



From Print to Performance:

2025 Consumer Trends in Direct Mail



What Consumers Are Saying—and How Marketers Can Deliver

The latest consumer research shows direct mail has become one of the most influential, enjoyable, and trusted forms of advertising—especially in a landscape where digital fatigue is very real.

This guide unpacks the key findings from Franklin Madison Direct's 2025 survey of 600 U.S. consumers. You'll learn what's working in mail, what's not, and how to optimize your campaigns for performance.



Return to Sender? Not Anymore. What Consumers Like About Mail

Influence is rising:

Direct mail jumped from 4th to **2nd most influential** ad type—right behind TV/video streaming

Enjoyment is strong:

It's now the **third most enjoyable** ad type overall and second when ranked for top enjoyment

Physicality matters:

The **ability to save and reference later** is still the #1 reason people appreciate mail

Older and middle-aged consumers

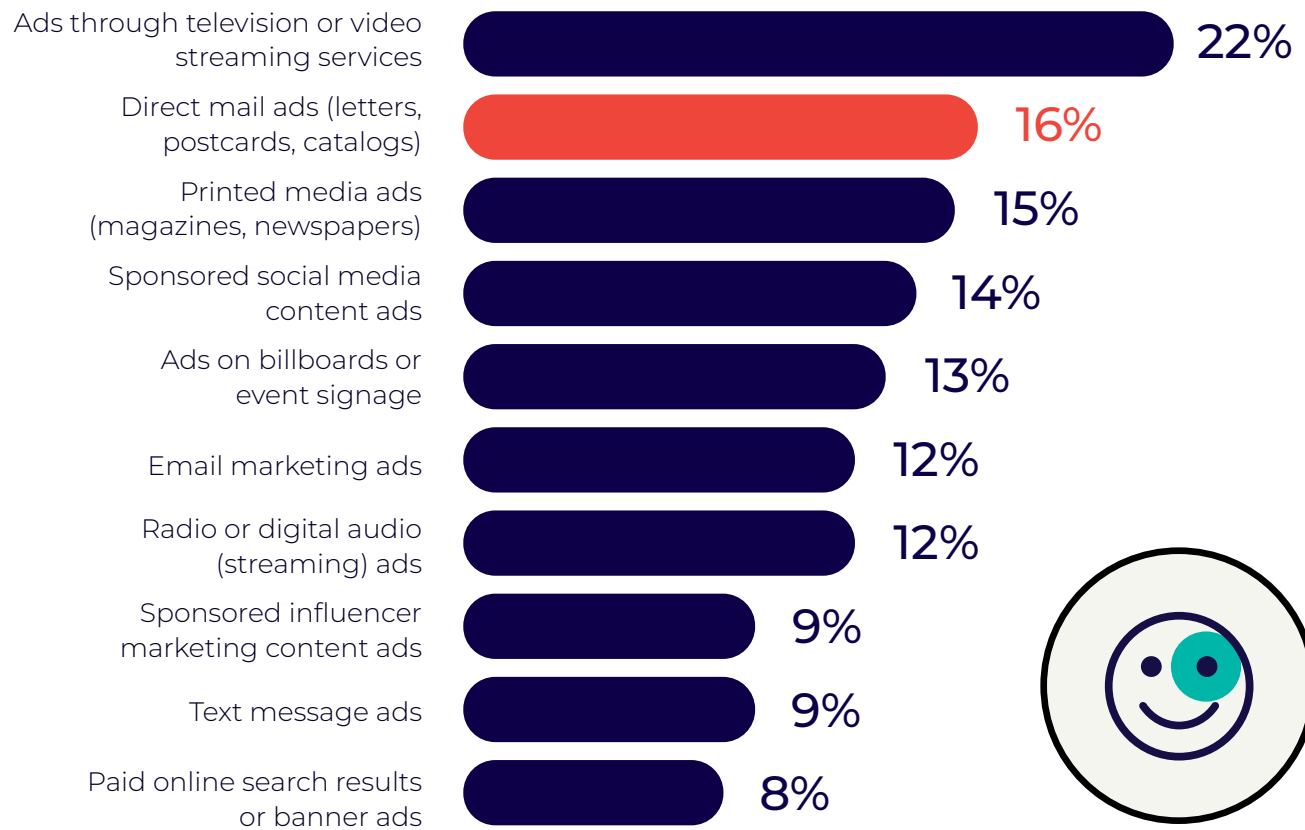
love mail most, but even younger groups value its uniqueness and nostalgia

People hold onto it:

Most keep relevant pieces for **1 day to 1 week**—giving it more staying power than a fleeting digital ad

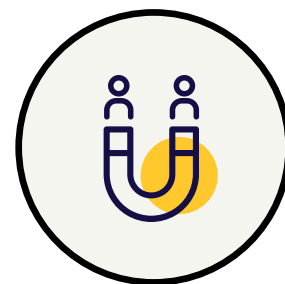
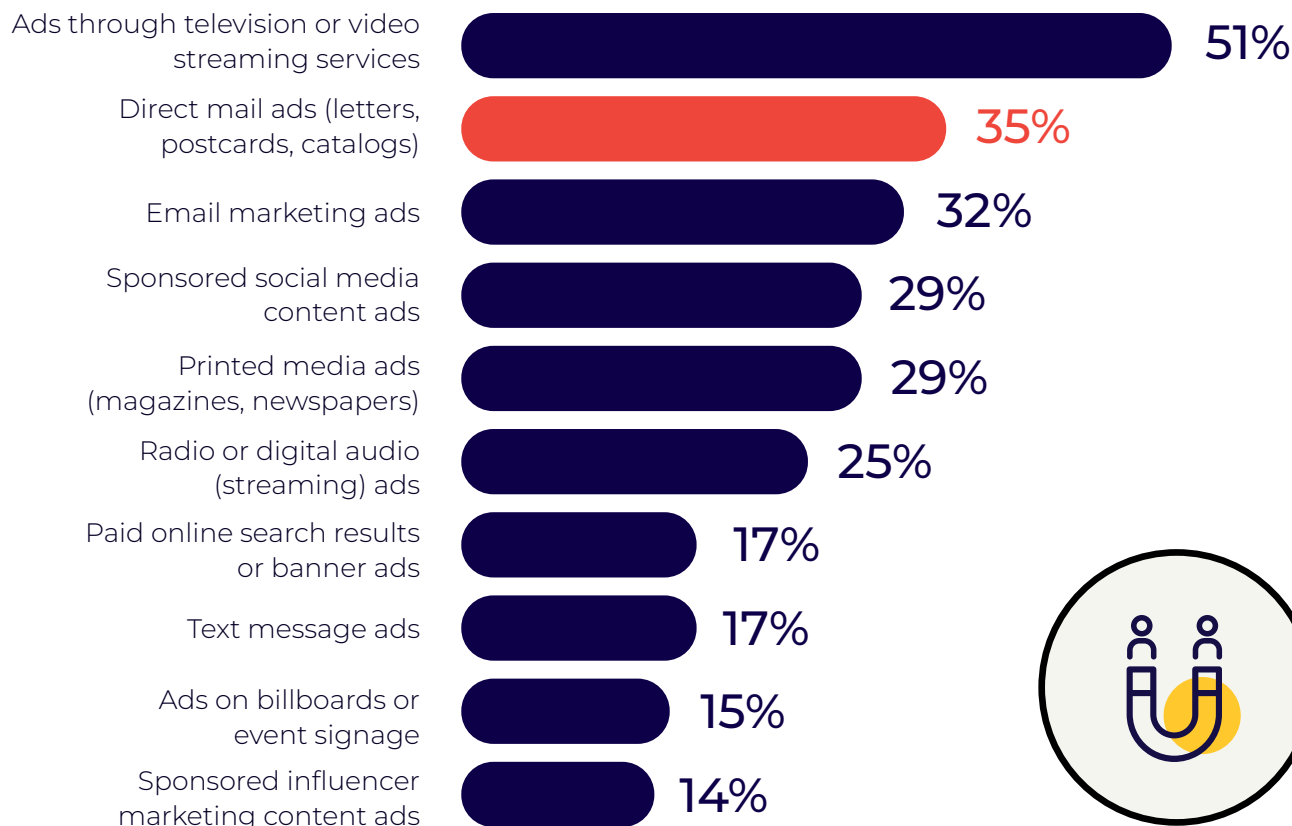
Most Enjoyable Types of Ads (Top Three Types)

Question: Please rank the most to least enjoyable types of advertising. [Select top three types]



Most Influential Types of Advertising

Question: Please choose and rank the types of advertisements that are most influential over your purchase decisions. [Select top three types]



How Consumers Are Engaging

Most Common Actions Taken from Mail

- **Visiting a website** (still #1)
- **Looking up a promo code or scanning a QR code**—especially among younger audiences
- **Making a purchase** (more unlikely among men and middle-income earners)

How Fast Do They Respond

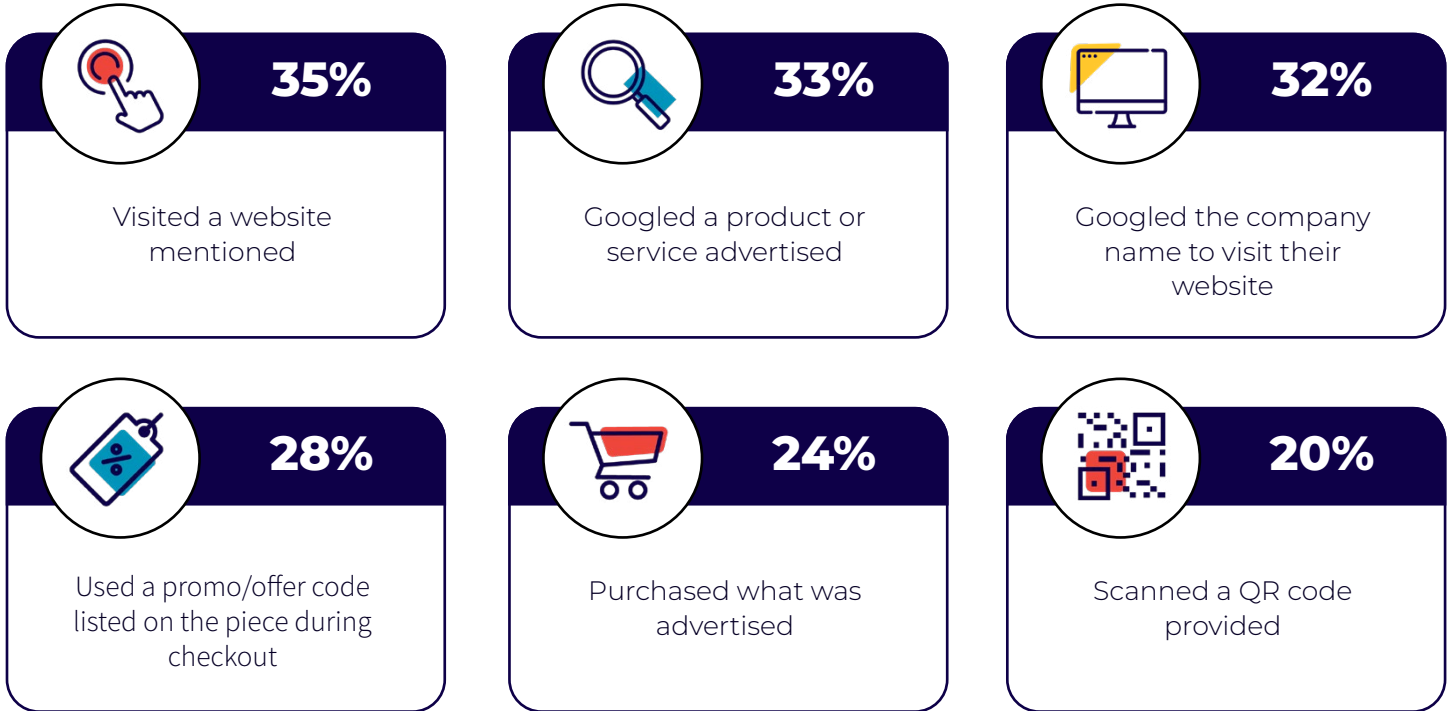
- **47% respond within a week**
- Older adults tend to act immediately or not at all, while younger audiences take longer but engage digitally (QR codes, online searches)

How Often Should You Mail?

- **56% of consumers engage** with mail weekly or more
- Only **27% act after the first mailing**
- **44% need 2–3 touches** before they'll respond
- Younger audiences need more repetition to act, so consistency is key

Actions Taken on Direct Mail Advertising

Question: In the past 6-12 months, which of the following actions have you taken as the result of receiving a relevant piece of direct mail advertising? [Select all that apply]



What Makes a Piece Work?

Top Ways to Improve Direct Mail Impact:

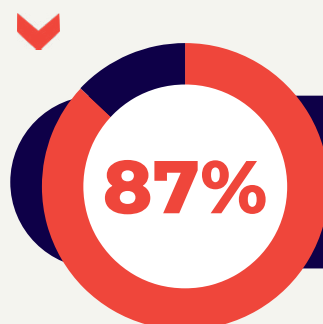
1. **Strong offers** (31% act on dollar discounts)
2. **Relevant personalization** and recommendations
3. **Concise messaging**—cut the fluff
4. **High-quality paper** and creative formats matter more to men and younger consumers
5. **25% of consumers value customer reviews**—up 7% this year

Attention-Grabbers:

1. **Sender recognition**—brand matters
2. **Deadlines**—a “limited-time offer” is motivating
3. **Interactive elements** appeal to younger readers (think QR codes, scratch-offs)

Most Influential Formats:

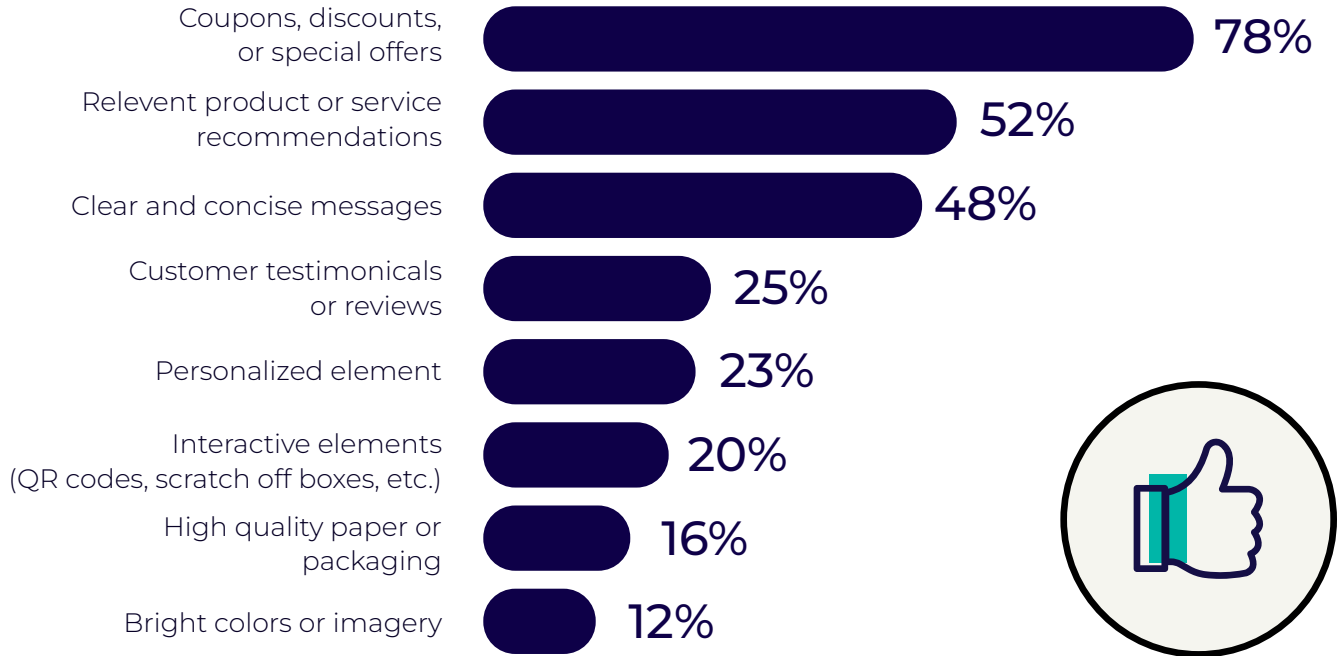
1. **Postcards** are still the top performer
2. **Catalogs and magazines** come in second—especially with women and older adults
3. **Multi-panel postcards** appeal to high-income households



watch for discounts and financial offers (especially women).

Most Likely to Give Positive Impression of Direct Mail Ad (Top Three Attributes)

Question: Which of the following are most likely to give you a more positive impression of a direct mail advertisement? [Select top three attributes]



Marketer Tips to Win in Mail



Send with a strategy

Don't expect one piece to drive action but also understand people dislike getting "too much" mail, especially when it feels irrelevant. Reduce volume fatigue by implementing triggered based sends on behavior, and plan for multiple touches—aim for **2-3 mailings to maximize results**.



Know your audience

- **Young + digital:** They're into interactivity, QR codes, nostalgia, and unique formats.
- **Middle-aged + pragmatic:** They want relevant content, strong offers, and clarity.
- **Older + loyal:** Simplicity, recognition, and consistency win here.



Cut through with clarity

Skip the long copy and get to the point—consumers want **quick reads, clear offers, and visually appealing layouts**.



Address eco concerns

Use **recycled materials** or **sustainable messaging** like "Printed on 100% recycled paper" or "Responsibly sourced materials," to appeal to environmentally conscious consumers.



Integrate channels

Consumers strongly agree: seeing both digital and mail from the same brand **increases trust and awareness**. Don't silo your strategies—connect them.

If you're already using direct mail, use these findings to refine and elevate your approach. If you're considering it, this is your sign: the mailbox is wide open.

Want help crafting high-performing campaigns? Learn more about how to turn these insights into action at franklinmadisondirect.com.