



Its power is real

Why Direct Mail continues
to deliver results for SMEs
across Ireland.

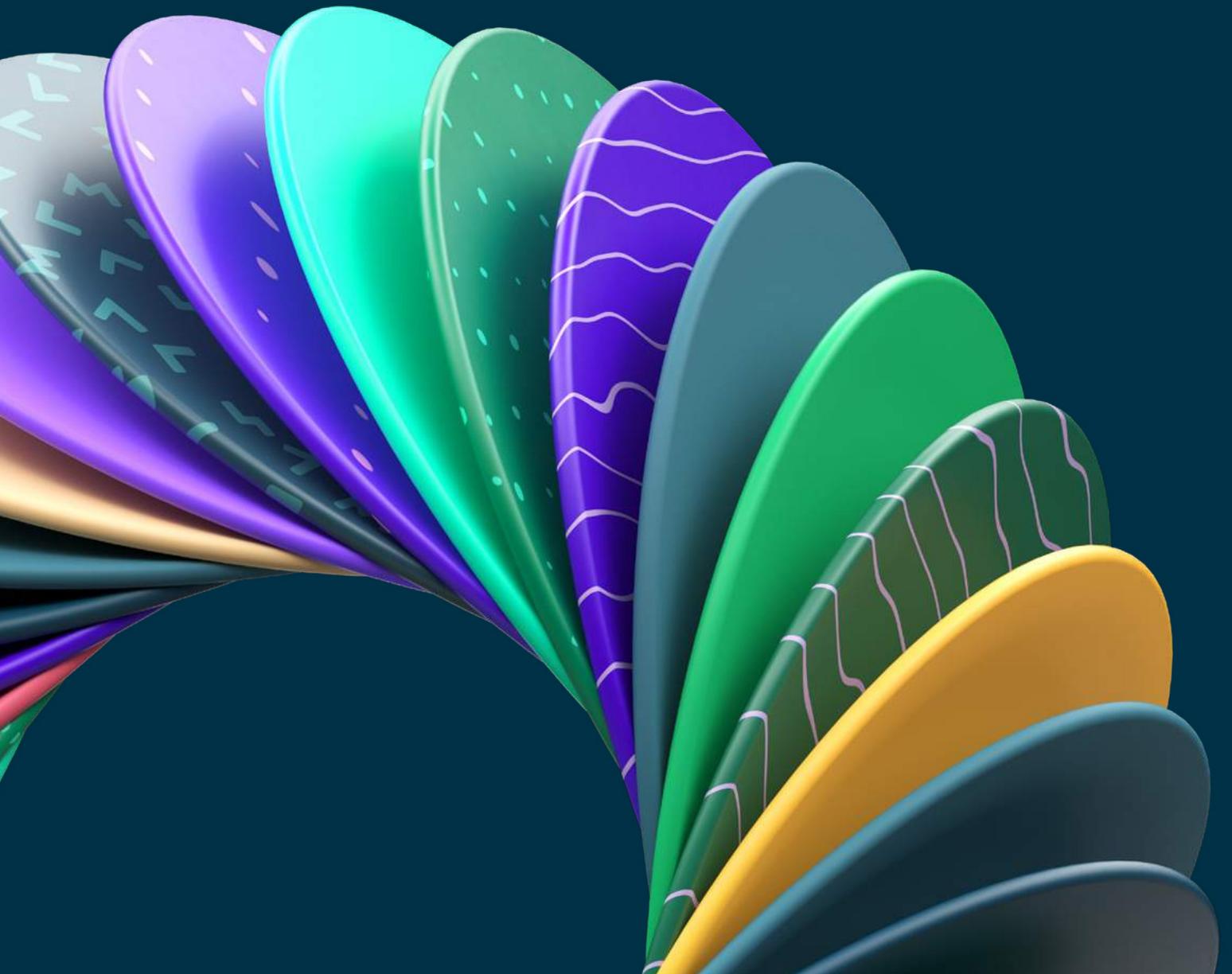
an post
commerce

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A world closer

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Introduction

For everyone, the past few years have been turbulent and uncertain.

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) have ridden a rollercoaster, with everything from staff availability to the rising costs of raw materials adding to their pressures. To retain customers and grow businesses, effective marketing is essential; and this paper explains how Direct Mail's reach, flexibility, credibility and tangibility can generate real results for businesses.

Underpinning all of this is the Direct Mail backing offered by An Post Commerce.

At An Post Commerce, we live by a mission of nurturing a vibrant, healthy and sustainable economy by opening economic opportunity for every business. Direct Mail helps us to achieve this, by connecting ambitious businesses to customers to make them more available, more magnetic and more successful.

Over the years, we have consistently championed SMEs with Direct Mail initiatives that help grow their businesses. We'll keep offering unwavering support, come what may - and at a time of continuing uncertainty, An Post Commerce will remain a resource that Irish businesses can always depend on.

Recent research has highlighted people's changing marketing appetites

While digital advertising has been a dominant force for many years, Direct Mail's power to persuade remains as strong as ever. This has been highlighted in a recent Behaviour & Attitudes survey commissioned by An Post Commerce. In particular, its findings will help SMEs make informed decisions regarding Direct Mail's ability to grow their business.



Credible and comprehensive

For its 2022 survey, Behaviour & Attitudes questioned 1007 people aged 16 and over, chosen as a representative sample of Ireland's population. Consequently, their age, gender, location and social classes accurately reflected the country's demographic balance.

Drawing on such a large sample, this survey paints an accurate picture of Irish attitudes towards Direct Mail in 2022.

Changing times and priorities

Recent experiences and changes have had a profound impact

Thanks to the internet, how we work, learn, meet people, entertain ourselves and do business has evolved radically. However, the past two years have also reminded us that nature can still have the upper hand.

The pandemic created new routines and highlighted how technology can reduce the need for endless commuting. Consequently, home has become even more central to people's lives. This has also reminded people of how much they welcome physical mail - everyone is always curious to see what's just come through the letterbox...

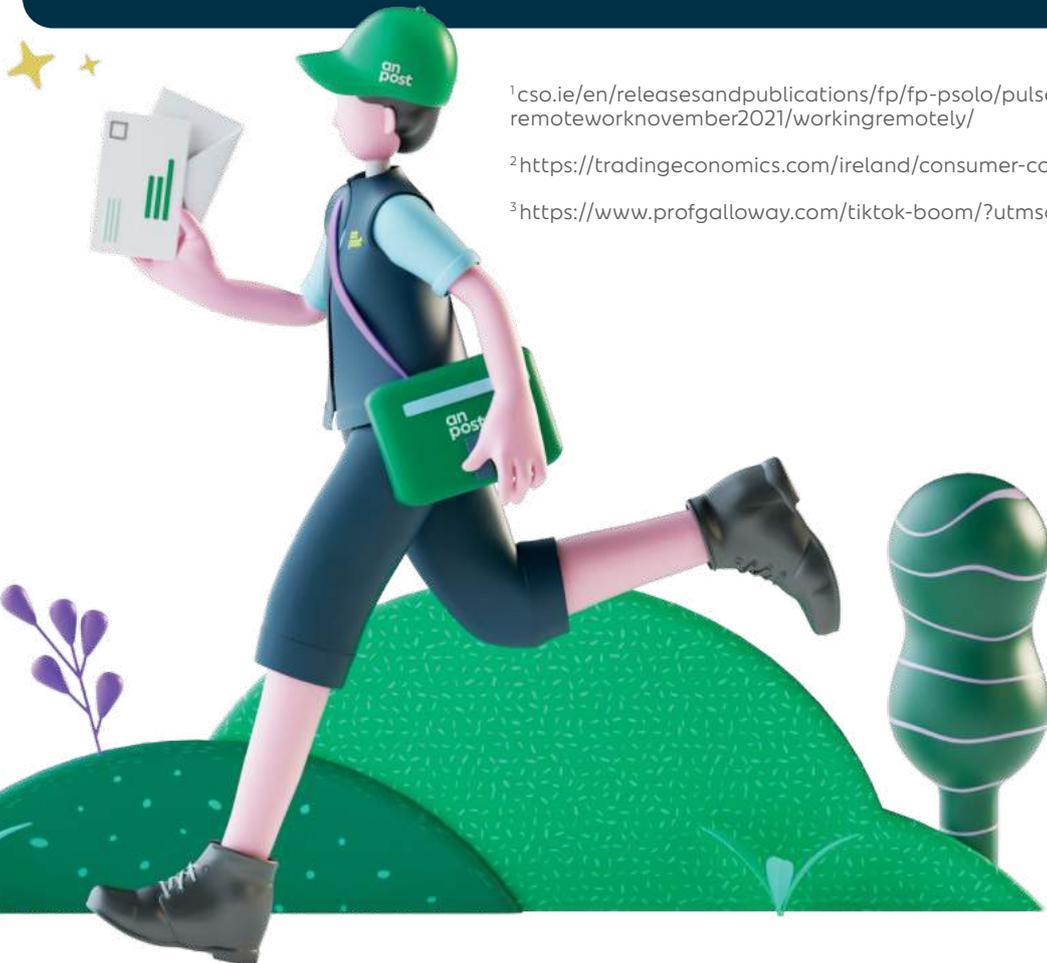
Big challenges. Bigger opportunities.

In a recent survey, 88% of those questioned said they would like to continue working remotely¹. At the same time, rising energy costs and inflation levels not seen for decades have hit consumer confidence².

In response, businesses need to offer:

- **Value:** as prices rise, household and business budgets are being squeezed. Consumers will be even more receptive to offers, special deals and positive signals that businesses are in tune with their challenges.
- **Reassurance:** there have been enormous changes over recent years in how we all live, work and do business. With a perception that scams and fraud are increasing, people want to engage with businesses they can trust.
- **Relevance:** facing today's deluge of choice and information, consumers increasingly demand genuinely relevant material. Social media platforms such as TikTok have built their dominance on delivering highly-targeted content³.

Although the world has changed, people still want what's new, exciting, interesting and useful. They also want a bargain - and despite everything that new technology now offers, one marketing tool continues to prove its effectiveness...



¹ cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/fp/fp-psolo/pulsesurvey-ourlivesonline-remoteworknovember2021/workingremotely/

² <https://tradingeconomics.com/ireland/consumer-confidence>

³ <https://www.profgalloway.com/tiktok-boom/?utmsource=substack&utmmedium=email>

Direct Mail: the proven marketing tool that's kept its cutting edge

For many decades, businesses worldwide have used Direct Mail to grow relationships with existing customers and acquire new ones. The power of Direct Mail - either personally addressed to the recipient or simply sent to a specific address - rests on three pillars: it is **proven**, **persuasive** and **breaks digital barriers**:

The proven power of Direct Mail

For centuries, businesses have used various forms of Direct Mail to attract attention and drive sales. Today, with the evolution of printing, information technology and postal services, it's more effective than ever:

- Charities have learned that evocative stories prompt people to donate. Direct Mail provides the space in which stories can be told compellingly. Supporters also need to know that their donations are being used effectively. Long-form mail enables detailed explanations that aren't always possible using advertisements or social media posts.
- One of the most remarkable indicators of Direct Mail's power is that Google, the world's largest digital advertising platform, consistently uses it to grow business. Besides using mail to verify a business's address, Google's mailings¹ also contain useful advice or offers that help its customers generate better results from their online advertising.

Persuasive and personal

Direct Mail offers the freedom to enclose items that bring messages to life; charities often show their creativity by mailing anything from tea bags to seed packets!

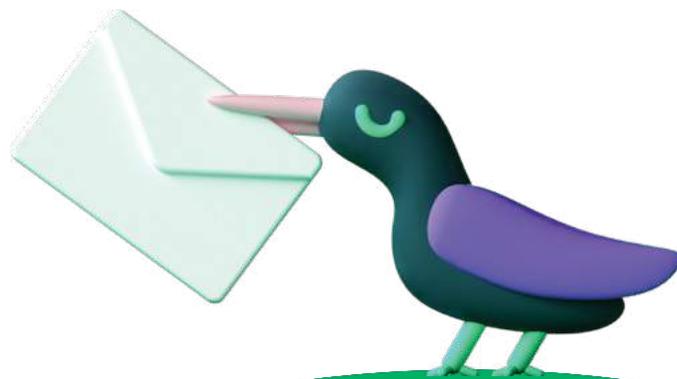
Direct Mail can also appeal to all the senses. Since a mailing is physical, its texture, scent and even taste can attract recipients' attention. Printing techniques including die-cutting, embossing, lamination and special folds also create bold and memorable statements.

While electronic messages can be instantly deleted, Direct Mail is often retained for future reference or because it has monetary value. And when it's kept in a home or business, it also acts as a constant reminder of your brand.

¹ <https://www.postcardmania.com/blog/why-google-uses-direct-mail/>

Breaking digital barriers

Many digital barriers now protect people from a deluge of email and sms marketing. These range from spam filters to cookie opt-out boxes. It's harder to develop a Direct Mail campaign with spam offers, so scammers don't use Direct Mail. Naturally this makes consumers trust it more.



The magnificent seven:

Seven reasons why Direct Mail makes such an impact

In April 2022, An Post Commerce commissioned market research specialists Behaviour & Attitudes to assess Irish attitudes to Direct Mail. Their findings indicate that Direct Mail is a more impactful, trustworthy and welcome marketing medium than virtually any other method:

1: It drives sales

Key 2022 finding: 60% of Irish adults say that Direct Mail prompted them to make a purchase.

There is very clear evidence that Direct Mail drives sales. Respondents of all ages - and particularly those aged under 50 - say that direct mail triggered them to make purchases. These took place in store and online; men were more likely to purchase from catalogues, stores and online while more women redeemed discount codes included with a piece of Direct Mail.

- **56%** purchased a product
- **54%** purchased a takeaway or visited a restaurant
- **38%** made a hotel, hairdresser or beauty salon booking
- **54%** supported a small business

Magnifying other messages

Direct Mail also amplifies the impact of other advertising media. Survey respondents say that it can remind them to act, having already seen a message elsewhere. We asked: 'How likely are you to remember and/or follow up on the following combinations of media?'

Other media seen/heard in combination with DM	Would be prompted to respond
Newspaper/magazine advertising	27%
TV advert	26%
Website advertising	25%
Social media advertising	25%
Billboards and poster	24%
Radio advertising	22%



2: It's Remembered

Key 2022 finding: 46% of Irish adults recall receiving at least one piece of Direct Mail during the previous week

People clearly remember Direct Mail, especially the urban Irish: 50% of this group recalled receiving Direct Mail the previous week. Although just 35% of people aged 16-24 said they received something - the lowest of all age groups surveyed - they are the population cohort that most welcomes Direct Mail.



This indicates that any business serving young people, and Gen Z in particular, may miss opportunities by not using Direct Mail.

46%
Remembered



3: It's Retained

Key 2022 finding: 67% of Irish adults keep Direct Mail for up to one week

Even if they evade spam filters, emails are easily deleted without being opened.



67%
Retained



4: It's Liked

Key 2022 finding: 66% of Irish adults like receiving addressed Direct Mail

In total, the 2022 survey revealed that 66% of people appreciate direct mail.

Amongst people aged 16-24, the number soared to 78%;

this remarkable statistic could be explained by the fact that this group has grown up in the digital era. For them, Direct Mail is novel compared to the online advertising they constantly see.

66%
Liked



5: It's Memorable

Key 2022 finding: 54% of Irish adults find Direct Mail more memorable than emails

Which is more memorable - a marketing message sent by email or one sent via Direct Mail? The 2022 Behaviour & Attitudes survey revealed a clear winner: 54% agree that Direct Mail makes a long-standing impression. Importantly, this view is particularly dominant amongst people aged 16-24.

54%
Memorable



6: It's Preferred

Key 2022 finding: Direct Mail is the favoured form of advertising for 49% of Irish adults

49% of people surveyed in 2022 said they prefer Direct Mail to other forms of advertising. The reason given was that it offers control over when, where and if they engage with the message. This is a clear contrast to alternative advertising methods which are possibly seen as more intrusive.

49%
Preferred



7: It's Engaging

Key 2022 finding: 31% of people say they feel closer to brands that send relevant Direct Mail

Reaching out via Direct Mail helps to reinforce a connection between customers and brands. This is especially true when mail is tailored to the recipient's specific needs or interests; the more relevant it is, the more powerful it becomes.

Direct mail also gives businesses a chance to capture customers' attention using high levels of creativity. Everything from letters made of chocolate to balloons that reveal their message when they're inflated have helped businesses stand out from the crowd.

Surprise and delight

Digital natives reach beyond their screens

Do you need to connect with younger customers? If so, the 2022 survey clearly indicates that digital shouldn't dominate your marketing strategy.

It's clear that after growing up surrounded by digital media, today's young adults consider that receiving a mailing is a noteworthy event. Just as vinyl records are still popular despite the convenience of streaming, Direct Mail seems to offer a tangible 'experience' that people value - especially those who spend their lives online.

- 54% of those who expressed an opinion agreed that Direct Mail advertising is more memorable than email advertising.
- Direct Mail outperforms email advertising on:

• attention	by 10%
• perceived credibility	by 12%
• trustworthiness	by 13%
• likelihood to relook	by 15%
• likelihood to remember	by 14%





Delivering confidence

Online fraudsters have many tools and options at their disposal. Since creating and delivering emails is so simple, spam filters are bombarded with bogus offers and too-good-to-be-true 'opportunities'.

Adding extra clout to marketing budgets

SMEs must be certain that every marketing cent is spent as effectively as possible. Direct Mail offers this assurance because it can be targeted with real precision and used to test offers and messages amongst sample audiences.

Once factors such as the type of customer (based on age or demographic profile, for example) and or the location of people most receptive to a message are identified, other areas that match these criteria can also be targeted.

Since it can deliver as few as 200 items, the Direct Mail **Admailer** solution is ideal for running highly targeted campaigns. Similarly, **Publicity Post** adds impact and authority to leaflets by delivering them with regular mail.

Adding momentum to other media

Direct Mail is proven to have a positive effect on messages carried on other media.

According to the 2022 Behaviour & Attitudes survey, a nudge sent by mail will remind 27% of people to respond to a newspaper or magazine advertisement. This contrasts with 26% in the case of a TV ad and 25% of people exposed to a website or social media ad.



The 2022 Behaviour & Attitudes survey reported that trust levels in Direct Mail were DOUBLE those of email.

An Post Commerce: a proven marketing partner for SMEs

Every day across Ireland, businesses connect with customers using solutions from An Post Commerce and its subsidiaries. These include cost-effective Direct Mail tools that deliver targeted messages and product samples, discounts on large-scale mailings, leaflets and more.

Helping businesses grow is a key aspect of An Post Commerce's overall commitment to acting for the common good and supporting communities. An Post Commerce is one of Ireland's most trusted brands and can reach every address in the country, As such, we can work in partnership with businesses to create impactful, cost-effective campaigns that drive growth and success.

An Post Commerce's current Direct Mail services and tools:

- **Publicity Post**

Efficient and cost-effective, Publicity Post delivers leaflets or brochures with mail directly to homes and businesses across the country, **from just 9c ex VAT per leaflet**. The minimum booking is 1 zone.

- **AdMailer**

AdMailer.ie lets businesses create their own postcard or letter campaign, and target customers by address, demographic profile or industry. Use your own design or just choose one from a range of professionally-designed templates. An Post Commerce will print and deliver the campaign within three working days and the minimum quantity is 200 items, costing **from 96c ex VAT per item**.

- **Reach+**

Use your own database to maximise your campaign's impact, with a personalised DM to get your marketing message directly into the hands of your target audience, **from 68c per item**. Minimum volume is 2,000 items.

- **Programmatic Direct Mail**

An existing or potential customer's behaviour can be tracked by adding a GDPR-compliant tagging code to a business's ecommerce website. If a customer falls out of the sales funnel, the code triggers the sending of a personalised Direct Mail to their address within 3 working days. This can include sales incentives such as special rates or offers, **from 88c ex VAT per item**, minimum volume is 6,000 items.

- **Sampling**

Sampling lets businesses deliver product samples directly to customers' hands and homes. Once supplied to An Post Commerce, the samples will be delivered to customers with the scheduled mail service within three working days, **from €1.45 per item**, minimum volume is 200 items.

Learn more. Grow more.

Our Direct Mail solutions are here to drive growth and deliver impact for Irish businesses everywhere. You can find out more about all of the An Post Commerce Direct Mail solutions at anpost.com/directmail or email mail.media@anpost.ie

**This is getting your message
into the hands and homes
of customers, the length
and breadth of the country.**

**Start your campaign today
at anpost.com/DirectMail**

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