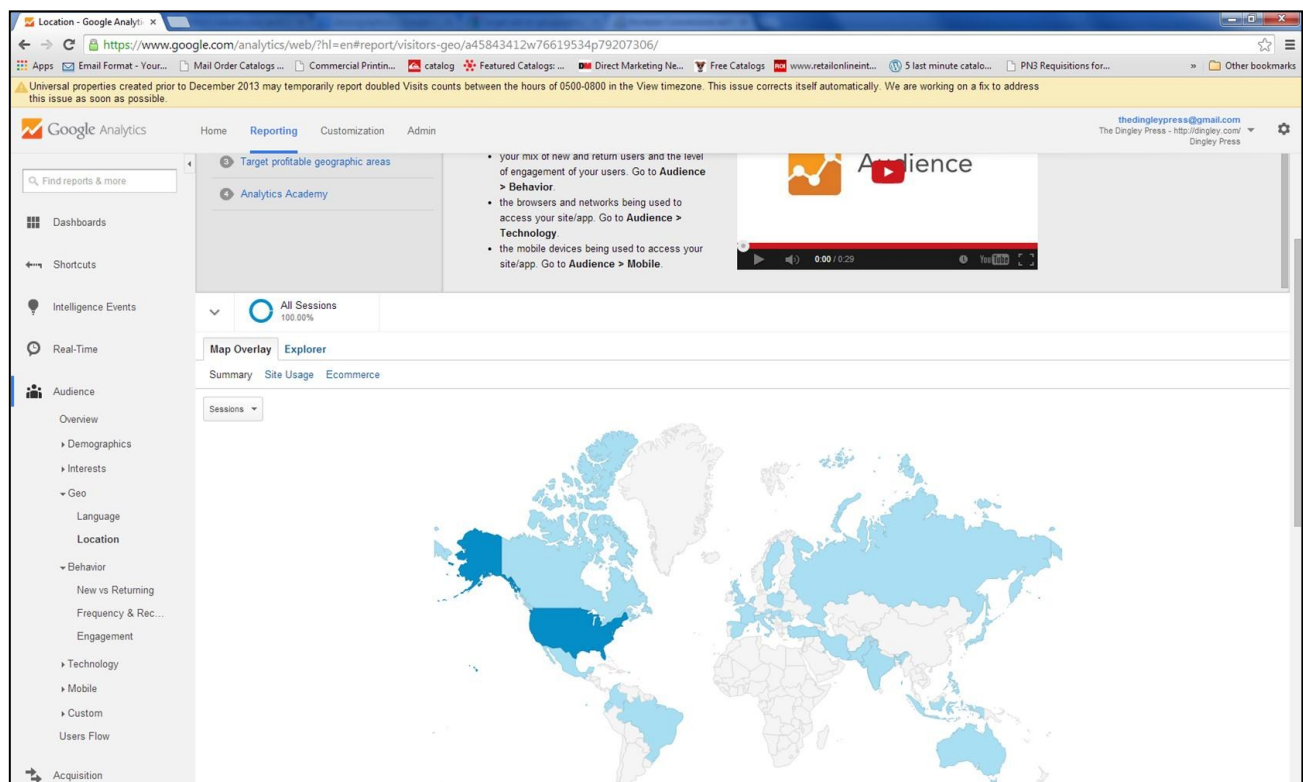
If, however, purchasing a new list seems too risky for you, why not try doing some demographic studies on your own. Cross referencing your purchasers with your followers on social media sites such as Facebook or Twitter; sending out surveys; asking questions upon time of purchase are all ways to find out who your purchaser is. Once you have a pretty good idea of who is purchasing your product then it's time to expand your list by using geographic data.

Geographic Location

After creating your consumer profile, targeting a location with high statistics related to your profile can help you find new potential customers for your catalog. For example, if I am selling horse gear and my targeted customer profile consisted of mostly women in their 30's whom lived in a rural area, then a search can be conducted as to which zip codes are heavily displayed with these statistics. [Zip Skinny](#) is a free site that allows you to view demographics and statistics of select zip codes. Once you have narrowed down to a zip you can send out test runs to segments of the population. Slimjim catalogs are great for this. You can measure your ROI from these areas and add your new customers to your master list.

Another way to target a group geographically is by monitoring Google Analytics to determine from what geographic location the most interest is being generated.

Likewise, there are other demographics that Google Analytics measures from your web traffic. Age, gender, location, the amount of time spent on each landing page. There is much that can be determined this way. In fact, if you are looking to create your own mail list from scratch, this could theoretically be a good place to start.



Cooperative Database

In a blog hosted on the Datamann website [It's Not Always the Fault of Merchandise](#), VP Bill Lapierre explains that “the reason that customers only purchase once is not always related to the nature of the product purchased. There are a host of behaviors to look for among your customers to determine if they are unlikely to make a second purchase from you. Looking for these behaviors should be part of your catalog circulation planning, and your catalog survival strategy.”

One of the most important elements of target marketing that has become popular is that of Cooperative Databases. What is a cooperative database? In simple terms, it is a database of people—customers—and their many purchases and buying behaviors. The database is formed from multiple companies who will participate.

The idea is that if you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours. You provide information about your customers' purchases and in turn you are able to have access to what other customers have purchased from other companies.

In this respect you are able to better target your customers. First, by finding them in the database and seeing what type of items they like to buy and how many purchases they are making. Someone who makes a lot of purchases, for example, is more likely to buy from your catalog than a person who makes very little purchases.

Some of the information that is provided in these databases have been aggregated for decades or more. The beauty of it is that the information you gather about your consumers' buying behaviors can be utilized across channel. You can target market your customers via e-mail, for example, with products you know they are interested in. You are also targeting the customers that are more likely to buy. When put together, that's a powerful tool.



Call To Action

Once you have taken the time to target your customers and really get to know them enough to know what drives them, then it is time for the final stage of your segmentation—the *Call To Action* (CTA).

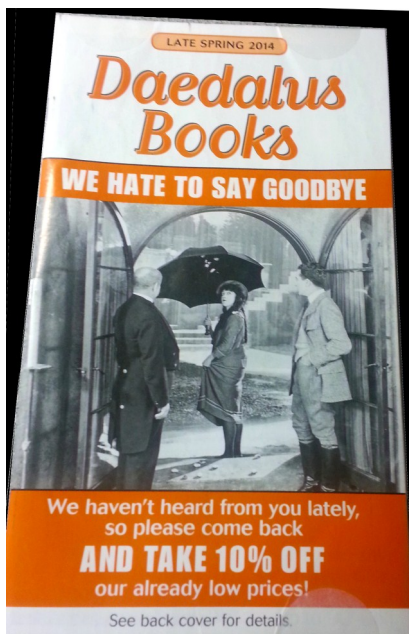
A blog on the Catalog University website states it well that “once you know what motivates [your customer], your ability to craft a message allows you to reach them more effectively and understand not only what they want, but how to encourage action.” (see [Follow Me, Like Me, Order Now ... Blah, Blah, Blah](#)).

The author continues through a series of five tips to help achieve a bolder and more successful CTA. Her third tip is the best “**Make the Call-to-Action a Call-to-Arms**” If you know what drives your consumer now, if you understand their emotional triggers and their shopping behaviors, then this should be simple.

You must entice your customer; reveal to them what they’ll get out of it and follow through with your promises to not to break your credibility. Here’s an example of a Call-to-Arms. If you are a craft beer hobbyist who enjoys brewing beer at home then what would you be more likely to respond to?

A.) Follow Us on Facebook

B.) Like us on Facebook for more tips on how to add hops and other great techniques for a great IPA!



That is an example of a CTA to gain followers on Facebook. To the left is an image from the Daedalus Books 2014 spring catalog. The call to action in this image is to that of previous buyers to buy again. Come make a purchase and save 10%. Their goal here is to reach out to their buyer, in this case it would be me, and make me feel like they care about me and my business. You know what else it tells me? They’ve been doing their research on who’s buying and who isn’t.

Call to action



Conclusion

The hope is to get you thinking about who you are mailing your catalogs out to. If you haven't given your customers the attention they deserve then you won't see the same ROI from your catalog. Blind mailing doesn't always work and certainly does not recruit as many lifetime valued customers. No one wants to get lost in a crowd. Your customers are no different. They want to be shown how important they are. Getting to know or not knowing your customer can make or break your brand. Give it a try. Target market your segments and you may just be surprised how much your ROI will skyrocket.

