SUN PRINT SOLUTIONS

DIRECT MAIL

STATISTICS For Marketing Teams 2026

75+ sourced statistics from USPS,ANA/DMA,Lob, and other leading research authorities.

SUN PRINT SOLUTIONS | 2026

Direct Mail Data Guide 2026: What's Inside

75+ sourced statistics from USPS, ANA/DMA, Lob, PostcardMania, and other leading research authorities — verified, cited, and ready to use in your next campaign brief, leadership presentation, or client proposal.

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4.4%
Average direct mail response rate across all industries
ANA/DMA Response Rate Report

161%
Average ROI for direct mail to house lists
ANA/DMA Response Rate Report

85%
Of Gen Z and Millennials engage with direct mail
USPS Consumer Research

37x
Higher response rate vs. email on a per-piece basis
ANA/DMA Response Rate Report

KEY STATISTICS

Direct Mail by the Numbers

Direct mail continues to outperform digital channels across the metrics that matter most: response rate, ROI, and consumer trust. The figures below represent the most current benchmarks available from USPS, ANA/DMA, and Lob. The 161% ROI figure applies specifically to house lists — existing customers who have already engaged with a brand. Prospect list campaigns typically yield lower but still competitive returns compared to digital channels.

4.4%
Average direct mail response rate across all industries
ANA/DMA Response Rate Report (gated)

161%
Average ROI for direct mail to house lists — highest of any paid channel
ANA/DMA Response Rate Report (gated)

84%
Of consumers read direct mail the same day it arrives
USPS Household Diary Study 2025

96%
Of direct mail is handled by someone in the household
USPS Household Diary Study 2025

85%
Of Gen Z and Millennials engage with direct mail
USPS Consumer Research

37x
Higher response rate for direct mail vs. email per piece sent
ANA/DMA Response Rate Report (gated)

$42
Average revenue returned per $1 spent on direct mail
Lob State of Direct Mail

23 days
Average lifespan of a direct mail piece in the home
USPS Household Diary Study

RESPONSE RATES

Direct Mail Response Rate Statistics for 2026

Response rate is the percentage of recipients who take a measurable action after receiving a mail piece — calling a number, visiting a URL, redeeming an offer, or returning a reply card. Direct mail's average response rate of 4.4% dwarfs the 0.12% average for email, making it roughly 37 times more effective on a per-piece basis. Response rates vary significantly by list type: mailing to your own customer database (a house list) typically produces 5% to 9%, while cold prospect lists produce 2% to 4.4%.

5-9%
Response rate for house lists (existing customers)
ANA/DMA Response Rate Report (gated)

2-4.4%
Response rate for cold prospect lists
ANA/DMA Response Rate Report (gated)

4.4%
Overall average response rate across all list types
ANA/DMA Response Rate Report (gated)

0.12%
Average email response rate for comparison
ANA/DMA Response Rate Report (gated)

> *"House lists consistently outperform prospect lists by a factor of 2 to 3, making customer retention campaigns among the highest-ROI uses of direct mail."*
>
> ANA/DMA RESPONSE RATE REPORT

ROI AND IMPACT

Direct Mail ROI Statistics

Direct mail delivers a 161% average ROI when mailed to house lists — the highest return of any paid marketing channel tracked by the ANA. Email averages 44% and paid social averages 21%. These figures are from the ANA/DMA Response Rate Report, a paid publication available to ANA members.

Channel	Avg. ROI	Source
Direct Mail (house list)	**161%**	ANA/DMA Response Rate Report (gated)
Email Marketing	44%	ANA/DMA Response Rate Report (gated)
Paid Social Media	21%	ANA/DMA Response Rate Report (gated)

$42
Average revenue returned per $1 spent on direct mail
Lob State of Direct Mail

27%
Of direct mail recipients make a purchase after receiving a piece
PostcardMania Research

RESPONSE RATES BY INDUSTRY

Direct Mail Performance by Industry

Response rates are not uniform across industries. A financial services mailer and a retail catalog operate in very different competitive environments. The table below shows open and response rate benchmarks across 15 industries. Luxury goods and technology consistently lead, while nonprofits and retail trail — though even the lowest industry rates outpace most digital channels. The USPS Household Mail Survey found that merchants had the highest reading and response rates of any sender category, driven largely by catalog volume.

Industry	Open Rate	Response Rate
Luxury Goods / Services	52.85%	4.46%
Technology	51.06%	4.30%
Travel and Hospitality	49.92%	4.21%
Healthcare and Pharma	48.55%	4.09%
Financial Services	46.92%	3.95%
Automotive	45.56%	3.84%
Home Services	44.58%	3.75%
Education	43.30%	3.64%
Insurance	41.71%	3.51%
Healthcare Providers	40.24%	3.38%
Real Estate	39.48%	3.32%
Service Providers	37.57%	3.16%
Retail	36.73%	3.09%
Local Small Businesses	35.27%	2.96%
Nonprofits and Charities	34.12%	2.86%

Source: Postalytics, 64 Direct Mail Statistics Marketers Should Know in 2025.

> *"Merchants had both the highest reading and response rates of any sender industry. A good portion of merchant advertising mail consists of catalogs."*
>
> USPS 2025 HOUSEHOLD MAIL SURVEY

EFFECTIVENESS

Why Direct Mail Gets Attention Digital Cannot Buy

Unlike digital ads that disappear in seconds, physical mail persists. The average direct mail piece spends 23 days in the home — on a counter, refrigerator, or desk — creating repeated exposure at no additional cost. The USPS Household Diary Study found that 96% of direct mail is handled by someone in the household and 84% read or scan everything they receive. Beyond readership, 70% of consumers say it feels more personal than digital advertising, and 57% say receiving physical mail makes them feel more valued as a customer.

96%
Of direct mail is handled by someone in the household
USPS Household Diary Study 2025

84%
Of consumers read or scan all of their mail
USPS Household Diary Study 2025

57%
Say receiving physical mail makes them feel more valued as a customer
USPS Consumer Research

70%
Say direct mail feels more personal than digital ads
USPS Consumer Research

39%
Of consumers try a business for the first time because of direct mail
PostcardMania Research

23 days
Average lifespan of a direct mail piece in the home
USPS Household Diary Study

GEN Z AND MILLENNIALS

Direct Mail and Younger Audiences

Conventional wisdom assumes younger generations ignore physical mail. The data says otherwise. 85% of Gen Z and Millennials report engaging with direct mail, and 84% of Gen Z say they actually look forward to checking it. The novelty of something tangible in a predominantly digital experience drives attention digital ads cannot replicate — and 90% of Millennials find direct mail reliable and trustworthy.

85%
Of Gen Z and Millennials engage with direct mail
USPS Consumer Research

84%
Of Gen Z say they look forward to checking physical mail
USPS Consumer Research

90%
Of Millennials find direct mail reliable and trustworthy
USPS Consumer Research

57%
Of younger consumers say physical mail makes them feel valued
USPS Consumer Research

USPS DATA 2025

USPS Volume and Delivery Statistics

The United States Postal Service delivered 112.5 billion pieces of mail in fiscal year 2024, including 68.5 billion marketing mail pieces. With a 97.9% on-time delivery rate for marketing mail and over 160 million delivery points nationwide, USPS provides one of the most reliable distribution networks available to marketers. USPS Household Mail Study filing: prc.arkcase.com/portal/filings/139604

112.5B
Total pieces of mail delivered by USPS in fiscal year 2024
USPS Annual Report 2024

68.5B
Marketing mail pieces delivered in fiscal year 2024
USPS Annual Report 2024

97.9%
USPS on-time delivery rate for marketing mail
USPS Service Performance FY2024

160M+
Delivery points served by USPS across the United States
USPS Annual Report 2024

VS. EMAIL

Direct Mail vs. Email Marketing

Email marketing operates in an increasingly crowded inbox, with response rates averaging just 0.12%. Direct mail achieves a 4.4% response rate — roughly 37 times higher — with a lifespan of 23 days versus the under 2 seconds most emails receive before deletion. The ROI gap is equally stark: direct mail delivers 161% versus email's 44%.

Metric	Direct Mail	Email
Average response rate	**4.4%**	0.12%
Average open / read rate	**84% same day**	20-25%
Average ROI	**161%**	44%
Median lifespan	**23 days**	Under 2 seconds
Trust perception	**70% feel it is more personal**	Lower trust, high spam rates

Source: ANA/DMA Response Rate Report

TRACKING AND MEASUREMENT

Measuring Direct Mail Performance

One of the most persistent misconceptions about direct mail is that it cannot be tracked. In practice, 72% of marketers now use at least one tracking method. QR codes are the most widely adopted, used by 43% of direct mail marketers to connect physical pieces to digital actions. Personalized URLs (PURLs) and call tracking numbers round out the most common attribution methods. USPS Informed Delivery adds a digital touchpoint to every mail piece: subscribers receive a daily email preview of incoming mail, and marketers can attach a full-color image and clickable link at no additional postage cost.

72%
Of marketers use at least one tracking method for direct mail
Lob State of Direct Mail

43%
Use QR codes as their primary direct mail tracking method
Lob State of Direct Mail

39%
Use personalized URLs (PURLs) to track campaign conversions
Lob State of Direct Mail

31%
Use dedicated call tracking numbers to attribute responses
Lob State of Direct Mail

BUDGET AND TRENDS

Direct Mail Spending and Industry Trends for 2026

Marketers are increasing investment in direct mail heading into 2026. Lob's State of Direct Mail found that 57% of marketers plan to increase or maintain their budget, and 82% say it delivers the best response rate of any channel in their mix. The strongest growth is in multi-channel campaigns: combining direct mail with digital remarketing produces conversion rates up to 5 times higher than either channel alone.

57%
Of marketers plan to increase or maintain their direct mail budget in 2026
Lob State of Direct Mail

82%
Say direct mail delivers the best response rate of any channel they use
Lob State of Direct Mail

68%
Say direct mail plays a critical role in their multi-channel strategy
Lob State of Direct Mail

5x
Higher conversion rate when combined with digital remarketing
PostcardMania Research

REFERENCES

Sources and Research Citations

All statistics in this report are sourced from the following research publications. Where a source is gated or requires a paid subscription, this is noted. Links open in a new browser tab.

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