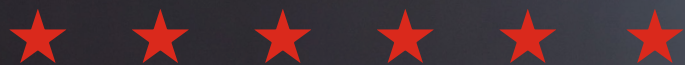




Voters and Mail



5 Insights to Boost Campaign Impact

A United States Postal Service and
American Association of Political Consultants (AAPC) study

Voters are waiting for you at the mailbox.

The American Association of Political Consultants (AAPC) and the United States Postal Service (USPS) conducted listening sessions with campaign professionals at the 2017 AAPC Pollie Awards and Conference.

Based on these listening sessions and feedback received throughout the 2016 election cycle, you told us you're looking for **greater insights into how Americans use mail and interact with the mailbox**. After an election cycle where political mail volume and spending reached record highs, you asked to know more about the **Mail Moment**—how people interact with their mail from the moment they see it.

You also asked us to **look to broader, non-campaign mail use surveys** for research and trends campaigns can leverage.

Here, we share anecdotal insights from recently completed in-depth interviews of AAPC members and highlight recent research into how often Americans go to the mailbox, what they think about their mail, and how direct mail compares to other communications channels.

THE MAIL MOMENT:

“People are consistently inundated with information in the 24-hour news cycle.

Mail can be really helpful because it is physical and feels real. Voters slow down and will actually look at a piece of mail.”

– CHRISTIAN, DEMOCRATIC
POLITICAL CONSULTANT

1

Most Americans go through their mail at the first opportunity, nearly every day.



86%

Heads of households pick up mail at first opportunity*



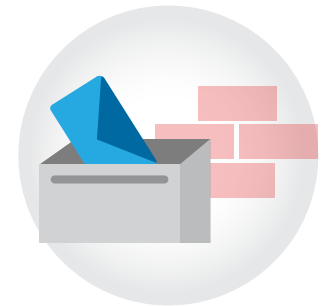
79%

Heads of households sort mail at first opportunity*



86%

Registered voters check their mailboxes at least 5 times per week^



83%

Heads of households have their mailboxes connected to their homes*

THE OPPORTUNITY

This is the Mail Moment—most Americans pick up, sort, and check the mailbox nearly every day. In other words, direct political mail leverages existing habits and reaches voters right at their residences, where they are ready, accustomed, and open to receiving information.

*Source: Summit Research national online survey among 1,545 U.S. adults (who are head of household and involved in sorting the mail) from February 26 to March 9, 2016 (data weighted to Census-level targets for age and ethnicity). This survey was sponsored by the U.S. Postal Service.

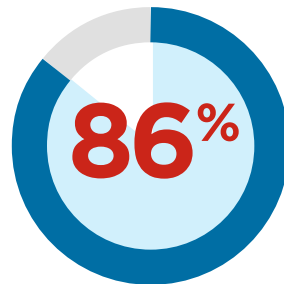
^Source: Summit Research national online survey among 1,398 U.S. adults from August 11-22, 2016 (data weighted to Census-level targets for gender, age, ethnicity, education/gender, and marital status). This survey was sponsored by the U.S. Postal Service.

2

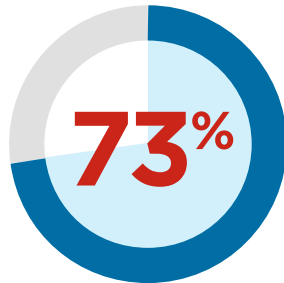
Have new information to share? Americans prefer mail.

HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

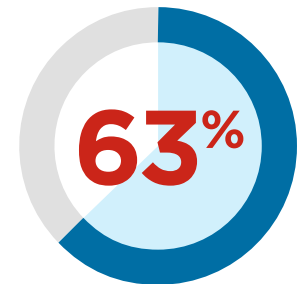
I take the time to look through my mail to make sure I am not discarding information that I might have a use for.*



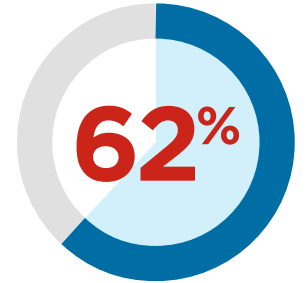
If someone I don't know wants to do business with me, I'd advise them to use mail, because I block spam, and also phone calls from businesses I do not know.*



I look forward to discovering the mail I receive each day; getting my mail is an important part of my day.*



I'd much rather scan for useful information by going through the mail I receive, than by clicking through emails sent to my inbox.*



THE OPPORTUNITY

A lesson from business marketing: Americans like receiving mail to discover something new. Mail can be the best way to share new information about a candidate or issue.

*Source: Summit Research national online survey among 1,545 U.S. adults (who are head of household and involved in sorting the mail) from February 26 to March 9, 2016 (data weighted to Census-level targets for age and ethnicity). This survey was sponsored by the U.S. Postal Service.

Political consultants say:

“Our firm found that targeting with mail is more precise than with any other form of media. It allows you to get hyper-targeted with messages. There can be a lot of waste in radio and TV advertising, the geographic targeting is not as precise as you can be with mail.”

“We worked in a race that was a very crowded primary with 7-8 candidates spending a lot of money, including a well-entrenched incumbent.

We decided to spend most of our resources on a really intensive mail campaign. We saw in the polling that over half the people in the district were getting their information from mail, way more than any other source.

Mail was the center of the campaign and we believe that was a critical reason we finished the race on top.”

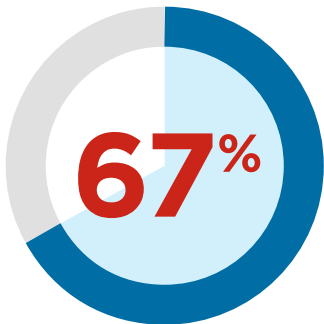
- CHRIS, REPUBLICAN POLITICAL CONSULTANT

3

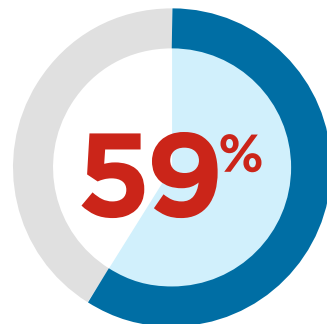
Voters say that early voting, absentee ballot, and voter registration deadlines are key.

REGISTERED VOTERS WILL IMMEDIATELY READ A PIECE OF MAIL FROM A CAMPAIGN:

Sharing registration deadlines or details on early voting^

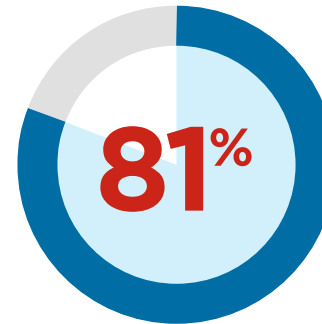


Giving information about the candidate^

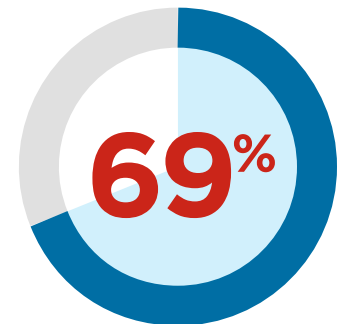


REGISTERED VOTERS WANT TO RECEIVE MAIL WHEN THEY DON'T KNOW ABOUT:

Absentee ballot deadline^



Voter registration deadline^



THE OPPORTUNITY

Voters are particularly engaged with mail about early voting, absentee ballot, and voter registration details. You can imagine a voter attaching a flat mailer or postcard to the refrigerator, providing a helpful reminder.

^ Source: Summit Research national online survey among 1,398 U.S. adults from August 11-22, 2016 (data weighted to Census-level targets for gender, age, ethnicity, education/gender, and marital status). This survey was sponsored by the U.S. Postal Service.

Political consultants say:

“We continue to find mail an effective way to communicate with the public at large, and more specifically, likely voters. It can also be helpful with unlikely voters in getting them to come out and vote.”

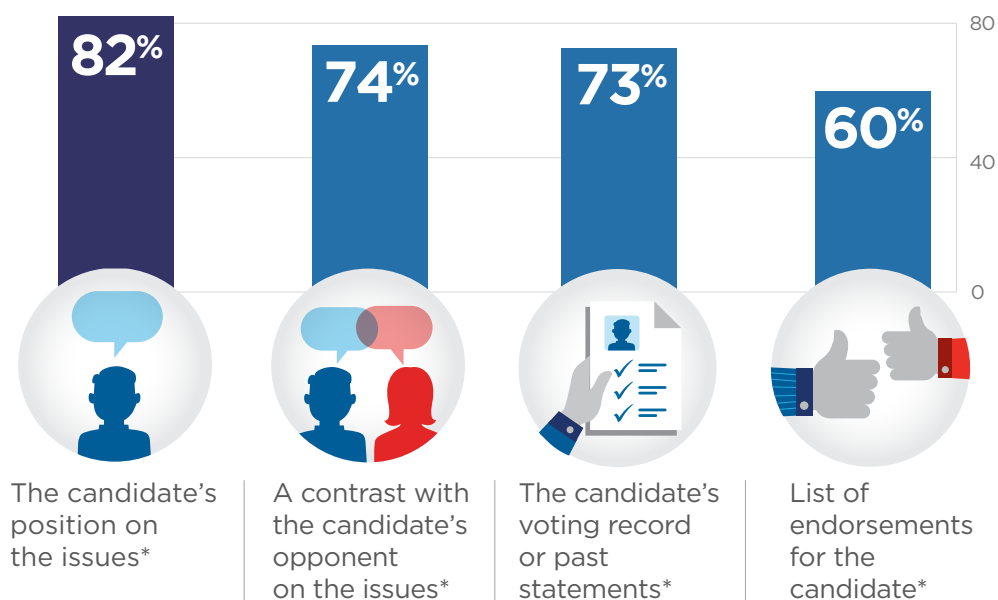
“There’s a large body of evidence that mail is the single most cost-effective way to get low propensity turnout voters to come out and vote. Especially in non-presidential years.”

**– ALEX, DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL
CONSULTANT**

4

Focus more on issues, less on endorsements, to drive voters to act.

REGISTERED VOTERS ARE MOST INTERESTED IN CAMPAIGN MAIL THAT ADDRESSES:



CAMPAIGN MAIL DRIVES VOTERS TO TAKE ACTION:

	Millennials (ages 18-34)	Non-Millennials (older than 34)
Searched for info on that candidate^	66%	52%
Made decision about how to vote^	57%	54%

^Source: USPS and Summit Research conducted a national online survey among 1,156 U.S. adults from March 18-23, 2016. By utilizing an oversample, total sample size for Millennials = 671.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Over half of Americans are likely to search for info on a candidate or are driven to make a decision about how to vote after receiving campaign mail. Voters most want campaign mail to focus on where the candidate stands, followed closely by opponent contrast, candidate voting record and biographical details. Keep text concise and scannable. Use bold, color, and contrast to draw the eye to important content.

* Source: Summit Research national online survey among 1,398 U.S. adults from August 11-22, 2016 (data weighted to Census-level targets for gender, age, ethnicity, education/gender, and marital status). This survey was sponsored by the U.S. Postal Service.

5

Non-college-educated voters have room in their mailboxes.

THE SWING VOTE: NON-COLLEGE-EDUCATED PRESIDENTIAL VOTER PREFERENCE SUBSTANTIALLY SHIFTED

Region	Vote margin among non-college-educated voters*			
	2008	2012	2016	Shift (2008 to 2016)
US	+7 Obama	+4 Obama	+7 Trump	+14 to GOP
WI	+13 Obama	+4 Obama	+14 Trump	+27 to GOP
MI	+20 Obama	+13 Obama	+4 Trump	+24 to GOP
PA	+9 Obama	+15 Obama	+7 Trump	+16 to GOP

Non-college-educated voters produced one of the most dramatic swings in the 2016 presidential election. And research shows these influential voters have room in their mailboxes:

Non-college-educated voters receive an average of:

12 pieces of advertising mail per week^

College-educated voters receive an average of:

25 pieces of advertising mail per week^

THE OPPORTUNITY

Americans without a college degree receive *less than half* the amount of advertising mail per week than Americans who have a college degree. There is a strong opportunity to utilize direct mail to get your campaign's message to these voters.

* Source: 2008, 2012, and 2016 National Exit Polls from CNN.

^ Source: NuStats 52-week diary study using online and in-person methods among 5,295 U.S. households, 2016. This study was sponsored by the U.S. Postal Service.

Political consultants say:

“The intersection of data and direct mail allows us to target voters using affinity scores, modeled data, precincts, education level and other socioeconomic indicators. The sky is the limit.”

“Mail is a great medium to reach non-college-educated voters, especially in more rural areas. The experience of mail is very different in those communities—getting the mail every day is a bigger part of their way of life.

Also, Election Day voting is more of tradition there and early voting is less common. Therefore, traditional mail in more rural areas tends to impact and persuade people more than other communications channels.”

– **JARED, REPUBLICAN POLITICAL CONSULTANT**



Moving Forward:

FIVE OPPORTUNITIES

Use mail to:

- 1 Leverage the Mail Moment
- 2 Share new information about a candidate or issue
- 3 Inform on early voting, absentee ballot, and voter registration deadlines
- 4 Educate or contrast on a candidate or issue campaign
- 5 Reach a key voting group with room in their mailboxes: non-college-educated voters

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE AAPC

Thanks to American Association of Political Consultants (AAPC) members for their participation in phone interviews and research conducted in Spring/Summer 2017. Founded in 1969, the AAPC is a multi-partisan organization of political and public affairs professionals. The AAPC is the largest association of political and public affairs professionals in the world. AAPC members consist of political consultants, media consultants, pollsters, campaign managers, corporate public affairs officers, professors, fund-raisers, lobbyists, congressional staffers and vendors. Membership is open to everyone associated with politics from the local level to the White House. For more information, see www.theaapc.org.



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