

How to use direct mail

About: This guide offers advice and outlines the steps you need to take when producing direct mail material and running a direct mail campaign.

Who is this guide intended for: Sports Development Teams, County Sports Partnerships and sports clubs

What is direct mail: Direct mail is the delivery of either printed or electronic advertising directly to a target audience. It's delivered by post, email or fax and usually includes a customised letter and/or a flyer. The material is usually personalised, making it an effective way for clubs to build relationships with their members. It is also a valuable tool for promoting an upcoming event or campaign to a specific group of people.

1. Define the purpose of your direct mail campaign

Why do you need to run a direct mail campaign? Is it to:

- a) Promote a particular event or initiative?
- b) Build or maintain a relationship with members?
- c) Introduce a new product or service?

2. Identify your target audience

The size and amount of information you hold on your database, will determine how precisely you can target your direct mail campaign to a particular group of people.

The people you target could be based on basic demographic information such as gender, age or the area where they live. Think about which demographic group would be interested in what you're promoting.

For more information on database management refer to the **How to create and manage a database** guide.

3. Define your key message and desired outcomes

What is the **one key message** you want to communicate in the campaign?

What are the **desired outcomes**? Is it for recipients to sign up to a particular event, or is the campaign a relationship building exercise, which has no measurable outcomes.

4. What content are you going to include

Direct mail allows you to personalise your communication. You need to decide whether to include a **letter**, **flyer** or a combination of the two.

For more information on flyers, check out the **How to design a flyer** guide.

5. Write a headline

Now it's time to start producing your direct mail.

Start with a headline. As with adverts, flyers and press releases, your headline needs to grab the recipients attention and encourage them to read on.

6. Write the content

When writing the content, bear in the mind the following tips:

- a. Remain focused on your key message
- b. Avoid jargon and acronyms
- c. Keep sentences short
- d. Write in the present tense if you are talking about something that is happening now.
- e. Write in an **active voice** not a passive one. Using an active voice makes sentences shorter and punchier, and moves the subject of the sentence (your organisation or club) to the beginning. Examples of both are shown below:

Active Voice: *'ABC is to inject some fun into fitness this summer.'*

Passive Voice: *'This summer fitness is going to be a lot more fun thanks to ABC.'*

7. Call to action

What action do you want the recipient to take? Be clear with what they need to do next.

Make the phone number stand out and make it clear what hours they need to call between. If you want the recipient to complete a coupon, keep it simple and include a pre paid envelope. Also give a deadline for when they should respond.

Tip: Offer something for nothing. A discount or free trial for completing the coupon or a family discount.

8. Mail merge from database

Now it's time to insert the names and addresses of your chosen audience using a mail merge.

For a detailed description on how to do this take a look at the **How to complete a mail merge** guide.

9. Envelope

Including a message on the outside of the envelope will increase the chances of the recipient opening the mail.

Remember your target audience when coming up with a message. What are their likes and dislikes? What motivates them?

Check List

Check List		
1	What is the purpose of your direct mail campaign?	
2	Who is your target audience?	
3	What is your key message?	
4	What are your desired outcomes?	
5	What content are you going to include?	
6	What is your headline?	
7	Does your direct mail content focus on the key message?	
8	Is it jargon free?	
9	Is it written in an active voice?	
10	Is it clear what action the recipient must take?	
11	Does the envelop include a message on the outside?	