

Junk Part II

Today's **Washington Post** reports that the United States Postal Service in association with the Direct Marketing Association are working hard to quash "do not mail" initiatives. Read the full article here

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/03/18/AR2008031802893.html>

Most consumers who want out of direct mail want to stop the flow of paper into their homes. They are concerned about the environment and the wastefulness of unwanted mail. Yet the USPS and the DMA are blocking this initiative. According to the article, the DMA went so far as to write their members and instructing them to ignore requests from Catalog Choice, a service that allows consumers to opt out of receiving catalogs.

In my opinion, this is another example of marketing gone awry. I understand that direct marketers and their affiliates (printers, writers, mailhouses, and the USPS) make money off direct mail. They stand to make less money if less people opt to get direct mail. However, there are two major issues at play here: 1) REAL concerns about the environment and 2) disinterested parties. It is high time that businesses take a more thoughtful approach to environmental issues. More and more, the public is concerned, and rightfully so, about the long-term impact of human action on the earth and the very real consequences of global warming. In their own interest, why not market only to those people who are receptive to marketing? To send dozens of unwanted letters, catalogs, credit card offers into the homes of consumers who not only don't want them but are actively seeking to stop this barrage will surely cause ill will on their part. Remember targeted marketing?

The bottom line is that marketers are looking at their bottom

line. And holding on to outdated modes of communication. My suggestion to them is for them to evolve. When the Internet starting taking over, what did banks do? They started online banking. Why not reinvent direct marketing so that it becomes environmentally acceptable? Why not think of new ways to reach your targets without creating harmful waste?