

**STILL RELEVANT:  
A LOOK AT HOW  
MILLENNIALS  
RESPOND TO  
DIRECT MAIL**



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# Beyond the Myths: Young Adults Do Read Mail

You know the stereotype: Millennials are digital natives, glued to their smartphones, and the only way for marketers to reach them is through social media.

**The truth is, Millennials respond to a low-tech marketing approach that's been around for centuries: Paper in a mailbox.**

**84%** of Millennials  
take the time to look  
through their mail.<sup>1</sup>

**64%** would rather  
scan for useful info  
in the mail than email.<sup>1</sup>

This guide is designed to help you better understand how and why Millennials respond to mail, how mail compares with other marketing channels, and how to create an appealing mailpiece for this generation.

1. USPS Mail Moments: 2016 Review, March 2016.

# What Millennials Think—and Do—about Mail

Let's look at how Millennials interact with mail. Here are some revealing statistics.



**77%** of Millennials pay attention to direct mail advertising.<sup>1</sup>



**90%** of Millennials think direct mail advertising is reliable.<sup>2</sup>



**57%** have made purchases based on direct mail offers.<sup>2</sup>



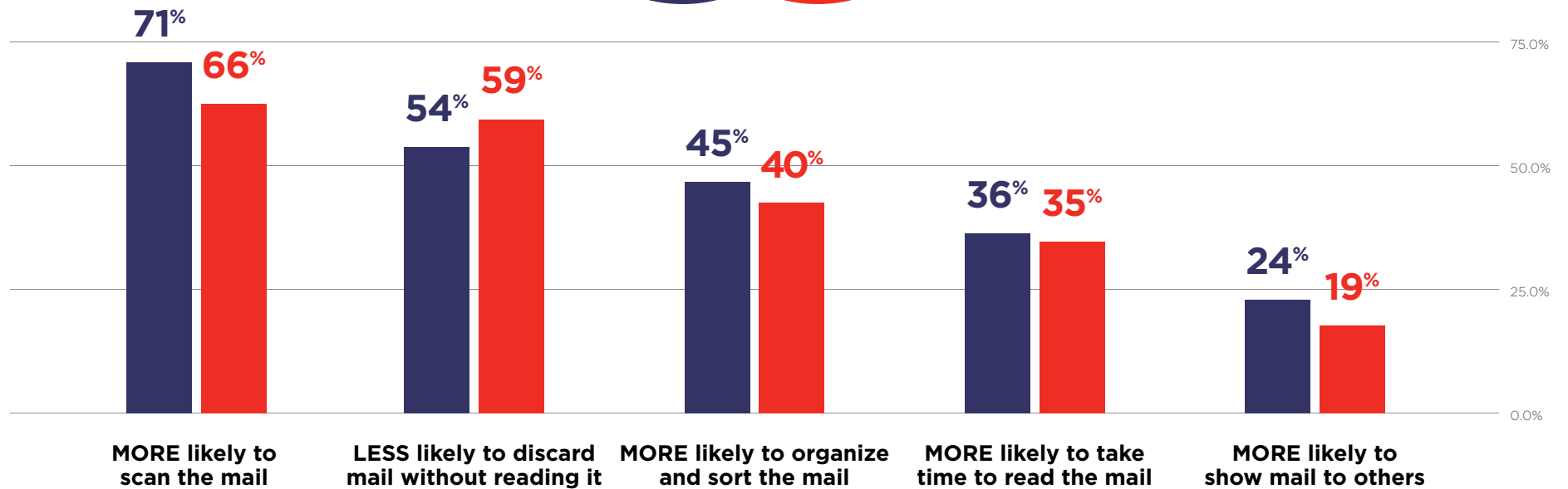
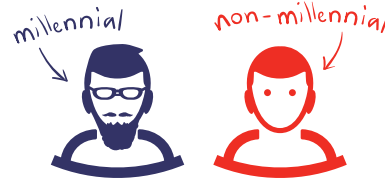
**87%** of Millennials like receiving direct mail.<sup>3</sup>

1. *Millennials: An Emerging Consumer Powerhouse*, Quad/Graphics, March 2016.  
2. Felicia Savage, "Don't Hide In The Bushes: How To Use Direct Mail To Target Millennials," PERQ, October 28, 2013.  
3. "Direct Mail vs. Social Media | Q&A Showdown," Divvy, January 15, 2016. <http://divvyonline.com/direct-mail-vs-social-media-20160115>



# How They Differ from Other Adults

Compared with previous generations, Millennials are:<sup>1</sup>



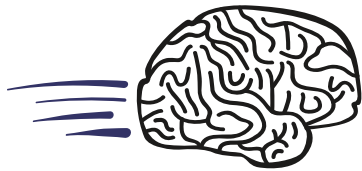
1. USPS Mail Moments: 2016 Review, March 2016.

# How the Brain Responds to Print vs. Digital

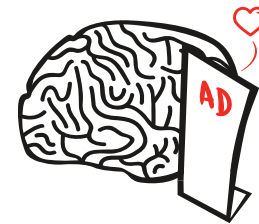
Why do even so-called digital natives still respond to print? Neuromarketing research shows that our brains react differently to printed material than to digital media.

The U.S. Postal Service partnered with the Center for Neural Decision Making at Temple University's Fox School of Business on a study to gauge responses to physical and digital advertising pieces. The researchers used brain imaging, biometrics (e.g., heart rate and respiration), eye tracking, and questionnaires to measure reactions.<sup>1</sup>

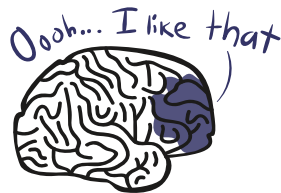
## They found that:



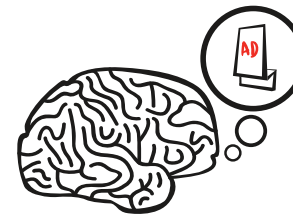
Participants processed digital ad content more quickly.



They spent more time with physical ads.



Physical ads triggered activity in a part of the brain that corresponds with value and desirability.



Participants had a stronger emotional response to physical ads and remembered them better.

1. *Enhancing the Value of Mail: The Human Response*, USPS Office of Inspector General, June 15, 2015.

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# Print Comes Out on Top in Neuromarketing Test

Canada Post found similarly intriguing results in a neuromarketing research project. They measured the response to two campaigns that used the same creative and messaging for both physical and digital media.<sup>1</sup>

## They found that:

The direct mail campaigns required  
**21%**  
less  
cognitive effort to process.

Participants' recall was  
**70%**  
higher  
if they were exposed to direct mail rather than a digital ad.

Activation in parts of the brain that correspond to motivation response was  
**20%**  
higher  
for direct mail.

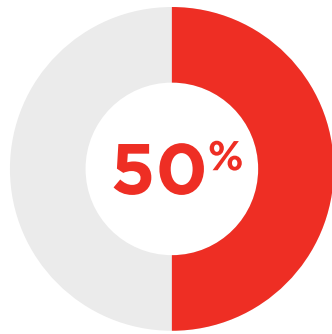
It seems we are wired to respond more strongly to physical, printed messages. For marketers who want advertising with long-lasting impact and easy recollection, printed materials can clearly make a difference.

1. *A Bias for Action: The neuroscience behind the response-driving power of direct mail*, Canada Post, July 31, 2015.

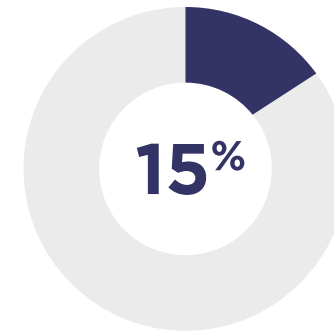
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# Breaking through the Clutter

Some marketers believe that the digitally engaged are suffering from digital fatigue.<sup>1</sup>



**Nearly half** of Millennials ignore digital ads.<sup>2</sup>



Yet **only 15%** say they ignore direct mail.<sup>2</sup>

Apparently direct mail—which comes only once a day—has become a novelty to this audience. Studies show Millennials enjoy receiving mail even more than non-Millennials. In fact, 50% of Millennials say they like to discover what the mail brings every day and consider time spent looking at and reading it time well spent.<sup>3</sup>

1. Kurt Allen, "Live from Loyalty360 Expo: Best Western Rewards Bets on Millennials and Direct Mail," Colloquy, April 29, 2015.

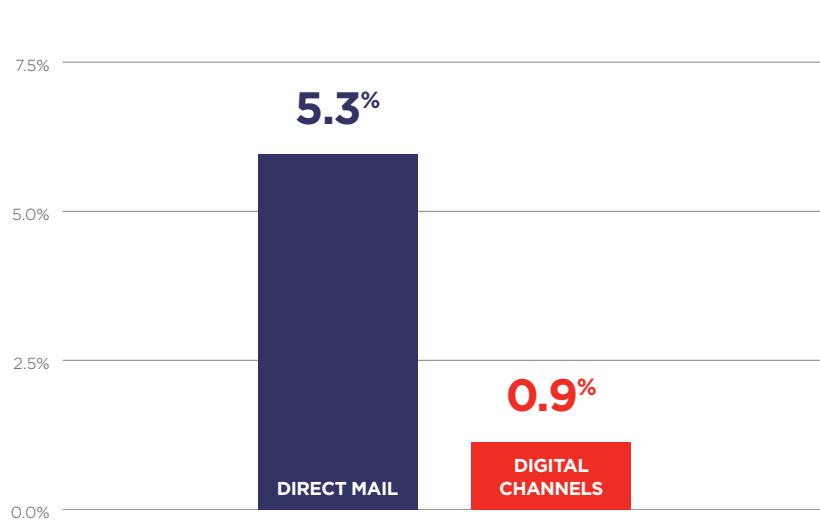
2. *Millennials: An Emerging Consumer Powerhouse*, Quad/Graphics, March 2016.

3. *USPS Mail Moments: 2016 Review*, March 2016.

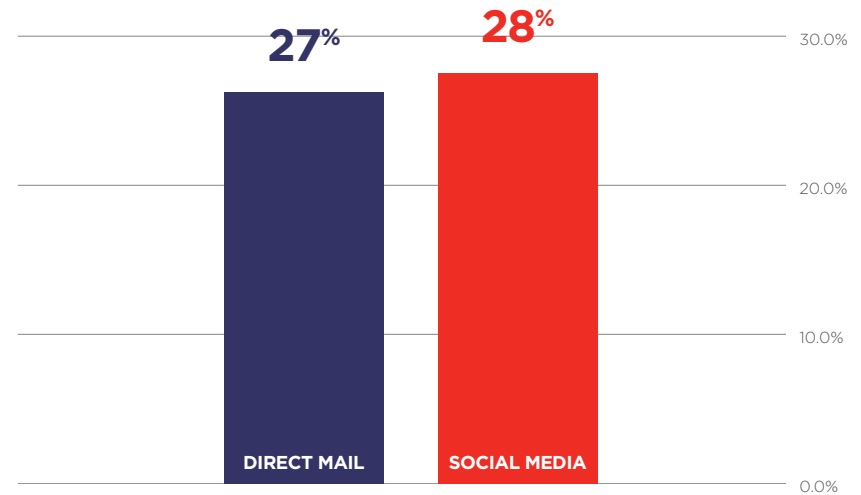
# How the Results Compare: Direct Mail vs. Digital

Despite an affinity for physical mail, Millennials still spend more time online than other adults, and no one is recommending that marketers abandon digital channels.

**Here's a look at how the channels compare:<sup>1</sup>**



Direct mail has a higher cost than some digital channels, but it also has a higher response rate—up to 5.3% versus a high of 0.9% for digital.



Email has the highest median return on investment (ROI)—122%—because of its low cost. But the ROI for direct mail (27%) is about the same as for social media (28%). And it's higher than the ROI for paid search or online display.

1. DMA Response Rate Report 2016, Direct Marketing Association, 2016.









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# Appealing to Millennial Values

Direct mail can help you engage Millennials, whether your goal is to acquire customers, generate interest in a specific promotion, or build customer loyalty.

## Try these tips to help create engaging mailpieces for this generation.

-  Incorporate multimedia and digital: Embed QR Code® barcodes, near field communication (NFC), or augmented reality (AR) to link your mailer to video and interactive materials on your website or social media sites.
-  Keep your messaging succinct and easy to read. Provide bite-size pieces of information.
-  Be authentic. Millennials distrust traditional advertising, so avoid hard-sell language. Use a straightforward, transparent approach.
-  Use enhancements such as scent, sound, or texture to make your piece stand out.
-  Help them feel good about their purchase. Millennials are compassionate and want to improve their world. Campaigns that donate a percentage of profits to a worthy cause or in some other way demonstrate corporate responsibility can resonate—if they're seen as authentic.
-  Use slang with caution, even if you are a Millennial. You risk turning off your audience.



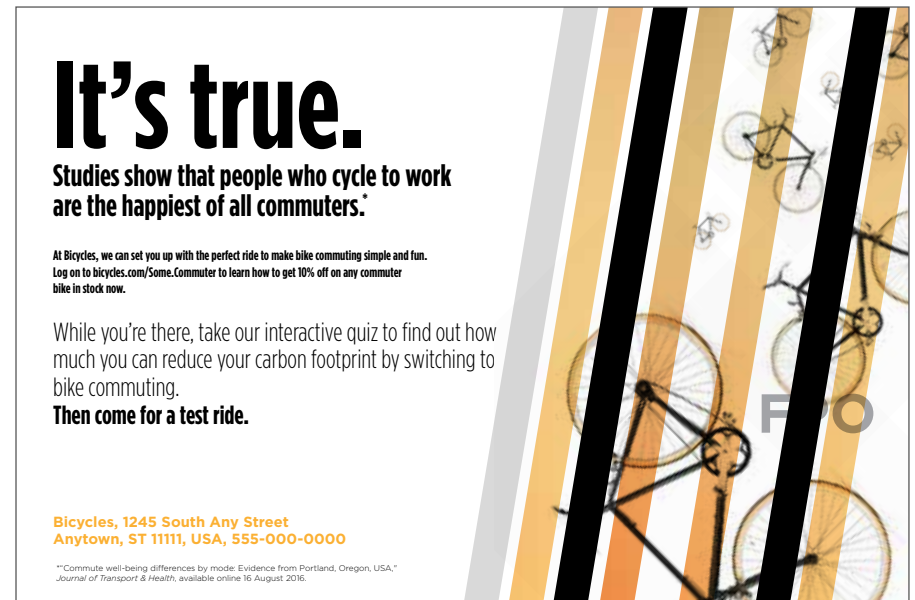
# Millennial Mail Ideas: Bike Shop Postcard

Here are some examples of direct mailpieces that could work well with the Millennial generation.

This mailpiece uses simple, straightforward language to encourage prospects to improve their lives by buying a new commuter bicycle. It incorporates a digital component by enticing prospects to log on to a personalized URL to learn how to get 10% off and to take an interactive quiz. Information gathered through the quiz will not only help the potential buyer but will also help the company provide better service. The mailer ends with an appeal to Millennials' desire to improve the world—in this case by reducing their carbon footprint.



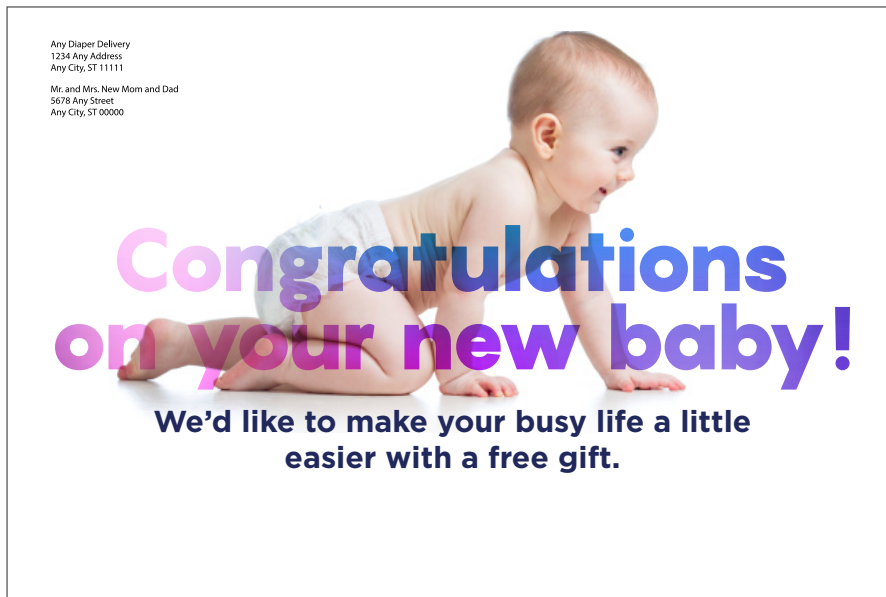
Outside Copy



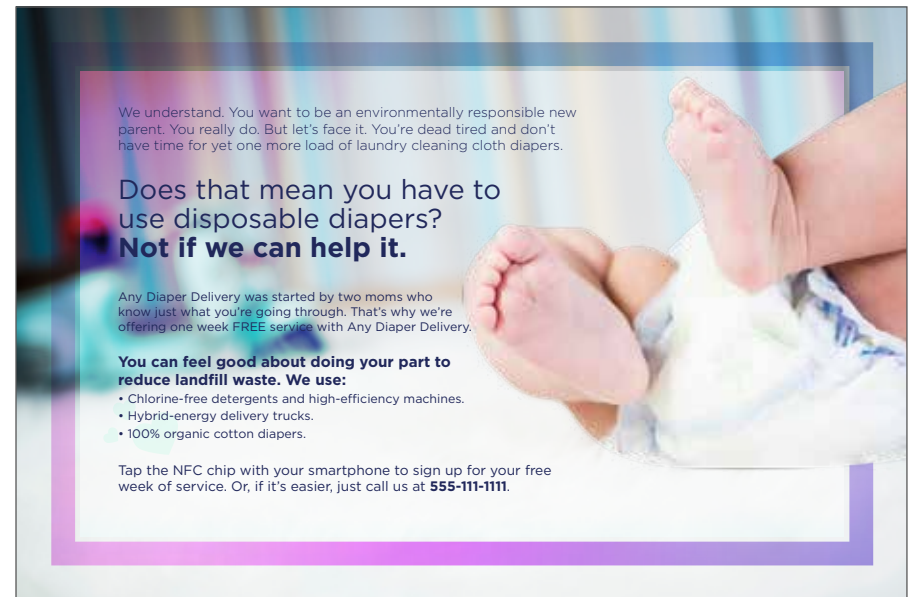
Inside Copy

# Millennial Mail Ideas: Diaper Delivery Service Letter

This mailpiece for a diaper delivery company uses down-to-earth language to appeal to new parents who may be reluctant to use cloth diapers because of the work involved. The letter touches on a desire of parents everywhere—to leave the world a better place for their children. An embedded NFC chip encourages customers to engage digitally by taking them to a website with details on the offer.



Outside Copy



Inside Copy

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# A Classic Approach for a Millennial Age

Marketers have more avenues than ever to engage with customers, but that also means customers are continually bombarded with messages, a high percentage of which they tune out. Direct mail can help your message rise above the digital noise, even with Millennials.

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**We now know that mail still resonates with this generation. 77% pay attention to direct mail advertising.<sup>1</sup>**

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They continue to enjoy and respond to the tactile experience of opening the mailbox and finding a printed message inside.

1. *Millennials: An Emerging Consumer Powerhouse*, Quad/Graphics, March 2016.



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