

THE TOP 6

Old Faithfuls Tested Anew

Is eight enough? Considering the number of times a prospect's name is featured on its recent subscription acquisition mailing, *U.S. News & World Report's* answer just might be a resounding "No." Personalized to the hilt—a healthy eight times, not including a sheet of address label freemiums—the magazine's in-line-produced test piece is designed with various tried-and-true direct mail concepts working in tandem to help maximize effectiveness (Archive code #201-171881-0609B).

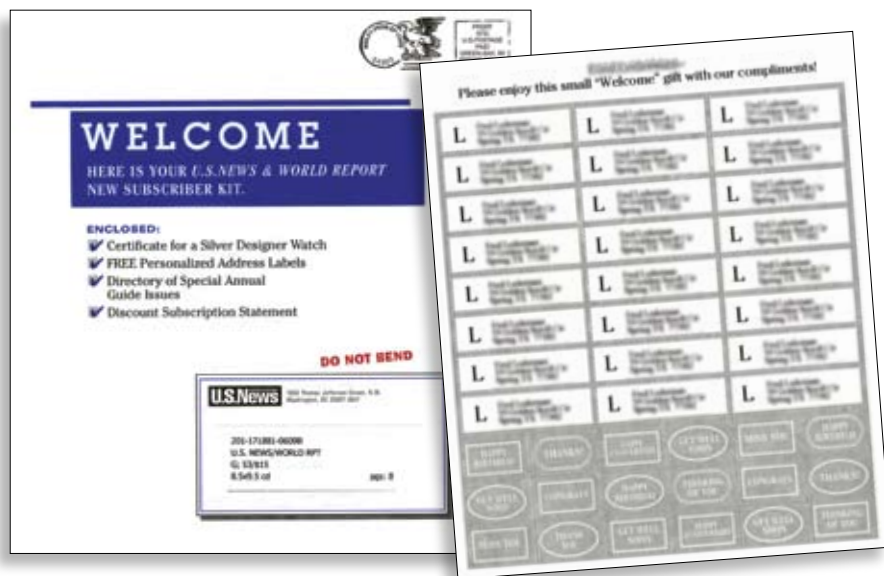
Margaret Lorzczak, *U.S. News & World Report's* new business director, indicates the format was suggested as a way to incorporate numerous response-boosting creative elements. She says, "The overall 'welcome' concept is probably strongest. The other elements, like personalization and address label freemiums, certainly contribute to the package lifts." And, of course, she mentions, "the great price of a year [subscription] for only \$15 and the free watch on payment are also very compelling."

#5 With a fresh look and a few components heretofore unseen from the mailer, this new subscriber kit was created by Moore Wallace to test both concept and printing/lettershopping, Lorzczak says. Compared to the magazine's past acquisition mailings, this 8½" x 9½" test is markedly different in both format and creative. Its presence is boldly heralded by the outer envelope copy, which appears in a blue box with reversed-out white type:

**WELCOME
HERE IS YOUR U.S. NEWS & WORLD
REPORT NEW SUBSCRIBER KIT**

That copy is immediately followed by a list of enclosed contents, separated by a series of premarked check boxes.

Inside, the prospect is greeted with a personalized welcome letter from William D. Holiber, president of *U.S. News & World Report*, perfed to a two-part top section that includes the 93 percent-off discount subscription statement and directions for how to respond. All three feature the name of the recipient. The BRE has a similar construction, perfed to a gift certificate for the package's designer silver watch premium and directions for its redemption. Interestingly and relatively unsurprisingly, the BRE also is heavily personalized, with the recipient's



This subscription acquisition mailing from *U.S. News & World Report* combines several effective direct mail strategies, including personalization, a premium and a freemium. To order: 215-238-5225, Archive code #201-171881-0609B.

name and address printed in the upper-right-hand corner of the address panel as well as on its reverse side, along with a gentle reminder to include the necessary paperwork.

The mailing also includes a sheet of address labels as a freemium, an addition common among in-line packages, but rare for the publishing sector. This device supports the kit's overall personalization strategy and was added as a cost-effective way to boost response, Lorzczak explains.

Another new response-driving technique is the inclusion of an offer expiration date. The magazine's control asks for a response within five days, however this package marks the first time a concrete return-by date has been used in recent years. The letter's P.S. reads:

The 93% discount is valid only until 10/14/06. Return the Statement today so we can rush your FREE gift!

It adds to the offer's immediacy and seems to be working well, Lorzczak reports.

While this package only was rolled out this past September, it's not the first time this format has been in place. Lorzczak recalls a previous in-line mailing that was once the magazine's mainstay: "About five years ago, *U.S. News [& World Report]* had an in-line control ... with a different concept, which was a survey package."

Today, the magazine's return to in-line production is showing some life against its current voucher-style control. "We've seen lifts on gross and net response, and are evaluating the P&L," Lorzczak says. However, "The CPM is more than the current control, so the net-per-net sub is still being evaluated," she adds.

—Christen Gruebel

IDEAS IN Action

It's hardly a radical concept to offer a premium as an impetus for action, yet *U.S. News & World Report* gives this old idea a unique twist. Its acquisition mailing includes a gift certificate for a silver watch premium, with the stipulation that recipients redeem it with their subscription payment. In essence, they not only have to respond, but they also have to remember to complete this extra step. Margaret Lorzczak, the magazine's new business director, describes this as "an involvement device which tends to improve response." She also indicates the package can be tested without it in the future.