

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ADVERTISING MAIL

Royal Mail offer a discount for advertising mail. The aim is to encourage customers to use direct mail in order to promote their products and services.

They apply strict rules to qualify for the discount:

1. The items mailed must be aimed at selling specific products or services, or encourage contribution to or support of a cause.
2. The recipient must not be expecting it.
3. It must be addressed mail (not door drop or partially addressed mail).
4. You have to send at least 4,000 standard size letters or 1,000 large letters.
5. The message must be largely generic.



Does my mailing qualify for an advertising mail discount?

Sometimes, it is easier to understand what doesn't qualify. Here are some examples for you.

| Direct mail example | Why it doesn't qualify |
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| Membership or subscription magazines, with or without advertising. | The recipient has requested or is expecting it. Any advertising included would not have been sent independent of the magazine. |
| A school, college or society sending a newsletter, alumni communication or publication. | The purpose is to provide information, not to sell. An exception would be a fundraising campaign for a specific cause. |
| A utility bill with advertising on the back for other services. | Primary purpose of the mailing is to deliver the bill, not to sell services. |
| Mailing customers or supporters to inform them about a change to pricing, or VAT rates. | The purpose is to supply information on pricing, not to promote a specific product or service. |
| Sending highly personalised documents, such as an insurance policy, where the content is specific to that individual. | The message is not generic, and the inclusion of any advertising is secondary to the purpose. |
| Sending purchased tickets, invitations or mail order items with advertising material. | The content is expected because it has been bought. The advertising sent is secondary to the purpose of the mailing. |
| Mailing an annual shareholder report. | Primary purpose is to share information, not promotion. |
| A consumer/lifestyle survey or product/service questionnaire specifically to gather information on a range of products/habits/services for trend analysis. | Purpose is to seek information/data for collection, not directly to promote specific products/services. |
| Sending a loyalty/membership card to a subscribed customer. | Sent as fulfilment to conclude a service the subscriber has already responded to or purchased. |
| Political mailings aimed at influencing the recipient's view. | The purpose is to influence a view point, not sell a product or service |
| Prize draw letters informing recipients that they have won a prize. | No product or service is being sold. The purpose is to give information. |

So what sort of direct mail could qualify for advertising mail?

| Direct mail example | Why it qualifies |
|---|---|
| A credit card company or retailer sending an offer of a new credit card. | Promoting the sale or use of products/services. |
| A charity or society sending a subscription renewal reminder. | Encouraging donation / purchase. |
| A company sending its new/seasonal catalogue to an existing or prospective customer. | Promoting the sale or use of products or services. |
| Customer satisfaction survey capturing information relating to a customer's experience of the product/service/cause, with the aim of using such information to be more targeted when sending further information on such products/services. | Promoting the use of a product/service. |
| An unsolicited mailing of tickets, invitations, vouchers or a discount code with a uniform message to existing or prospective customers. | The sender is under no obligation to mail these items. It is promoting the sale or use of products. |
| An organisation sending a letter to notify recipients of future dates/events. | The primary purpose is promoting a sale or support for a cause, not information. |
| Sending unsolicited samples, with or without a voucher. | Promoting the sale of products. |
| Loyalty scheme with offers and coupons tailored to the recipient. Could include details of an individual's loyalty points | Promoting the sale of products or services with broadly generic messaging and minimal personalisation. |
| A customer magazine, newsletter, unsolicited greeting card or branded calendar forming part of a company's communication programme to encourage purchase or support of a cause that is not paid for by the recipient or via subscription | There is no obligation on the organisation to send the mailed items, which are designed to promote the sale or use of products, services, or a cause. |
| A letter providing a quote for products or services. | Promoting sale. |

Source: Royal Mail; Responsible Mail & Advertising Mail (version 16, 2019)



APPLYING FOR ADVERTISING MAIL DISCOUNT

You'll notice that when The Mailing People quote for your projects, we always include estimates for both discounted advertising mail costs as well as standard business mail postage rates.

Once we have your artwork and mailing data, and it appears to meet the criteria, we automatically apply to Royal Mail to secure the advertising mail discount on your behalf. Not all mailing houses do this. It doesn't take long – usually no more than a working day, and it's a great way for us to save you money.

If you'd like to save money on your next direct mail campaign, whether you qualify for advertising mail discounts or not, we can help.

Get in touch



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