

# TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

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## Marketing with the Undead

*Direct mail is up from the grave to help uplift your online campaigns*

by Greg Brown, Melissa Data

**W**hat if I told you that 65 percent of consumers made a purchase as a result of the one marketing tool you're probably not using today? That tool? Direct mail.

With the rise of digital marketing, direct mail has been left for dead. You might wonder how direct mail can compete in the age of cheap eblast technology and hip social media apps?

Well, it has, and the truth is, direct mail – like the zombie apocalypse – is a surprisingly strong force.

Consider this: According to a USPS® study, 81 percent of recipients read or scan their mail daily. And 40 percent of 18-34-year-olds say they read their mail immediately. But, the average household receives just two pieces of direct mail each day according to the USPS. Can you imagine getting just two marketing emails in your inbox every day?

Now there's less competition in the mailbox than ever, as traditional mail volumes continue to decline. And that means direct mail is actually the best tactic to get your message noticed by customers and prospects. Shhhh, don't tell your competitors.

That doesn't mean you should abandon all of your other marketing channels in favor of direct mail. Instead, consider adding direct mail to your online engagement initiatives. It's a one-two punch that allows you to create a seamless marketing effort that stretches from the recipient's email inbox to their front door.

In fact, it's proven that email and direct mail are better together. A study by Royal Mail's research agency, Quadrangle, reported a 13 percent uplift in driving consumers to a website; a 21 percent increase in purchases, and a 35 percent jump in use of a coupon when both direct mail and email were combined in a customer engagement effort.

And, retailers are taking notice of direct mail's effectiveness. J.C. Penney began mailing its print catalog earlier this year after a five-year hiatus. J. Crew Group Inc., Williams-Sonoma Inc., Bloomingdale's, and Saks Fifth Avenue are all committed mailers, and even internet retailers like Bonobos, a men's clothing retailer, are starting to mail catalogs.

The reason catalogs are making a comeback is simple – customers like to flip through a traditional mail piece before ordering online or going to a store. And, seeing products in print helps inspire online purchases; 31 percent of shoppers actually have a catalog with them when making an online purchase, according to retail consultant, Kurt Salmon.

### The Future of Direct Mail

The future of direct mail looks bright because of how today's innovative technologies integrate with direct mail to create truly compelling and

effective marketing campaigns.

For example, many businesses are leveraging the immediacy of mobile phone technology by adding QR or SnapTag barcodes to their direct mail campaigns. This allows the recipient to simply scan a code with their smart phone and be instantly transported to a landing page where they can connect with the campaign's offer, use a coupon or get more information.

Some marketers are taking it a step further with augmented reality (AR) that ties in a direct mail piece with video or computer-generated 3D graphics. These campaigns look to improve engagement through a more personalized and compelling digital experience – think of something like a virtual shopping trip or video game experience.

Another innovation – near field communication (NFC) – empowers marketers to deliver content seamlessly with touch-to-transfer technology, so all a recipient has to do is touch their smart phone to the direct mail piece and there's an instant connection.

So, far from being dead, direct mail is alive and kicking. If you have the resources to couple your email marketing campaigns with direct mail, then you should. Otherwise, you are losing out on potential sales and new customers. Take the time to think of creative ways you can most effectively incorporate this one-two marketing punch for your business, and see the ROI of your overall direct marketing increase.



### Greg Brown

Since 2006, Greg Brown has been in charge of the Melissa Data's brand management, business to business, internet and email marketing strategies. Having worked for over 15 years on both the client and agency side, he brings a unique perspective to developing creative, results-oriented marketing programs to acquire and retain customers.



### About Melissa Data Corp.

Since 1985, Melissa Data has been a leading provider of global data quality solutions, address management software, targeted mailing lists and data enrichment services. More than 10,000 companies worldwide rely on Melissa Data to gain and maintain a single, accurate and trusted view of their customer contact data. For more info, call 1.800.MELISSA.

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Mobilitie provides robust wireless connectivity at the largest and mostly highly attended venues across the country. With MGM Resorts, Mobilitie engineered, built, and operates one of the world's largest and most advanced Wi-Fi networks, covering millions of visitors to their properties in Las Vegas.



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## Priceless Peace of Mind

The phone rang at five in the morning. It was a client whose whole world just went from business as usual to a state of pure panic. "Hey...we've got a BIG problem."

"Ok, we're here for you," said the semi-awake, yet calm voice on the other line. "What's up?"

"I just got a call that the air conditioner's condenser pump went out and our IT room is almost 100 degrees, but more importantly, water is pouring out of it onto the server rack. EVERYTHING is down...we need help. Right now. We've already shut everything off."

*Everything is down.* "Ok, we'll be right there."

Yikes. You might call it a crisis, but to NIXSYS, a managed IT services provider, it's just another morning in the tech business.

NIXSYS is dedicated to solving big IT problems and providing excellent customer service. The growing company is on a mission to offer managed IT services along with the highest-quality, custom-built computers and servers supporting legacy hardware and software with the fastest delivery and personalized customer support at reasonable prices.

But what NIXSYS truly delivers for small and mid-sized business owners in Southern California...is *peace of mind*.

"Most of our clients aren't interested in how it works, but they expect their technology to work 24/7, 365 and we make sure that happens, says Nicolas Szczedrin, president of NIXSYS.

Since 2003, the company's Irvine-based service division has offered extraordinary IT support for small and mid-size businesses by utilizing the most advanced tools available in the industry and proactively ensuring its clients' productivity under the tagline, "We deliver IT with peace of mind."

And that peace of mind is especially difficult to achieve today with the threats companies face that test their cybersecurity. In fact, cybersecurity is rapidly becoming a critical activity in many enterprises, due to the increasing number of cyberattacks and cybercrime. Cyberattacks often target small and medium-sized enterprises, because cybercriminals expect information in these organizations to be less protected than in larger enterprises. On the line are their economic interests, reputation and intellectual property, as well as the information assets of their customers and business partners.

According to a recent study by the Information Systems Audit and Control Association (ISACA), 82 percent of organizations expect to be attacked in 2015.

The study shows that 77 percent of those polled experienced an increase in attacks in 2014, and even more (82 percent), view it as likely or very likely that their enterprise will be attacked in 2015.

NIXSYS helps its clients build the right IT infrastructure for their businesses that is secure and worry-free. Whether it's antivirus, e-mail and web protection, password management or even disaster recovery solutions, NIXSYS works with the industry's premier security providers to keep its clients protected. More and more employees these days bring their own mobile devices to work and that creates some security risks to the network. Using some of the leading mobile device management solutions, NIXSYS helps its clients stay on top of all the



coming and going network traffic and ensuring that business goes forward uninterrupted.

In the area of security, NIXSYS can install and maintain firewalls, e-mail spam filtering, continuity, archiving and encryption, as well as antivirus and malware protection.

For companies who are looking to do more of their business in the cloud, NIXSYS also offers Microsoft 365 deployment and e-mail migration services.

NIXSYS helps companies move to the Microsoft Cloud on their terms, delivering business e-mail and corporate groupware (including calendar and contacts) on each desktop, phone and tablet.

In 2002, NIXSYS emerged as a rapidly growing provider of rack mount server, storage, interconnects and networking solutions from an IT consultancy, which provided customized hardware and software services. Since then, NIXSYS has doubled in size each year due to the company's sharp focus on low-cost procurement; quality custom manufacturing; and unbeatable, personalized service.

NIXSYS has provided hardware systems, consulting services and full implementation for its diverse customer base from universities to financial institutions, as well as security and IT companies all the way to individuals and small businesses. NIXSYS also has experience and awareness of IT's important role in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) compliance, which is why many health care companies are counted among its clients.

NIXSYS isn't afraid of older technology and specializes in helping OC businesses run it for as long as they'd like. And doing that requires an extensive network of suppliers and vendors who share this IT provider's passion for being a valuable resource to companies who don't want to be pressured into costly and stressful system upgrades when they aren't ready to do so.

One thing that sets NIXSYS apart from competitors is that the company actually builds computers in addition to servicing them. We're talking not just super computers and servers, but also ISA and PCI slot computers, as well as legacy

operating system machines running Windows 98, NT and even MS-DOS! NIXSYS also builds AMD and Intel servers, as well as short rack mount servers. And all of this with the parts and accessories to keep these systems up and running effectively for years.

"At NIXSYS, we believe in building customer relationships even after our products and services are delivered," says Szczedrin. "Receiving your PCs on time and getting them up and running is just as important as selecting the right components. We've put together a support team that provides attentive and informed service."

And that is just one of many reasons why NIXSYS continues to deliver hardware, software and services that all come standard with plenty of peace of mind.

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## Checking-In: How Mobilitie Is Transforming the Hospitality Industry

**M**aking a positive connection with guests is a priority for hotels worldwide. The hospitality industry thrives on being able to anticipate their guests' needs, provide a relaxing experience and ensure that guests will return in the future. Today, technology plays a major role in how guests rate their overall experience. In fact, travelers are increasingly considering Wi-Fi as more important than TV, room service or other traditional services when providing an overall rating for hotels and resorts. That's why hotels are turning their attention to providing superior connectivity – it's what guests expect.

### No Wi-Fi? No guests.

Wi-Fi is no longer a luxury, it's a necessity. Guests often refer to reviews of a hotel's Wi-Fi connection when making a lodging decision for an upcoming trip, whether it is for business or pleasure. It's fair to assume that if a hotel is not equipped with Wi-Fi access, it will be thrust down to the bottom of the list when it comes to making a choice for accommodations.

More hoteliers now understand the need for enhanced Wi-Fi, but don't really know where to begin. A simple router won't do the trick when you have hundreds or even thousands of guests trying to access the Wi-Fi network simultaneously.

### Mobilitie "At Your Service" at MGM Resorts

MGM Resorts International, one of the world's largest gaming companies, faced this challenge. In addition to having superior Wi-Fi connectivity, MGM Resorts wanted to increase engagement with guests and visitors who were using the network during their stay or visit to the property. And, they saw a need for new, unique options to monetize this exclusive access, such as providing partners with a custom-branded portal or customer analytic capabilities.

Knowing what a project of this scale would require, MGM Resorts tapped Mobilitie to establish a comprehensive Wi-Fi network that spanned eleven MGM Resorts International destinations including Bellagio, MGM Grand, Mandalay Bay, Delano, The Mirage, Monte Carlo, New York-New York, Luxor, Excalibur, MGM Resorts Festival Grounds and Resorts Village. The system would eventually become the world's largest broadcast Wi-Fi network.

Managing the network for 11 properties is a unique challenge in its own right. Each venue is different, and it was important for Mobilitie to understand the needs of each property in order to maximize network functionality. To accomplish this goal, Mobilitie worked closely with MGM Resorts to discuss specific network needs for each individual property, and then designed a custom network that would provide the best experience for visitors and guests.

The Mobilitie-designed network would, first and foremost, easily engage with MGM guests and visitors. The network was built to provide a seamless experience among properties, meaning it would be easy to roam between different properties such as Bellagio and MGM Grand without the need to sign in to a new network at each venue. Location-based services were also included in the design so visitors could find desired locations at each venue, whether it was a booth during a large convention or the pool for an afternoon swim.

Beyond seamless connectivity, Mobilitie worked with MGM Resorts to deliver



unique monetization opportunities. The network was designed to provide additional revenue through advertising and customized, branded portals that sponsors could leverage to reach their audiences. Mobilitie also designed "Ads for Access," where visitors would simply watch a brief sponsored video in order to access the network. The network was also designed in tiers, so that MGM Resorts could control the type of access – such as speed or duration – for each guest or visitor. With location capabilities, MGM Resorts could also provide guests with information specific to their precise location.

Today, Mobilitie continues to manage the Wi-Fi network at MGM Resorts International, constantly refining and enhancing the system to meet the evolving needs of the network on a daily basis.

Mobilitie's solution was turn-key, and enhanced the mobile experience for the millions of guests and visitors to MGM properties in Las Vegas.

### Opportunities for Hospitality

Providing a network like MGM's for guests to stay connected isn't the end of the road. All who work in the hotel industry know the advantages that come as a result of making a personal connection with guests – whether it is a phone call from the front desk seeing if the room is to their satisfaction upon check-in, or sending a 'Thank You' note via email immediately following a stay. Wi-Fi is opening a realm of endless possibilities where the hotel, vendors and sponsors can easily connect directly with guests over the Wi-Fi network.

Imagine walking into the hotel lobby and receiving a "welcome" notification on your phone that lets you know what room number you'll be in, along with activities taking place at the hotel that day. What if you were able to receive a notification about when breakfast is being served, or when your room was getting serviced? The overall experience during your stay would be completely transformed. Wi-Fi is no longer a way for guests to stay connected; it's an opportunity for hotels to connect with guests.

Push notifications aren't the only application for connecting with guests through Wi-Fi. Depending on how the network is designed, there are additional opportunities for revenue with advertising and customized branded portals that sponsors can leverage to reach their audiences. For example, marketers could have guests watch a trailer for an upcoming film in order to receive complimentary Wi-Fi.

### The Future

As wireless connectivity technology continues to improve, so will the overall experience that hotels are able to provide their guests. Wi-Fi will not only serve as a gateway to information, it will allow hotels to better connect with each guest individually.

The entire hotel stay will change as guests experience a hotel anticipating their needs. As each guest is unique, Wi-Fi will allow the hotel to draw off of past behaviors to provide the best experience possible. Wi-Fi will be able to notify a guest that their favorite play is in town and provide them with tickets, check them out without having to head to the front desk, or even provide dinner recommendations without having to call the front desk. "Wi-Fi Concierge" has a nice ring to it.

For more information, visit [www.mobilitie.com](http://www.mobilitie.com).

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