



Inserts guide





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Acknowledgements



Acknowledgements

The DMA would like to acknowledge the contributions of the DMA Inserts Council to this guide.



Business practice



Introduction

An insert is a piece of advertising material distributed via a third-party publication.

Inserts are one of the most powerful one-to-one marketing options available – combining the creative power of advertising mail with the reach and low cost of press.

They are a proven method to meet a wide range of commercial goals. Inserts can elicit immediate sales, develop product awareness, promote brand positioning, support other marketing activity, raise funds for a charitable cause, provide a product sample and more.

For many marketers, inserts are an important and trusted element of their campaigns.

This guide has been written by the industry, for the industry. It concentrates on challenges and opportunities that people have experienced within this sector and gives you the insight to make your campaigns successful.

It will help you to get all the essentials right and give you valuable ideas, insight and inspiration to help make your campaign truly effective, efficient and profitable.



Compliance

Inserts and the DMA Code

The DMA Code is the standard to which all DMA members, their suppliers and clients must agree to operate.

Following the DMA Code and this best practice guide is about much more than mere compliance – rather, it is about delivering one-to-one marketing that is a true *exchange of value* between your company, looking to prosper, and your customer, looking to benefit.

Marketing in the right way – honestly and fairly, putting your customer first – will also make you a much better and more valued marketer.

Key legislation

There is a wealth of legislative and best practice requirements of which you must be aware – but it all works towards making and keeping inserts beneficial to your customer.

The key piece of legislation governing inserts is:

The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008

Industry codes

Inserts are subject to code requirements from a number of industry bodies:

DMA Code

DMA members must comply with the DMA Code.

Non-members are strongly advised to comply with the Code and relevant guides as they are a useful summary of the legal and best practice requirements for one-to-one marketers.

The Code is adjudicated by the Direct Marketing Commission (DMC).

The CAP Code

The British Code of Advertising, Sales Promotion and Direct Marketing (CAP Code) is administered by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA).

Regulatory organisations

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

Regarding data protection and privacy issues.

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA)

Administers the CAP Code.

Trading Standards

Consumer protection law compliance.



FCA rules for financial services marketing

If your marketing relates to an investment product that falls within the scope of the *Financial Services and Markets Act 2012*, then your creative agency and mailing house must ensure that:

- The client is properly authorised under the Act by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA):
[fca.org.uk](https://www.fca.org.uk)
- The final copy has been signed off by a responsible official of the client

Failure to do either could result in the agency or mailing house committing the criminal offence of publishing an unauthorised advertisement.

Penalties

Penalties for non-compliance include fines and sanctions under legislation and various industry codes.

To find out the latest information on penalties and sanctions with regard to data protection and privacy laws, including examples of companies that have been penalised, visit:

ico.org.uk/



Campaign creation



Campaign planning

This section summarises the timings, brief and targets required from the client to provide the media agency, creative and printer with the information necessary to plan the campaign.

Here are six key steps that will result in a better thought out, planned and executed campaign:

1. Time plan
2. Campaign brief
3. Campaign plan
4. Briefing
5. Distribution and storage
6. Response handling

Step 1 – Time plan

The recommended minimum lead time for planning an insert campaign is 12 weeks to the date of the first distribution:

		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12
	Responsibility												
Define campaign objectives	Client	•											
Brief media agency	Client		•										
Develop creative	Creative team				→								
Plan media	Media agency		→										
Sign off creative	Client			•									
Option media Supply samples to media	Media agency		→										
Brief printer	Client/agency			•									
Sign off media plan	Client					•							
Finalise negotiation Confirm delivery details	Media agency				→								
Print inserts	Printer						→						
Deliver inserts to transport	Printer											•	
First delivery to publisher													•



Seasonality

Some times of year will require longer lead times in terms of planning.

- **Option media space early**

January, September, October and November are notoriously busy months in the inserts marketplace and therefore availability can be an issue.

Ensure you allow enough time for optioning media space long in advance of these months.

- **Allow extra time before Christmas**

Allow for earlier deliveries in the period before Christmas as many printers shut down over this period.

Paper availability can also be an issue when planning high volumes of inserts for this season, so order early.

Step 2 – Media briefing

Your campaign brief is critical to the success of your campaign and should always be agreed between client and agency – with each element forming part of a written contract, signed and dated by both partners.

Always consider and agree the following elements:

- **Profile your target customer thoroughly**

Identify who you want to target as precisely as possible.

Poor targeting will just waste your resources, effort and money, jeopardise your ROI and affect your environmental performance – whilst you risk undermining your brand reputation by marketing to consumers for whom your offer is not relevant or welcome.

Provide any information you have readily available – such as a detailed customer profile. If you do not have a profile available, consider working with your agency to develop one. Your agency should have access to market research and other information that can help.

- **Be specific about target areas**

Specify whether your campaign is national or not.

If your customer base has a regional or local bias, be specific about which region(s) you wish to target.

- **Understand industry benchmarks**

Clarify the campaign benchmarks that are most appropriate to measure your campaign against.

You may wish to assess your campaign against one or more of the following:

- Response rates
- Cost per lead
- Cost per sale
- Conversion rates
- Return on investment
- Profit

- **Set clear, measureable, realistic goals**

Benchmark realistic response rates and use these when laying out how you expect your campaign to support your wider business goals.

- **Set realistic budget**

Establish what budget you have available and exactly what this needs to cover.



Campaign creation



Be completely clear to your suppliers whether it covers media only or whether it includes media, print and production, delivery, VAT and other costs such as fulfilment, incentives, origination, creative and so on.

Assess all campaign costs in terms of cost per thousand (CPT) and evaluate them against your budget.

Your agency should be able to sense-check these costs based on their experience.

If you prefer simply to specify a particular number of customers you wish to reach, your agency should be able to work back from this to determine the budget you will require.

- **Specify timing**

State when you wish your campaign to run.

Take into account your broader business goals and capabilities and consider whether this timing is realistic. If you are looking to drive product sales, for example, consider when you want the sales themselves to happen and whether your organisation and supply chain will be ready to deliver an increase in demand.

Establish the time period over which you want to run your campaign as this will affect the response lag. You do not need to send out your entire inserts volume in one go – you may find it more effective and efficient to spread publication over a period of time to encourage a constant flow of responses, rather than a big surge.

Make sure you state clearly if your campaign is date sensitive or subject to an 'end of offer' date.

- **Detail your offer**

Make sure you have thought the workings and permutations of your offer through very thoroughly before briefing your media and creative agencies.

Ensure that it is on-brand, appropriate to your product and that it constructs the easiest, most successful, most sensitive customer journey.

For example, should you make your customer journey a one-stage, two-stage or longer process? Are you realistic to expect your customer to make a buying commitment straight away, or should you concentrate on positioning your product and asking your customer to find out more information at this stage?

If your offer requires multiple stages of response to lead up to a purchase, remember to factor in additional costs to cover the full cost of sale – such as cost of subsequent response handling, postage, collateral sent out and so on.

- **Ensure you have appropriate registrations**

If your offer asks for a 'cash with order' response and you are using inserts in a national newspaper, ensure you are registered with the Mail Order Protection Scheme (MOPS) operated by the Newspaper Publishers Association.

- **Agree insert format**

Agree the best insert format with your creative agency, taking into account your budget, goals, product and messaging, content and creative ambitions, brand values, target audience expectations and response requirements.

There are many format elements to consider, including:

- Paper quality
- Total size
- Weight
- Number of 'pages'
- Shape
- Need for a leading edge for the inserting process
- Number of folds, perforations and so on

Occasionally the size and format of the insert is agreed after the schedule has been agreed and the particular specifications of each proposed publication have been considered.



Campaign creation



Please note that sometimes creative strategy may drive the format – but it is always wise to seek a combined recommendation from your creative and media agencies.

Confirm with your media agency that any formats you are suggesting can be accepted by the proposed publications.

Always agree chosen formats in writing as part of your contract.

- **Specify testing**

Remember that one of the great things about inserts is the ability to test things easily – such as putting two variations of a creative treatment in the same publication to see which works best.

Testing is a valuable exercise – but you are likely to only have time and budget to test the most important aspects.

Think about what choices are likely to have the most impact on your response rates and production efficiency – for example, you might want to compare two different creative approaches or assess the value of a more exciting format.

Whatever you decide to test, make sure that you plan and communicate this thoroughly to ensure you get reliable and revealing results.

Step 3 – Media plan

Based on receiving a detailed brief from the client, the agency should ensure it is in a position to plan the campaign in detail and provide recommendations to the client.

Consider the following areas when planning your campaign.

- **Analyse previous campaign results**

Use any results from previous campaigns to build on core elements that work and to identify other potentially rewarding publications, approaches or audiences to test.

- **Use competitor data**

Monitor which publications your competitors are using and how frequently.

You can obtain this data via industry sources but it will only give you an indication of titles used in specific months – you will not be able to get information relating to volumes, regional splits and so on.

Your agency should also track competitor activity in terms of insert formats they are using.

- **Be inventive with your media planning**

Use previous experience, competitor research, agency expertise and thorough customer profiling to draw up a list of potential publications to use.

Consider all types of publications – including the national press and their specific supplements, consumer magazines, specialist niche magazines and customer loyalty magazines.

Your product or service might also be a natural complement to those of other brands – so consider how you might productively agree to include your insert in third-party programmes, catalogues, statement mailings, product despatches, brand literature, point-of-sale material or other space.

- **Use targeting and regional opportunities**

Consider any customer targeting and regional bias specified in the brief.

Targeting geographically is one of the greatest advantages offered by most loose insert distribution channels.

Even if a campaign is national, consider how you might be able to use regional opportunities to spread or build up the campaign more intelligently. Will one area be quicker to deliver a positive ROI that can help support the campaign in other (perhaps less fertile or mature) areas? Will success with one demographic boost the response rates of others (early adopters encouraging the early majority, for example)?



- **Consider creative formats**

Getting your insert to stand out with an immediately positive, attractive first impression is a major factor in the success of all media – and inserts boast an impressive range of opportunities to appeal to your customer using multiple senses.

Consider different insert format choices that might appropriately amplify your message or brand – or simply get you noticed – such as creative 3D folds, bound-in inserts, tip-ons, static nailing, post-its, tactile materials, die cuts, unusual shapes and sizes and so on.

- **Rationalise and plan testing thoroughly**

Seize opportunities to test different ideas – but always act with a clear idea of what you are testing and how it will be valuable whatever the result.

Do not test blindly, for the sake of it – always agree a hypothesis beforehand that you wish to prove or disprove and that will give you the insight to improve your campaign either way. For example, you might reasonably hypothesise that increasing the font size of your call-to-action will increase your response rates, or that highlighting a particular product amongst several might increase your average order value.

Use ID codes to identify your different variants and accurately monitor your test.

When put into a grid, this formalisation of test variables, media selections, ID codes, volumes and so on is known as a test matrix.

- **Allow for 'overs' in production numbers**

The agency should also consider the 'overs' required by each publication to allow for wastage during the inserting process.

This tends to be around 1% or 2% of the booked volume and should not be charged within the media cost.

Step 4 – Creative process

Accurate, productive briefings between the client and their media agency, creative agency and printer are crucial to achieving a campaign with efficient production, a successful execution and a positive ROI.

- **Agree everything in detail, in writing**

All agreements should be in writing, signed and dated by both agency and client.

Make sure that the details have been comprehensively discussed and agreed as any difference in understanding at this stage can lead to substantial errors, inefficiencies and friction later.

- **Brief all parties at the same point**

Ideally, brief all parties simultaneously at the point the media agency has confirmed maximum and minimum sizes for the insert, plus the proposed schedule.

Creative brief

Your creative brief will overlap to a certain extent with the information provided in your media brief and should include the following:

- **Creative strategy**

You may have already developed your creative strategy with your creative agency or it may be part of an ongoing strategy – but make sure that it is clarified and confirmed, ideally in writing and including any format and copy tests.

- **Target market**

Be specific and detailed in identifying your target audience. Provide profiling information alongside your campaign goals to enable your creative team to develop an extremely relevant, engaging and effective approach.



- **Budget**

Be clear and up-front about your budget for creative and origination. Whatever your budget, knowing it up front will allow your agency to pitch their ideas accordingly and deliver the best value.

Include your print and production budget here as well so that your creative team know what creative formats they can explore.

Your creative agency may also source your print – in which case you should include these considerations in your brief as well.

- **USP and offer**

State your USP, offer and any time constraints or date sensitivity of the offer.

Define whether your insert will use a one-step or two-step promotion.

- **Response mechanisms**

Choose a response mechanism that suits the action you are asking your customer to take and the fulfilment capabilities you will have at your disposal.

For example, you are unlikely to ask your customer to make a major purchase via a coupon; but you should be absolutely sure that you can affordably have enough call centre staff trained and on stand-by if you encourage response by phone.

Whatever response mechanism you fit to your offer, agree this in writing with your agency.

Specify responsibility for tracking these responses.

- **Insert specification**

Refine the specifications of your insert as different factors are agreed – including size, weight, pagination, leading edge, paper quality and so on.

Ensure that your written agreement is constantly kept up to date and confirmed by all parties to ensure full communication of changes and avoid costly confusion.

- **Deadlines**

Establish written deadlines for your creative concept to be presented, refined, tested and approved in good time to meet your print deadline.

- **Compliance**

Make sure that all parties are aware which regulations, codes and obligations they need to work within.

Highlight that all copy must conform to the CAP Code.

- **Design brief**

Please see the *Design considerations* section of this guide for further creative and design information.

Step 5 – Distribution plan

- **Agree distribution responsibilities**

At the point the media plan is signed off, agree who will distribute the inserts to the publishers once printed.

Obtain written quotes from the printer or a transport/distribution company.

Your media agency may also have a relationship with a particular transport company for all of their insert business, in which case invite them to quote as well.

Unless your campaign is due to be distributed over a very long period of time (several months or more) then storage charges should not be an issue.



- **Supply correct information for quoting**

Supply the following information for quoting purposes:

- Budget
- Volume, size and weight of the insert and number of publications
- Estimated number of delivery points

- **Supply correct information for distribution**

Once a distributor and cost has been agreed, the media agency must supply the following information in writing to the distribution company – with a copy sent to the printer for palleting and labelling purposes:

- Client name and product(s)
- Volume by source code
- Publisher delivery specification – how the inserts should be boxed and palletted
- Source code(s) per publication and respective volume
- Delivery date, address and contact name for each code
- Any special delivery instructions – for example, distributions only accepted at specified times or any requirement to phone ahead to book in a delivery

More information on this subject can be found in the *Distribution and storage* section.

Step 6 – Response handling

An insert campaign that is well planned and executed is meaningless if it is not tracked accurately.

Core to this is your response handling briefing.

- **Brief your response handling team in person**

A face-to-face briefing with your call centre and/or fulfilment provider is crucial and should cover the following:

- The purpose and objectives of your campaign
- The role of your response handling team in tracking response and fulfilling these objectives
- A list of your insert identification codes and relevant publications
- Where these identification codes can be found on your insert
- Possible tracking issues and how to combat them

- **Define all response-handling actions**

You should also consider the following process during your campaign:

- **'Dump' codes**

Assign a specific insert 'dump' code so that any miscellaneous responses that do not fit with any prepared response can still be recorded, reported, attributed to your bottom line results and apportioned back as required.

- **Seed names**

Implement seed names, via your agency, that can be tracked back at name and address level, as well as at code level, to ensure that codes are being assigned properly.

- **Weekly results at code level**

Produce a weekly feed of results at code level to identify any code anomalies and to establish any circumstances of non-insertion.



Campaign creation



- **Call monitoring**

Listen in to live calls at the call centre and adjust your script as required if any issues are identified.

Note: Any such monitoring must comply with the Telecommunications (Lawful Business Practice) (Interception of Communications) Regulations 2000 and both call participants must be told that such monitoring is taking place. If the client and/or agency intend to keep a copy of the recording, such processing must comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 and, amongst other obligations, the call centre staff and inbound callers/outbound call recipients must be informed of the uses to which the data will be put.

- **Track online results**

A significant part of the impact of inserts is actually felt in different spaces – online, in-store or in brand perception.

DMA research suggests that 24-76% of insert response is delivered online.

(Source: [How much response goes online? DMA, 2011](#))

Build in metrics from the start of your campaign that will allow you to accurately measure the impact of your insert campaign across all channels.

Media planning

Provide your media agency with all the information they will need, in writing, before they can commence planning. See the *Step 2 – Media brief* section of this guide above for an outline of the information required.

- **Clarify all required media details**

Once the media agency has established a candidate list of media they will need to ascertain the following information:

- **Frequency of publication**

Publication frequency is vital to forecasting response and conversion lag times.

- **Circulation**

Find out the audited circulation figures. If figures are not audited, identify how the circulation has been quantified.

- **Print run for specified issue**

The actual print run of a promoted issue will likely have a large variance from the stated circulation.

- **Circulation per region**

If you are taking specific regions then your agency will need to supply the volume to be taken per region.

- **Minimum volume**

Find out the minimum volume that the publisher will take into their publication or a region.

- **Recommended volume**

Your agency will need to recommend the volume to be placed per publication.

- **Overs**

Calculate the number of overs that will be required.

- **Codes**

Provided by the client, these will need to be allocated to each test cell for each publication.

Subscription and newsstand volumes may need to be identified, costed and coded separately.

- **Rate card cost**

Provide the rate card cost for comparison with negotiated rates.



- **Negotiated cost**
Agree the negotiated cost in gross or net, dependent on the client's requirements.
 - **Agency commission**
Agree the rate of commission in writing.
 - **Dates**
Clarify the delivery, on-sale and cover dates.
 - **Inserts per issue**
Make sure you know the number of inserts accepted by the publisher per issue.
 - **Exclusivity**
Some publications offer exclusivity, others do not – this can potentially affect your results.
 - **Polywrapped issues**
Where possible, take advantage of polywrapping for newsstand issues to avoid inserts dropping out.
 - **Packaging for distribution**
Determine how the inserts should be packed ready for delivery to the publisher's bindery as this can vary.
See the *Best practice at the bindery in the inserting process* section of this guide for further information.
- **Option the inserts volume**
At this point the media agency then options the insert volume agreed with the client, subject to availability in the target publications.

Optioning is the process of reserving your specified volume in a publication in advance of the formal booking and payment process.

Should another advertiser then wish to book the same volume, you must either confirm the option as a booking or release the option to the other advertiser.

At the point of optioning the media agency must also forward a sample of the proposed insert to the publisher for approval. Booking is not possible until samples have been supplied, unless it is a repeat of an insert placed with the publisher on a previous occasion.

Media buying

- **Confirm booking in writing**
Once the campaign is agreed and signed off by the client, the media buyer confirms the booking in writing with the relevant media owners, exclusive of the overs required by each publication.
 - **Exclude overs**
The client does not pay a media cost for the overs.
 - **Confirm requirements**
At this point all of the relevant information above is confirmed in writing and both the publisher and media agency supply paperwork detailing the booking.
 - **Confirm codes**
The media agency also confirms code(s) allocated to the booking.
 - **Confirm delivery**
The media owner supplies full written delivery specification and address and then forwards this to the client and printer/distribution company.
 - **Confirm schedule**
The media agency then supplies the client with confirmed written schedule.



Campaign management

The final stage in the process for the media buyer in terms of execution of the campaign is the campaign management, which involves the following:

- **Delivery notes**

As per the schedule, on the date that the delivery is due to be made to the publisher the company delivering the inserts will obtain a delivery note as proof of delivery.

This should then be forwarded to the media agency.

The delivery note should contain all the relevant information including:

- Date
- Publication
- Client name
- Product
- Volume
- Code(s)

- **Confirmation calls**

The media agency should also telephone the publisher to confirm receipt of the delivery on the expected date.

The media agency may also ring the publisher on the specified distribution date to confirm the distribution is still on schedule.

- **Flag up any issues**

Any issues, such as problems with the insertion equipment or late printing of the magazine, can then be identified and a new distribution date identified.

- **Notify client and response team**

The agency should then amend the schedule and notify the client

The client should, in turn, notify their call centre or response team to expect calls on that code at a delayed time.

- **Certificate of Insertion**

Once distribution is complete, the media agency should request a Certificate Of Insertion (COI).

The DMA approved COI can be found here:

[\[INCLUDE PDF DOWNLOAD OR LINK HERE\]](#)

Creative

Strategy

Before you start to create your insert, you will naturally need to decide what task you want it to achieve and how you want the customer journey to work.

A few key questions to ask are:

- What response do you want the insert to elicit?



- What action do you want your customer to take? Are your expectations realistic? How can you make this action as easy, rewarding or entertaining as possible to encourage greater response?
- Are you selling from the insert directly, looking to inform customers before their next shopping trip or purely positioning your brand?
- How will your insert work alongside and complement other marketing activity – online and offline?
- Are the goals of your insert isolated – ie measured on direct returns – or is the insert intended to put in the groundwork for success via a different channel, such as point-of-sale or search marketing?
- How will your insert complement and leverage your brand values, identity and tone of voice?
- What factors will affect the way your customer perceives your insert? Will the choice of publication significantly influence your design? Will your customer first see your insert at home, at work, during their commute or in another situation – and how can this inform your approach?

Key creative considerations

- **Format and production specifications**

Take into consideration all mechanical limitations regarding size, weight, leading edge requirements and so on. Get as much information as possible before you start to turn your concept into a design.

- **Target audience**

Always keep your customer in mind and design your insert to catch their eye and appeal to their tastes.

BUT do not pander blindly to stereotypes or assumptions – you only risk causing offence and brand damage, rather than delivering positive results.

Consider your customer's expectations regarding use of colour, tone of voice and imagery – should you align with these expectations or disrupt them?

- **Host publication**

Take the look of the host publication into account. Reflecting the look, feel and visual language can add to your insert's credibility and give a perceived editorial endorsement – but you may decide it is appropriate to sacrifice some of this in search of stand-out or to support a particular message.

- **Relevance of media**

Build on the affinities of your product or service to the values and interests of your host publication – and those of your customer.

- **Format**

Consider the format and impact of your insert. Aim to balance creative ambition against budget

- **Take VAT considerations into account**

If your insert is to qualify as VAT exempt or 0% rated – relevant to sectors that cannot normally reclaim VAT, such as financial services – find out the criteria required and ensure that your design meets these.

See the *VAT mitigation* section within the DMA's *Advertising mail* guide to gain a working understanding.

Consult your agency, mailing house or VAT advisor for further advice.

- **Personalisation**

Your insert can potentially be personalised to readers of specific publications using digital printing techniques.

Consult your printer or mailing house to understand the options available to you.



Copywriting

- **Take advantage of creative copy**

Since your insert is going inside a publication, you can be confident that your customer is happy to read good copy – so seize the opportunity!

- **Your headline is critical – so craft it carefully**

Your headline is vital if you want to grab attention – make sure it conveys the right tone as well as a message or idea that your customer will find hard to ignore.

- **Target your body copy to ideal prospects**

Make sure that your body copy gets straight to the point. You're not trying to keep everyone reading, at this stage – only those who are going to be genuinely interested in your product – so do not be scared to make your message very specific, quickly, to grab hold of the few readers who will appreciate your offer and potentially become customers.

- **Match your style to the publication**

Consider the tone, style and content of the publication in which your insert will be placed – after all, your customer has gone out of their way to pick up or even buy the publication, so consider that an endorsement of its content and match your approach to fit.

- **Layer your copy**

Some of your readers will be interested in becoming customers immediately; others might become customers in the future.

So layer your content accordingly. Include the detailed offer that will make it easy for customers to make a decision to purchase right now; but also ensure that your insert works at a glance to give future customers the right impression of your brand and a very top-level awareness of your product.

Remember that many purchasing decisions – especially for costlier products, longer-term services or aspirational brands – are effectively made months or even many years in advance.

- **Copy compliance**

Make sure your copy complies with the CAP code.

Copy should be legal, decent and truthful.

Special rules might apply in certain situations – for example, if your target market is under 16 years of age or if your campaign is for alcohol, a motor vehicle, a health and beauty product, a financial product, betting and gaming or for an employment or business opportunity.

Check the CAP Code for pertinent rules:

www.cap.org.uk

Types of insert

Below is by no means an exhaustive list of insert types and new formats are being developed by suppliers and publishers all the time – so always conduct your own research to find out what is possible for your insert campaign.

But here are a few of the more common types and terminologies:

Furnished outserts

Furnished outserts are inserts that are physically attached to the outside of the publication – usually on the front cover.

Typical outserts include CDs, product samples or other give-aways on the front of magazines.



Loose inserts

Loose inserts can be anything from a single sheet to a mini catalogue and are tucked into the main publication.

Consider the following questions:

- Do you need many pages to sell your product or service?
- Do you need more than one piece in order to get your message across?
- Are you looking to sell directly from the insert itself, to generate enquiries or just to promote the brand?

Furnished inserts

Furnished inserts are inserts that are physically attached to the publication – usually bound-in or glued ('tipped') on, as described below.

Bound-in inserts

Bound-in inserts are fixed into the main publication, giving the feeling that they are part of it – and tend to force the publication to open at your page.

Staying attached, they have a longer life and therefore offer more chances to be noticed by your customer. The publication might also be handed around and find your customer this way.

They are normally the sole insert in a publication and give you more time to sell and tell a story – with time and space to explain, demonstrate and persuade.

Tip-on inserts

Tip-ons are inserts that are glued onto a relevant advert page within the publication. Tip-ons definitely give you two shots at grabbing your customer's attention, which is particularly useful for shared readerships, and allow you to use this additional card as a response mechanism or creative ploy.

Your insert is also supported by the advertising space. Tip-ons have long been used as an ideal way to provide product samples, such as perfumes or toiletries, in tandem with a branding advert.

Tactile, three-dimensional and potentially useful, tip-ons can be a very impactful way to increase your customer's involvement with your insert.

Brochure

Brochures can run to many pages and are typically used to promote a range of products, acting as a mini catalogue or voucher book, or a single high-value purchase with a lot to say, such as a luxury car or a holiday destination.

Brochures can have a very high impact – especially if you use the space to provide meaningful, useful content to your customer.

For example, if your brochure is going in a gardening supplement then you might include valuable tips and ideas that your customer will appreciate.

Brochures can also benefit from having the gravitas and appearance of editorial content – but can also be the first inserts to fall out and get lost if not polywrapped.



Post-it

A post-it is a sticker attached to, usually, the front cover of a supplement.

They can be peeled off and re-stuck elsewhere by your customer – so if your post-it is truly useful and worth keeping then it may just find its way onto your customer's fridge, desk, noteboard or computer screen, where it can remain for some time.

Use these unique possibilities when conceptualising your insert – concentrate on finding the hook or piece of information that your customer cannot throw away.

Bellyband

A bellyband is a belt of paper wrapped around the outside of a publication.

Bellybands are highly visible and have to be physically removed from the publication before it can be read – so guarantee some level of interaction from your customer.

However, make sure that you provide a sufficient reward for this engagement – otherwise your insert is effectively just an obstacle in your customer's way.

Be creative about how you can use this format to express a relevant, entertaining message about your product or brand.

Special covers

Many publications offer you different opportunities to add a special cover – often an additional cover over the top of the publication's real front cover, or a two-page or three-page spread that unfolds from the inside of the front cover.

Special covers give you the opportunity to effectively take over an issue.

If your cover completely wraps around the real cover then you will likely need to put the publication's masthead and key details (such as price, issue and barcode) in your advert – which can give a real feel of partnership or synergy between your product and the publication's brand.

Creative formats

Inserts, being a physical and bespoke medium, offer you a wide array of creative elaborations that can stimulate almost all your customer's senses to create greater impact and a longer-lasting recall.

- **Use all the senses**

Touch, smell, and even taste can be used as well as visual stimuli – whilst to a much more limited extent inserts can even use sound if your creative idea drives it.

Inserts are foldable, scratchable, tearable, peelable, stickable, textured, scented, glittery, made of different materials, moveable and malleable – so be creative, even on a budget.

- **Investigate production techniques available**

Can you take advantage of special production techniques to make your insert more engaging?

Perfuming, latex, scratches and reveals, lenticulation and the addition of stickers are just a few of the options available to you.

- **Consider paper stocks**

Can you use an unusual paper stock to add impact to your piece?



- **Consult your production and media partners**

Ask your printer and production specialists to show you what is possible and conduct your own research to stimulate your ideas.

Do not forget to talk to the media owner as well – not only to ensure technical compliance but to get some bright ideas that could make your insert work even better.

A good media owner will be imaginative and ambitious in the options they can offer you – after all, their job is to promote their media space, expand their service and keep their readers interested.

Response mechanisms

Telephone response

- **Include advertiser's full details**

If you offer a telephone response mechanism, you must state the name and telephone number of the advertiser.

- **Understand your inbound call obligations**

See the *Data capture by telephone* section of the [Data guide](#) for further information on your data capture and customer service obligations.

Postal response

If you wish your customer to send you a physical response, you will need to pay special attention to creating a postal response device for them to complete and send back to you.

- **Make response sealable**

Postal response devices should be sealable if you are asking your customer to include their details.

- **Meet postage specifications**

Make sure your response form, once separated and ready to return, conforms to Royal Mail's minimum standards for weight and dimensions.

- **Include full details on retained part**

If you include a written response mechanism, you must include the advertiser's full contact details outside any coupon or other response device so that it can be retained by the respondent.

Data capture forms

- **Ensure effective data capture forms**

Accurate response data is absolutely crucial to your marketing and business success.

Follow the data capture planning and design guidelines in the *Data capture forms* section of the [Data guide](#) for detailed advice on how to structure and design your form to ensure that the information you get back is correct, usable and efficient to process.



Environmentally responsible campaigns

Designing environmentally responsible print

Design and print

- **Target as precisely as possible**
As well as improving the commercial performance of your campaign, excellent targeting drives environmental performance.
Mis-targeted mailings are inevitably a waste of materials.
Work hard with your mailing data to ensure you keep mis-targeted mail to an absolute minimum.
- **Consult your print specialist**
Consult with your printer and paper supplier to select the most environmentally favourable print options available for your campaign.
- **Optimise design to minimise wastage**
Use the minimum practicable page size and pagination for your communication.
Test different formats and paginations to establish optimum efficiency.
- **Avoid excess packaging**
Avoid excessive packaging – although it is important that you still ensure that your collateral is packaged sufficiently to avoid it being damaged, spoiled and ultimately wasted.
- **Use efficient formats**
Use formats and paginations that are efficient for printing – minimising ‘trimming’ waste at source.
- **Avoid ink-heavy designs**
Design communications that are impactful but minimise the coverage and use of ink.
Using less ink is not only more environmentally friendly in its own right – it also means less energy used.
- **Encourage customer to re-use**
Better even than encouraging you customer to recycle is if you can create a mailer that they will pass on to others.
WaterAid do this on their printed collateral, asking their supporters to share it after reading.
- **Encourage recycling**
Ensure that your printed communications always carry a message and/or logos encouraging your customer to recycle them.

Recyclability

Paper and materials

- **Use recyclable materials**
Select materials that can be easily recycled, from the kerbside, by the majority of UK local authorities.
- **Avoid mixing materials**
Use materials that enable the entire item to be placed into one household recycling container.
Mixed materials are more difficult to sort and recycle and are more likely to end up in landfill, even if the component materials would individually be recyclable.



- **Only use certified sustainable paper mills**

Source all paper products from paper mills that operate an environmental management system that accords with the standards of ISO14001 and/or the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS).

- **Only use non-chlorinated bleaching methods**

Only use paper that has been produced using non-chlorinated bleaching methods.

Specified for use are:

- Elemental Chlorine Free (ECF)
- Processed Chlorine Free (PCF)
- Total Chlorine Free (TCF) – including oxidising and reductive bleaching

- **Use recycled paper or managed stock**

Any paper that you use – including envelopes, contents and inserts – should contain:

- Recycled fibre from recovered waste paper

AND/OR

- Virgin fibre sourced from a forest certification scheme approved by Central Point of Expertise on Timber Procurement (CPET).

Note that paper from managed, certified forests can be more environmentally-friendly than recycled stock.

For more information on CPET, visit:

www.cpet.org.uk/

- **Ensure wrapping meets OPRL**

Do not use plastic envelopes or polywraps that do not meet the requirements of the On Pack Recycling Label (OPRL) scheme (including displaying the OPRL logo).

- **Do not use rubber-based adhesives**

Avoid using rubber-based adhesives in any part of your mailing or insert piece.

Ink and finishes

- **Avoid lamination**

Printed pieces should not use laminate finishes.

- **Avoid UV finishes**

Printed pieces should not use ultra-violet finishes.

Recycling statements

- **Include a recycling statement on all printed marketing**

All mail or insert pieces must display the 'Recycle Now' logo and/or statement on the outside to encourage your customer to recycle it.

The following are examples of statements that could be included on printed communications:

"Re-using is even better than recycling – please pass me on to someone else once you've read me. Thank you!"

"I'm on a mission to spread the word about [benefit] – please pass me on to someone else once you've read me."

"We care about the environment and work to minimise the usage and wastage of materials used for this message. We hope you found our communication useful – but if you do not plan to keep it, please recycle it."

"Please recycle this communication when you have finished with it."



"Please recycle me."

"Read, Respond, Recycle!"

Recycling logos

- **Use a recycling logo on all printed materials**

There are multiple campaigns to promote recycling in the United Kingdom.

Use the familiar logos associated with these campaigns to increase the impact and success of your recycling message.

You may use these logos on their own, without any additional message.

- **Recycle Now**

Recycle Now is a campaign to encourage more people to recycle more things, more often and to understand the positive benefits of these actions.

For further information, visit:

www.recyclenow.com

- **Downloadable logos**

partners.wrap.org.uk

- **Zero Waste Scotland**

Zero Waste Scotland is a campaign to promote reduction, reuse and recycling of household waste in Scotland.

For further information, visit:

www.zerowastescotland.org.uk

- **Waste Awareness Wales**

Waste Awareness Wales provides information to the public about managing resources more sustainably and reducing waste.

For further information, visit:

www.wasteawarenesswales.org.uk

Mailing house environmental management

Your mailing house should maintain an Environmental Management System (EMS) that broadly conforms to the standard of ISO14001, including:

- **Documentation**

Documentation setting out your commitment to environmental management.

- **Baselines**

Your documented baseline for environmental performance.

- **Compliance controls**

Identification of appropriate environmental legislation and other environmental requirements.

Documentation describing the controls that you have in place to ensure compliance with these.

- **Targets**

Formulation of environmental objectives, targets and programmes.

- **Checks**

Regular and systematic checks of conformance and achievement against targets, and implementation of appropriate corrective action.



Campaign creation



- **Reviews**
Regular reviews of commitments and targets by the senior management.
- **Meet all environmental responsibilities**
Supply of services that meet all the specified requirements under the *Recyclability, Procurement and use of paper products* and *Inks and finishes* sections above.
- **Sub-contractor controls**
Appropriate controls to ensure that sub-contractors fully meet the specifications of your scheme and provide auditable evidence that the provision of their services is fully compliant.
- **Sub-contractor compliance**
All print preparation and mailing house activities outsourced to external suppliers should be placed with suppliers that have ISO14001 certification.



Campaign delivery



Production

Working with your printer

- **Involve your printer during the creative stage**

When designing your insert, it is often beneficial to involve your printer in the early stages of the process so that they can outline your options and add value.

- **Understand your printer's strengths and opportunities**

Each different printing organisation will have different printing presses and areas of expertise that will allow you to find the best match in terms of printing costs and design.

For example, trimming an insert down to size involves an inevitable waste of expensive materials. You might be able to avoid this by finding a printer who can produce your insert at the right size first time – perhaps using a short cut-off press, which enables different sized inserts to be produced without wasting paper.

- **Provide sample to publisher early**

Make sure that your printer is able to supply a final sample of your insert to your publisher for approval at least two weeks prior to the delivery date.

Printing brief

- **Provide a detailed written brief**

When you supply a specification to a printer for your print project, include as much detail as possible and provide this information in writing.

This will enable your printer to provide an accurate quotation, based on using the best presses for the job.

You will need to specify the following:

- **Quantity**

Be as accurate as possible with the quantity of inserts you require.

Allow extra for inevitable errors at different stages of the printing, delivery and inserting processes.

- **Pagination**

The order in which the pages of your item should appear.

Depending on your production method, any booklet will commonly need pages in a multiple of four as each additional sheet of folded paper gives another four sides once bound.

- **Colour**

For example, whether your design will require two colour, four colour or monochrome printing.

- **Paper weight**

Give paper choice major consideration, especially if your product is to be mailed, as weight will greatly affect the cost of postage. Saving a few grams per item could reduce the price of your mailing significantly.

- **File format**

Clarify how your data and artwork should be supplied – for example, as ISDN, PDF, Quark/Illustrator files and so on.

- **Product finishing**

How do you want your product to be finished? Consider how it should be folded and whether it should be stitched, stapled or perfect bound.

- **Packaging**

It is important to specify in writing how the inserts should be packed ready for delivery to the bindery – for example, bulk packed, cartoned or other?



Some insertion houses have very specific delivery requirements. If these are not met, they can and do refuse deliveries. This then involves repacking, which can have a detrimental effect on your schedule as well as additional costs – and, of course, you risk missing the insertion date.

Ensure that you have clarified the requirements of the bindery before you brief the printer, including:

- Should the bulk packs on pallets be boxed or shrink-wrapped?
- Do they require special pallets?
- Does the recipient require copy to be in specific bundle sizes?
- Should the pallets be a maximum weight?
- **Delivery requirements**
What delivery is required? Is it 'ex works' (no delivery costs included) or multiple single point delivery?
- **Schedule required**
Finally, inform your printer of your schedule in as much detail as possible.

If you are able to specify when data will be available and when delivery is required, this can be of real benefit to both the printer and yourselves.

If you leave the schedule information to the last minute this may affect the price and may also compromise where and with whom you eventually print.

Inserting process

Delivery of inserts

- **Book in your delivery in advance**
Ensure that you book in the delivery of your inserts at the bindery, stating the following information:
 - Number of pallets to be booked in
 - Total quantity of supplied material
 - Publication title
 - Publication issue date
 - Product type (polythene, strapping etc)
 - Product name
 - Name of haulier
 - Any codes/regional information or relevant designation of the product
 - Supplier name and contact number
- **Ensure deliveries are labelled correctly**
If the inserts are put into cartons, each carton must be labelled as above.
Remember that if you do not correctly conform to the bindery's regulations, you risk the production of your job being delayed and, potentially, your publication date being missed.

You can download the DMA's template label here:

[\[INSERT PDF PAGE DOWNLOAD/LINK HERE\]](#)



- **Take responsibility for correct details**

You are responsible for ensuring that the bindery has all of the appropriate information and that you have conformed to the delivery specifications and schedule.

- **Ensure safe delivery**

Please ensure that your inserts are delivered flat, dry and in good condition.

Ensure that you conform to the regulations set by the bindery.

- **Ensure deliveries are signed for**

Get a signature to confirm safe delivery of your inserts between any two parties in the process.

- **Communicate any changes or delays**

If your inserts are in danger of being delivered late, ensure that you communicate with your bindery.

Remember that if your insert is going into a weekly publication there will be very little leeway when it comes to late delivery.

Binding different insert types

Different formats of inserts are treated differently at the bindery and are therefore subject to different regulations.

- **Bound-in inserts**

Bound-in inserts must be supplied with a head trim and spine grind off allowance.

This allowance varies by publication so ensure that you check this with the bindery before you finalise the printing of your insert.

Inserts must be supplied in minimum turns, usually of 50, and as flat as possible.

- **Magna-stripped products**

Check the head trim allowance that must be left on these inserts.

Bulky products can cause slow running in the bindery.

Most binderies will be willing to carry out trials before accepting your job.

- **Scent strips**

Ensure the scent strips are secured all the way along the flap, not just at the head and foot.

- **Scent patches**

If patches are quite bulky, fewer inserts may be placed in a hopper at a time.

If an extra person is needed to fill the hoppers, this may incur extra costs.

- **Glued tip-ons and sachets**

Tip-on inserts can appear on either the front page of a section (if magazine knocks to the head), or the back page of the section (if the magazine knocks to the foot).

It is vitally important that you provide a positional guide for your tip-on insert.

Most tip-ons are rectangular in shape but many binderies can accept those with a more unusual shape.

If the tip-on is an unusual size the bindery can sometimes make a 'block' or cradle to fit inside the hopper. The sachet or tip-on will then sit inside the block to ensure that it is held securely.

- **Folded inserts**

Most binderies would have difficulty in inserting certain types of inserts.

For example, if an insert is multi-paged then it is essential the folding is accurate.

Roll folds can be inserted because they have a closed edge – but a concertina (or 'Z fold') would not be suitable, as it does not have a closed edge.



Insert positioning

All loose inserts in a magazine will be inserted at the same point.

This position is completely random – a bindery cannot mechanically place loose inserts between specific pages.

- **Static nailing**

Some binderies offer you 'static nailing', which enables you to insert your product at the beginning of a particular section.

For example, if your product is a fashion insert then you might be able to insert it at the beginning of the fashion section.

This could help better targeting for your product.

- **Bulk packing**

Loose inserts may be bulk packed but they must be supplied in minimum turns of approximately 50.

They must be supplied flat and dry.

Overs

If there are any inserts remaining after the insertion process is complete then the bindery should inform you of the remaining amount.

- **Agree disposal of overs**

Overs must not be destroyed without the consent of the advertiser.

Most binderies stipulate that they will dispose of any overs within seven days of publication of a weekly publication and 14 days of publication of a monthly publication.

Make sure you have agreed how overs will be dealt with after publication.

Distribution and storage

At the end of the print process your inserts will require distribution to various bindery, mailing house and fulfilment centre locations.

This may involve the movement of many pallets over long distances, often with critical time deadlines to be met.

- **Choose appropriate transport services**

You can use the transport services of your printer, a third party transport company or a specialist insert control company.

A specialist insert control company will typically offer additional checks to help improve response rates.

- **Keep communication smooth**

The key element at this stage of the process is information flow.

Ensure that all parties have agreed timings and that critical information and updates are shared.

- **Separate out costs**

To make your cost comparison of alternative services easy, ask for costs for print and delivery to be specified as separate elements.

- **Provide full information required**

Provide the following campaign information to allow an accurate distribution estimate:

- Weight of insert



- Maximum number of inserts on a full pallet
 - Total campaign volume
 - Number of delivery locations
 - Duration of campaign
 - Highlight overseas delivery requirements
- **Ensure safe transportation**
The party responsible for transportation and/or storage must ensure that the inserts are kept in a safe, dry and secure environment and that sufficient care is taken to ensure that they are not damaged.
 - **Allow contingency**
Allow a contingency for unforeseen problems – or agree with the different parties that extra costs will be borne by the company deemed to be at fault.

Handling these issues in advance should help avoid difficult negotiations after the event.
 - **Have adequate insurance**
It is advisable to have an adequate insurance policy to cover any possible eventualities.

Transportation (distribution)

The movement of a pallet of inserts from the printer to a bindery should be a straightforward process.

However, things can and do go wrong, leading to missed insertions, confusion of response rates and a lot of wasted time.

To minimise these potential hazards, take the following steps and agree them in writing between all parties:

- **Control the distribution decision**
A number of distribution options are available. It is not a one-size-fits-all process.

Be clear that the method and organisation chosen is right for you and not just a default solution.
- **Identify who is responsible for communicating critical information**
Agree who is responsible for compiling a comprehensive schedule – including all information from the advertiser, the media agency and the printer.

Elements of this information are critical to your delivery company. They need to be advised early and immediately updated with any changes that occur.
- **State reporting requirements**
Include your need for management information within your distribution specification.

It is possible to receive reports that highlight pre- and post-delivery information.

Decide who will have the responsibility to provide this information – your agency, your printer or your distribution company?
- **Investigate additional services available**
Decide if you will benefit from added value services.

For example, will you need to store your inserts once printed – and can this be done within the distribution cost?

Will you need samples from the print run before distribution?

If a problem arises after delivery of a specific source code, will you be able to get a sample from the actual stock that was delivered?

If consideration is given to the four areas above, then your distribution activity will hopefully be a stress-free part of your insert campaign – allowing you to focus on your results.



Common issues – and their solutions

Given the colossal logistics involved in getting the right insert distributed in the right way, it is not surprising that things can and often do go wrong.

It is important to know what these common issues are and at least not be surprised or confused if they arise.

The issues below have been grouped in roughly the order that they happen – or can be avoided.

As always, it is vitally important to agree things in advance and to record this in writing, with a contract signed and dated by all parties, so that you know what needs to be done, by whom, and swift action can be taken.

- **Inserts incorrectly coded**

That all important unique code on the reply device will only be reproduced if the producers of the inserts were given the correct code to use, and/or the typesetting was done and checked properly. It's a bit late afterwards!

- **Solution**

- Diligence at all pre-delivery levels is crucial.

- Weird response results can often be traced back to a batch code that confuses response analysis – typically when the code has been used before.

- **Inserts incorrectly packaged**

Binderies issue specifications on how inserts should be delivered. If these specifications have been issued, then do not ignore them – it sometimes causes rejection and hence a missed distribution, which can be very costly.

- **Solution**

- Most printers of the original insert are experienced enough to comply with pallet and bundle specifications, but you may need to emphasise such requirements to those who are less experienced.

- **Inserts damaged**

Every printer experiences damaged or incompetently packed inserts being delivered.

This includes poor labelling, not conforming to packaging instructions, or sloppy assembly before the inserts are delivered to the bindery.

- **Solution**

- Use this guide as a basis for agreement for all parties involved – thus minimising the chance of differences of understanding or standards coming into conflict.

- As with any area of your business, use reputable suppliers that have such endorsements as DMA membership and are therefore bound to operate according to the DMA Code.

- **Inserts delivered out of specification**

Despite publishers issuing unequivocal mechanical specifications for inserts, some get printed too large, too small, too heavy, too light or to some other non-conforming standard, such as an insufficient gripping edge.

- **Solution**

- Get hold of the publication insert specifications as early as possible – and pass them on to your designer or producer as a matter of priority.

- **Surplus or insufficient inserts delivered**

Ending up with the incorrect number of inserts is one of the most common problems logistical issues.

It may be that your media buyer has been mis-informed, the goalposts have moved in terms of the publication's print run or the original printer has sent too many or too few.

- **Solution**

- It is normal to send a small percentage of 'overs' to allow the bindery to test the hoppers, or to rectify inserting problems.



Campaign delivery



However, sending too many does not actually help anyone – and too little means a weaker distribution. Either way, it is a waste.

Consult with your printer and bindery to ensure that you benefit from their recommendations.

- **Delivery instructions supplied late**

The sooner all instructions are gathered and passed on to the insert printer, the better.

However, sometimes the late supply of instructions cannot be avoided – such as when the booking has been made at the last minute.

Whatever the reason, things are more likely to go wrong when delivery instructions come late.

- **Solution**

Keep a checklist to help identify when instructions have and have not been received, ask for confirmation of receipt and take appropriate action if they have not been acknowledged.

- **Inserts stuck together**

A nightmare to the binder. Insufficient drying time or facilities are usually to blame.

- **Solution**

Everyone is a loser if this happens, so quality control is paramount.

Ensure that your schedule gives your printer plenty of time to produce your inserts correctly and be able to accommodate any problems.

- **Late delivery of inserts**

If inserts are delivered past the deadline then all manner of problems can occur.

- **Solution**

If it is known that a deadline is unlikely to be met, then keep your bindery informed to give them the best chance to make contingency arrangements.

Excellent, timely communication and a little charm can work wonders!

- **Multiple of same insert in magazine**

Have you ever opened a copy of a magazine or newspaper and seen more than one copy of the same insert?

If this problem occurs then it could have been caused by a drying problem when the inserts were printed, causing them to stick together, or possibly through double pick-ups from the hopper in the binding process.

If it happens in just a few copies then it is an acceptable 'par for the course' element of inserting.

However, if it affects a significant percentage then it is a real problem.

- **Solution**

It should be possible to determine if the problem is a result of not conforming to insert specification, poor printing or print finishing, poor storage or the inserting process being imperfect.

Ensure that everything has been agreed in a written contract and tracked so that your claim for compensation, if appropriate, can be directed to the appropriate party.

- **Incorrect inserts inserted**

An insert appears in the right issue for an advertiser but it is the wrong insert.

This can happen when a high volume insert user is running different creative treatments – but either there has been an error in delivery or there has been a mix up at the bindery.

- **Solution**

Ensure highly accurate and explicit labelling to diminish this occasional problem. But human error can still occur.

Check actual magazines and the inserts they contain for accuracy. You can do this by looking at voucher copies as well as spot-checking at various retail points.



- **Delivered inserts go missing**

A more common matter than some might imagine! The issue is almost always resolved within hours as they are tracked down within the bindery.

- **Solution**

Most truck drivers can be quickly contacted and asked for the name of whoever signed for the delivery at the bindery and time of the delivery. Once this is fed back to the publisher or bindery, the inserts are usually easily found.

It is easy to forget how busy and big the binderies can be, so a little patience is called for.

- **Inserts going as outserts**

For magazines that are polywrapped and posted, it is possible that the insert has been inserted outside of the magazine, but inside the polywrap.

This may or not have been agreed or desired.

- **Solution**

Ensure that the position of your insert is clearly agreed – do not just assume that it is obvious!

- **Too many inserts in the same copy**

Response rates dip in relation to the number of inserts contained in a single magazine or newspaper. So a single (solus) insert will fare better than if it is one of nine.

Sensible publishers realise that over-marketing in the short-term will end up losing repeat customers, so keep insert numbers to sensible levels per issue.

- **Solution**

Keep an eye on samples of magazines to analyse why your results are lower or higher than expected.

It may be appropriate to agree response expectations in advance, with this forming part of any written contract.

- **Unable to deliver at the bindery**

This can be the result of bays being full, insufficient staff numbers or the bindery simply not expecting your shipment.

- **Solution**

Communication before your delivery is essential – but if this situation does arise, a rapid exchange of co-operative, understanding calls will usually find a solution.

- **Non-insertion or only partial insertion**

“Where’s my insert?” It can happen that the one copy of the magazine that you have got hold of does not contain your insert. That is not unusual, as the odd copy will be missed in the rapid inserting process.

The worst-case scenario is that something catastrophic has happened and your inserts never made it into the issue.

More common is a late increase in the print run of the journal, resulting in more copies in circulation than were provided for.

- **Solution**

Establish if the problem has occurred in other copies, preferably sampled beyond one region.

Ask to see the bindery’s specimens: the best binderies keep copies of publications as they come off the binding machinery. This way, it can be shown whether your insert was correctly inserted and which other inserts it went in with.

Better still, polybagged mailings kept in this way prove whether the insert was indeed inserted.

Once you know the true situation, refer back to your written contract, if needs be, to support any claim for compensation you might make.

- **Inserts enclosed with a competitor**

The results for both competitors are often adversely affected, so no one wins.



Campaign delivery



It may be a simple error, or sheer negligence.

- **Solution**

Insist on exclusivity for your product.

- **Late change to planned distribution**

Publishing is a highly competitive market, so it is understandable that print runs may vary.

It might be that there is a late decision to publicise an issue, due to advantageous advertising rates becoming available, or that a breaking story of high interest requires a larger print run.

Conversely, the distribution volume, targeting or methodology can change from what was understood at the time of booking.

- **Solution**

Variances can cause disgruntlement or contractual disputes.

Establish exactly how serious the change in distribution was, what was originally agreed and what the impact has been.

Ideally, all parties will communicate such changes to each other as and when they arrive – without delay – and you should state this requirement explicitly in your written contract.

- **No one taking responsibility when things go wrong**

The worst kind of dispute is when each party denies that it is their responsibility.

- **Solution**

The customer is not always right, so the more objective evidence is available, the easier it is to sort out any insert distribution problems.

Carefully record and retain communications before, during and after a booking/delivery is made to help resolve such issues.

- **Disputes taking a long time to resolve**

Despite everyone's good intentions, things can and do occasionally go wrong.

With the DMA promoting high universal standards, publishers, printers, agencies and advertisers are increasingly following best practice guidelines and are getting better at resolving disputes.

- **Solution**

Keep detailed, dated and written records and maintain a professional and co-operative attitude.

Follow this DMA guide throughout your projects – and ask other parties to do the same – to ensure that you are all following the same standards and that these are clear and unarguable.

- **Inexperience or incompetence**

Just because the person you are dealing with has an official insert responsibility, it does not necessarily mean they know what they are doing!

Problems can occur when inserts are not a sufficiently important matter to justify a dedicated resource and responsibility is passed to someone inexperienced – leading to mistakes, poor process or incorrect information.

- **Solution**

Keep as much information as possible in written form so that issues are more likely to be spotted in advance and, if the worst comes to the worst, responsibility for problems can be more easily attributed later on.



Certificates of Insertion

Certificates of Insertion (COIs) serve as a statement by or on behalf of the publisher as to how many inserts were placed in a particular issue.

They allow you to be confident in the number of inserts that you consider during your response analysis.

There are occasions when a COI is at variance with what has actually been distributed. It is more likely that this is down to an error as it is rare that a COI is deliberately falsified.

- **Send COI within four days**

A COI should be sent to the publisher within four working days of the finish of the inserting operation.

- **Estimate overs**

The certificate of insertion should include an estimate of the number of overs.

- **Use the DMA approved COI**

The DMA Inserts Committee has established an industry-approved COI format that will help you to increase accuracy of reporting.

You can download the DMA COI [here](#):



Campaign response



Results analysis

The final process in your campaign will be results analysis.

- **Analyse for now and the future**

As well as measuring your current campaign and comparing it with previous results, you should analyse your campaign for vital insights to dial into future campaigns.

- **Assess against campaign goals**

Measure your campaign against the objectives you defined in your original brief.

You will typically be looking for measures such as:

- Response rates
- Conversion rates
- Cost per lead
- Cost per sale
- ROI

- **Assess all factors**

Consider all factors when analysing your results, including:

- **Accurate costs**

Have you considered all costs, including indirect ones – and are they accurate?

- **Campaign maturity**

At what stage of maturity are you analysing your results?

The frequency of a publication will affect your response and conversion rates. Less frequent publications will naturally give longer lag times.

- **Excessive print runs**

Find out how many copies of each publication were sold – it will naturally have a negative effect on your results if your inserts were in unsold copies.

- **Consistency against test results**

Are your results consistent with your test matrix?

- **Anomalies**

Are there any anomalies – such as codes with abnormally high results? Are there codes with no results at all?

Request a weekly feed of data to help you identify any issues at an early stage.

- **Consistency between codes**

If you have used a number of codes within a publication, are the results consistent – or can the codes help you to identify regional variations?

- **Results per creative or format**

Is there consistency in results for different creative treatments or formats within a single publication?

- **Exclusivity**

Did you have exclusivity in the publication? If not, did any competitor advertising affect your results?

- **Competitor activity**

Might any other competitor marketing have affected your results?

- **Miscellaneous responses**

Have you got a significant percentage of responses that could not be attributed to a specific insert?



- **Context**

Take into account any fluctuations in circulation for your chosen publications during your campaign.

These changes can have both positive and negative effects on your results and can be caused by many reasons, such as:

- Competitor activity – such as another publisher running an exclusive story or cover mount
- Major events
- Bank holidays
- Weather

- **Track online results**

A significant part of the impact of inserts is actually felt in different spaces – online, in-store or in brand perception.

DMA research suggests that 24-76% of insert response is delivered online.

(Source: [How much response goes online? DMA, 2011](#))

Ensure that you measure the impact of your insert campaign across all channels.

Campaign learnings

A well planned, executed and tracked campaign can deliver many nuggets of useful information that can improve your next inserts campaign.

Where figures are quoted below, these are averages. You should monitor these on a client-by-client basis.

- **Title effectiveness**

Analyse your results from the beginning to quickly gain an indication of which titles or sectors you can roll out to their full potential.

- **Process efficiencies**

Look for print and production, media buying rates, delivery and other cost savings and efficiencies within your larger rolled-out campaign.

- **Regional success**

Identify regional bias in response rates and customer value.

- **Topic effectiveness**

Use your test matrix to decide which title verticals to roll out, as well as which volumes to increase.

For example, if your test matrix results show that an over-50s title did not work but a gardening title did, you can quickly respond to roll your campaign out across other garden titles.

Use this information to suggest other verticals, too – for example, if the garden titles in the example above are successful then consider home interest or wildlife titles in your next test matrix.

- **Response lags**

Monitor response lags by frequency of title – for example, by comparing the response and conversion lags of weekly, monthly and quarterly titles.

This will be invaluable to you for future call centre forecasting.

- **Frequency of inserting into certain titles**

Use results over time to optimise the frequency with which you place inserts in each title.

Your goal is to maintain the best results from your reliable titles without overmarketing and jeopardising ROI.



- **Offers and creative approaches**

Test different offers and creative executions.

Implement winning treatments as soon as possible to maximise your ROI.

- **Response forecasting**

Response forecasting is easily predicted. As a rule of thumb, using the same creative and offer as a press ad should deliver 10 times more response when using an insert.

- **Response rates**

Different businesses will attract different levels of response but, in general, inserts produce a response of less than 1%.

Financial services tend to be at the lower end of the scale with expected response rates of 0.01% – 0.5% dependent on the product, incentive and any headline rate.

Mail order response is typically higher at 0.5%+.

For heavily incentivised campaigns, response can exceed 3%.

- **Subscription v newsstand**

Expect different results between subscription and newsstand copies.

Subscriber issues will typically give between 80% – 150% higher response rates.

- **One-step v two-step response**

If you are running a one-step v two-step campaign then you should expect the two-step to generate 50%+ higher response.

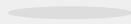
- **Seasonality**

Your response rates can be affected by between 30% – 75% dependent on your product and the time of year.

- **Integration with other channels**

Response to inserts can be uplifted by integration with other marketing activity, including online, TV, press and advertising mail.

a-z



Glossary



Glossary

- **A:B split testing**
Testing two creative executions against each other to find the better approach.
- **Approval**
Confirmation that the insert is within a title's specification and complies with required standards.
- **Bang tail**
Flap on the insert that is smaller than the size of a full page.
- **Bellyband**
Cover-mount type insert, where a band of paper is wrapped around the whole title and joined inside the pages.
When the reader opens the magazine, they are steered by the band to a specific double-page spread.
- **Bound-ins**
Inserts that are stitched or gummed into the title.
- **Circulation**
Normal volume of the title that is sold or distributed.
- **COI**
Certificate of Insertion – confirmation from the bindery/publisher of actual number of inserts that were inserted.
- **Collation**
Group of inserts presented in an envelope, rather than loose.
- **Concertina**
Zig-zagged way of folding an insert. Concertinas have no sealed edge.
- **Conversion**
Ratio of sales to response.
- **Covermount**
An insert that is attached to the front cover of the title.
- **CPT**
Cost per thousand. Usual unit in which inserts are bought.
- **Delivery specification**
Set of instructions to ensure that inserts arrive correctly packed, labelled, turned, bundled, rammed and so on, ready for insertion.
- **Die cut**
An unusual size or shape of insert that has been cut to size and has no leading edge.
- **Dummies**
Mock copy of an insert used to get approval from titles or programmes.
- **Euro pallets**
European standard pallet size.
- **Format**
Specifications of an insert type – size, weight, pagination and paper quality.
- **Gatefold**
Way of folding insert with two flaps on the front that meet in the middle like two halves of a gate.



- **Gross cost**
The agency buying rate, including full commission.
- **GSM**
Grams per square metre. A measure of paper thickness.
- **Hopper**
Part of inserting machine that inserts are fed into.
- **Insert specification**
Format of insert that a particular title can accept.
- **ISBA/TNT regions**
Geographic distribution areas based on TV regions or TNT transport routes.
- **Key/source/media code**
Unique code used on an insert to enable response tracking.
- **Lead time**
Period between delivery of the inserts to the bindery and the publication going on sale.
- **Leading edge**
The longest edge of the insert. The leading edge goes through the inserting machine first.
- **Net cost**
The agency buying rate, excluding full commission.
- **Niche**
Small area of market – usually targeting specific readers.
- **One-stage**
Selling a product directly from the insert.
- **Onsert**
An insert that is enclosed loose within the polybag and not inserted inside the publication.
- **Optioning**
Process of reserving media space ahead of a formal booking.
- **Overs**
Inserts that are left over after the inserting process.
- **Package markings**
Labels that describe the contents of a pallet or box.
- **Pagination**
Number of pages on an insert.
- **Polybag**
Plastic wrapping that contains the publication.
- **Print run**
Volume printed to ensure circulation.
- **Profile**
Breakdown of readership demographics and interests.
- **Programme**
Opportunity offered by a publisher for third parties to place inserts in their publication.



- **Ram bundling**
Technique used to pack inserts.
- **Random distribution**
Method to ensure that distribution is not contained to one region.
- **ROI**
Return on investment.
- **Sampling**
Usually tipped-on or bound-in inserts – such as perfume sachets, toiletry samples or chocolate bars glued on the title cover or to a specific page.
- **Shortfall**
When the media owner sells at a lower rate to sell unused space.
- **Solus**
Product exclusivity within an issue.
- **Static nailing**
Method of holding an insert in place using static instead of gum/glue.
- **Tip-ons**
An insert that is gummed to the page.
- **Turns**
Way of packing inserts to ensure easy inserting.
- **Two-stage**
Asking the customer to use the insert as a request for further information.

Template
documents



Delivery label

Client name and logo	
Publication	
Code	
Pack quantity	
Pack number	of
On sale	
Delivery address	
Postcode	
Contact names and details	

This template is a good guide and should not be deviated from much. Please go to www.dma.org.uk for further inserts best practice guidance.

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Certification of insertion

Project details

From (name and company)	
To (name and company)	
Publication	
Issue date	
Client	
Quantity booked	
Quantity delivered (as per delivery note)	
Quantity inserted	
Quantity unused	

Insertion details

Edition and insert code	Quantity	Edition	Quantity

Comments

--

Signature

Signed:	Date:
Print name:	Position:

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