

## Seven Ways to Slash Pre-Show Mailer Costs

Pre-show mailers can be a good way to draw attention to your exhibit. But they can also be a budget buster to produce. Here are seven ways to keep mailer production costs down.

- 1) **Mind the size limits.** Keep the entire, unfolded mailer within an 11-by-17-inch format. That's the largest of the standard film sizes that can be processed by most film houses. It is also the largest size of film that can be printed on a small press. If you go larger, you will pay more for both creating the film and printing the mailer.
- 2) **Go two-color.** Two-color mailers usually feature one color, such as red, along with black for the text. It's 25 percent cheaper than four-color because it uses two pieces of film (instead of four) and requires only a two-color press. Of course, you'll probably lose some impact by going two-color instead of four-color. But you can jazz things up a bit by shading the colors and using duotones. Ask your graphic designer for ideas.
- 3) **Go four-color on the cheap.** Some people try to save money by using two-color printing on the mailer's interior and four-color printing on the exterior. But if you're going to use any four-color graphics, you might be able to make the entire piece four-color without blowing the budget. Here's how. When you have the film made, place both the front and back pieces on the same piece of film. Then place marks where the printer can cut the mailer. You save money by using one piece of film and one printing press. (If you had both two-color and four-color graphics on your mailer, you would need to use two different presses to print the piece.)
- 4) **Use existing artwork.** When an outside graphic designer creates a new image for you, it may cost around \$50 an hour and take 10 hours or more to create. If you provide the designer with existing artwork of, say, the company logo, it can be scanned in. Better yet, give them a digitized file with the artwork. It will save both time and money.
- 5) **Purchase "photo disks."** Photo disks contain about 400 "stock" images that can be used for your mailers. You purchase all usage rights for the images; the cost runs about \$250 for each disk. An alternative is to go to a stock photo house and purchase a picture - but that will run you about \$500 for one image.
- 6) **Create one mailer for multiple shows.** One company created a run of about 50,000 mailers for use at several upcoming shows. During the initial printing, a space was left open on the mailer where specific show information (show name/dates, booth number, booth map, etc.) could later be added for each event. The show information was printed in separate, one-color printing runs where only black was used for the text, making it a less-expensive venture.
- 7) **Choose only one paper stock.** If you're creating a multipage mailer or brochure, use the same paper stock for both the cover and interior pages. In most cases, using even one heavy paper stock will be cheaper than a combination of light and heavy stocks.

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