

THE TOP 6

It Takes Two to Test

This past July, a new mailing emerged as *The Wall Street Journal's* acquisition control (Archive code #255-171652-0608B), but that didn't stop the newspaper from testing a similar package almost right away (Archive code #255-171652-0608A). That explains the two versions of subscriber acquisition mailings that turned up recently in the Who's Mailing What! Archive.

The control effort includes a "limited time offer" voucher, giving readers the chance to sign up for a 52-week subscription to *The Wall Street Journal*, with full access to WSJ.com, for only \$99 a year. The voucher is attached to the bottom of an "I Read It In The Journal" letter, which lists the benefits of the well-known and prestigious financial newspaper. The letter also calls out a bookmark freemium with an introductory paragraph that reads:

Use the enclosed bookmark to keep your place in whatever fiction you're reading to escape the here and now. Use *The Wall Street Journal* for trustworthy business news and analysis to give you insights and help you shape ideas regarding your investments, your career, your personal life.

The two other elements of the control are a BRE with a reminder for the reader to include his e-mail address and a brown kraft outer envelope featuring a "Do Not Bend" stamp and a large, white faux label that contains all the delivery information—return address, delivery address and indicia.

The second, test mailing includes an identical brown kraft outer envelope and a voucher promoting the same offer, only this time the voucher is attached to the letter sans the catchy introductory paragraph. It doesn't include a bookmark or the thought-provoking "Do Not Bend" stamp on the exterior.

Kristin Pannepacker, direct mail manager for *The Wall Street Journal* publisher Dow Jones & Co., confirms the mailing with the



This control mailing for The Wall Street Journal includes a bookmark freemium, but the newspaper currently is testing removing the freemium as a cost-saving measure. To order: 215-238-5225, Archive code #255-171652-0608B.

bookmark is the newspaper's control and explains the circumstances for this test: "The package minus the bookmark and the 'Do Not Bend' stamp is our current test package. We sent this test to a subset of those who received the control package as a way of determining if the change would provoke a different response," she says.

According to Pannepacker, the removal of the bookmark was a cost-saving strategy, and as of yet, she cannot comment on the mailing's performance since response is still flat. "[We are] still evaluating benefits of loss of subscribers versus reduction in cost for the piece," she says.

Interestingly, the new control previously was tested against a mailing in a white, business window envelope containing a similar letter-with-voucher combination. The biggest change from the previous piece to the current control was the outer envelope. "We feel the professionalism and business look of the kraft envelope bearing a large label speaks to *The Wall Street Journal's* business audience and prospects," she explains.

Pannepacker also mentions that mailings for *The Wall Street Journal* follow a monthly campaign cycle and that versions of these packages may vary depending on where recipients fall—former subscribers or prospective readers—within *The Wall Street Journal's* audience. The newspaper's readers typically are male, with well-established, high-income careers in finance and business.

When asked whether or not the control will continue to mail for some time, Pannepacker answers that all signs say "yes."

IDEAS IN Action

Both the control and the test mailings for *The Wall Street Journal* include a request for readers' e-mail addresses. Kristin Pannepacker, direct mail manager for the newspaper's publisher, Dow Jones & Co., says the reasoning behind the request is twofold. "Included in our offer is a subscription to WSJ online. In order to activate that membership, we need to send information via e-mail. The request is also a way to gain information about our customers. Having that address allows us to send promotions and other e-mails with links, which could help Dow Jones capture more detailed information about current and potential customers," she maintains.