

March 2009 Survey - Executive Summary

Overall we received a 7% response. Response sources varied and came from agencies, real estate firms, newspapers, and educational institutions.

Question # 1 asked responders to rank the most important attributes of a list broker as it pertained to their business.

- 47% ranked the "availability of, and access to, your assigned AE as one of the most important attributes of a broker.
- 23% of respondents ranked the "location - meet face to face" as important.
- 41% of respondents said that "turn around time for clearances and orders" is really important. 36% ranked negotiation as an important attribute.
- 27% thought that lowering brokerage fees was important.
- 35% felt that "innovative and strong test ideas and solid test strategies" were very important for their brokerage partners.
- On the "other" qualification Experience was the most common written in comment.

Question # 2 - Do you use a direct mail agency?

- 80% said that they go directly to their list broker.
- 20% go directly to list owners.

Question # 3 dealt with how many brokers were used (due to multiple answers, the total is more than 100%).

- 40% used more than one broker, and use the company that seems best suited for each campaign.
- 40% used only one list broker.
- 20% went directly to list owners.
- 20% said that their clients mandated the use of a specific broker.

The final question (# 4) was open ended and asked what the biggest challenge was for marketing programs this year. Here are the most impactful answers.

- Budget cuts in 2009.
- Cancellation of marketing programs in 2009.
- Keeping costs down.
- Marketing dollars moved away from direct response efforts into other advertising avenues.
- Direct marketing is cancelled as a channel or tool to reach new and previous customers.
- It was also noted, that a big fear is an unsuccessful campaign with no response at all.

What We Learned

Overall, the response shows us that, like most businesses, face to face is no longer the most important part of a relationship: email access and fast, fast turnarounds are the keys to the current broker / client relationship.

The economic downturn and cut backs in marketing programs are on everyone's mind. That's no surprise. The surprise in the open ended question about "fears" is that direct marketing dollars may be shifted to other programs. We believe that that's a mistake - that now is the time to turn to direct response, to build your database and nurture your customers. We're working on changing that perception among our clients. Look for more information and communication from us that will help you prove that direct response should be at the top of the consideration set when you're looking at priorities in marketing.