

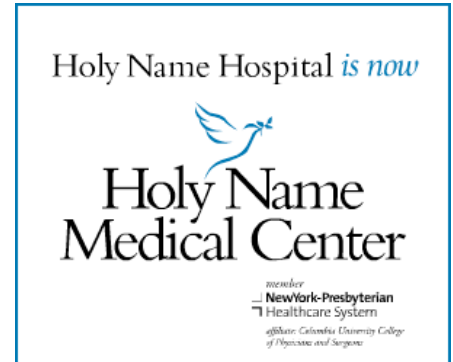
Multi-channel is Fairfield marketing CEO's mantra

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Tom Buckley is a man with a message — actually more than 4 million of them a week, direct mail and e-mail marketing messages that his Fairfield-based company, Redi-Direct Marketing Inc., sends out on behalf of clients.



NICK BRANDRETH/SPECIAL TO THE RECORD

Tom Buckley of Redi-Direct Marketing: 'Gone are the days when you just run an ad on TV or radio or send out a ton of mail. You still may do some of those things, but you'll probably add e-mail, or a Web presence.'

Tom Buckley

Chief executive officer, Redi-Direct

Redi-Direct Marketing is actually four companies, with more than 650 employees and offices around the world. It includes StayinFront Inc., which provides software systems and support for customer relationship management; Redi-Data Inc., a provider of mailing list and data services; Redi-Mail Direct Marketing; and Dialog Marketing Services, which specializes in customer acquisition and relationship marketing.

The most important word in marketing today is multi-channel, says Buckley. All channels — mail, e-mail, even text messages, must be used to reach potential customers, he says. "The idea of one message to all people, delivered one way, that's done," Buckley says.

He thinks old-fashioned mail still has a place in the world of e-mail and text marketing.

Buckley, 50, lives in Montclair with his wife and four children and likes to run, bike and fish. (Interview condensed for space.)

Q. How did Redi-Direct get started?

We founded the company in 1990. I'm an accountant by trade, with operational experience. I founded the company with two other guys who were mostly sales. We basically did the deal on a

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His business: He heads a Fairfield-based marketing, direct mail and customer relationship management software company with 650 employees and satellite operations around the world. The privately held business does not release revenue, but says its annual sales are in excess of \$50 million.

His background: He founded Redi-Direct in 1990 with two partners, after working for the Peat Marwick Mitchell & Co. accounting firm and a stint in venture capital. He grew up in Bloomfield, where he was captain of the Bloomfield High School wrestling team. He graduated from Montclair State University and taught accounting there as an adjunct professor. He earned a master's degree in business administration from the Stern School of Business at New York University.

You may do social networking, Twitter. Five years ago, we started making pretty big changes here to get into e-mail, and what we call digital mail. It's still hard mail, but it's a variable print image, so we can customize a piece of mail to your specific needs. There's less reliance on bulk mail and more reliance on targeted mail, whether it be paper or digital.

Q. Do you think paper mail will eventually disappear?

Paper mail has some challenges. People spend a lot of time online. They are increasingly pressed for time. They want a quick message. They want what's relevant. All that, plus certain things the post office did that increased costs, hurt hard mail.

It still has a place, but it's going to be one of many different channels. It won't be the primary channel. And since it's relatively expensive, you'll use it when the potential return is higher. Mail will have to deliver more, because it costs more.

Q. Doesn't e-mail have the advantage that you can track if someone actually read it, or clicked on it?

Right. But how many e-mails do you get per day? I know I get a couple hundred, and a lot of it is spam. Your responses on e-mail are generally lower than they would be for mail, assuming both are equally targeted. But if you sent the same number of e-mails and the same number of hard mail, your response, assuming all things were equal, would probably be better with mail.

Q. If you are marketing something, how do you break through all that e-mail clutter out there?

You're better off with a multi-channel strategy. No one channel works best all the time. You should use your less-expensive channels of communication to narrow your target market, then move up the ladder to more sophisticated — and expensive — ways to get your message out. You cull from the large audience to drive your business.

napkin, and each of us put in what was then our life savings — \$25,000 apiece. We had 12 employees, 2,000 square feet of space. Today we have about 650 employees.

Q. What made you decide to take your \$25,000 and start this?

I'm the type of person who likes to work for myself. I'm confident and I like to be rewarded or suffer the consequences of my own actions. I was newly married. Maybe it wasn't the best time to be doing that.

But I believed in my partners. It was a time to take a chance, so we did. The deal was if after the first year we weren't all better off, we would rip up the napkin. The other two guys have since retired, and the last fellow who retired, once the final payment was made, he handed me back the napkin.

Q. What are the biggest issues in marketing?

Marketing is very segmented now. It's targeted. Everyone's busy, everyone's working, and your marketing messages have to be delivered to the right people. They have to be timely and relevant, or people are going to ignore them. Gone are the days when you just run an ad on TV or radio or send out a ton of mail. You still may do some of those things, but you'll probably add e-mail, or a Web presence.



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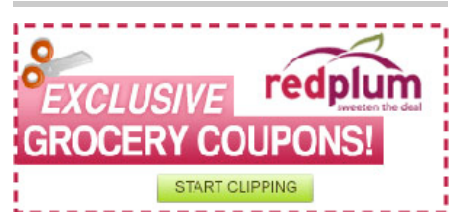
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