

# International News



**Peter Blau**

Managing partner, customer growth  
Blau Moritz Klang (USA)

## Direct mailings still welcome on the mat

“ Direct mail’s growth rate exceeds that of TV and every other ad medium except the Internet, which still grows at 25% a year ”

Isn’t it wonderful when the omniscient news media reports something we in the industry all know to be true?

Remember when the Internet and online marketing were going to spell the end of the direct mail business? Well, it hasn’t worked out that way.

The *New York Times* tells us, backed up with facts from Robert J Coen’s annual Universal McCann media survey, that US direct mail volume grew 15 per cent over the past five years to a current annual total of over 115 billion pieces. In the past year, bulk mail volume exceeded first class mail for the first time. Direct mail,

at an estimated \$59.6bn 2006 spend, is the US’s second largest ad medium – after TV at \$72.6bn. Direct mail’s growth rate, estimated at 8 per cent in 2006, exceeds that of TV and every other ad medium except the internet, which still grows at 25 per cent per year – but on a smaller base of only \$16bn.

Just \$1 is spent on Internet advertising for every \$4 spent on direct mail. At current growth rates, Internet spending will not overtake direct mail until 2016. Not that direct marketers can be complacent about relying on direct mail. The best direct mail campaigns today are integrated with online tactics, such as search engine keywords and promoting an online response. Also, the dot.coms are among the fastest-growing users of direct mail, according to Coen’s survey.

What are the enduring strengths of direct mail? According to the *New York Times*, its targetability, its immunity from spam filters and the fact that it replaces the selling opportunities lost when the 2003 Federal ‘Do Not Call’ register placed nearly half of US households off-limits to telemarketing. It also points out that consumers prefer direct mail to telemarketing and commercial email.

Ms Ginger Stickel, a mother of two in the well-heeled suburb of Greenwich, Connecticut, told the newspaper: “I would rather get a catalogue over a call during dinner ten times over... I always open those letters, and sometimes they’re useful.”