



NEWS RELEASE

28 October 2010

COMPANIES LOSING SALES BY IGNORING CUSTOMER ENQUIRIES

Companies are losing sales by failing to respond to customer enquiries, new research has revealed.

In a trial study conducted by the Direct Marketing Association (DMA), researchers posing as prospective customers requested catalogues or brochures via the websites of 200 UK-based companies covering a variety of sectors. One-fifth of retail and service industry companies contacted made no response to a request for information.

Companies were also evaluated on their acknowledgement, use of personalisation and presentation. Of those companies that responded, just 38.5 per cent sent an email acknowledgement and only 53 per cent sent a personalised response. Many were also guilty of sending duplicate response packs, incorrect address details and poor presentation.

The automotive and home sectors recorded the best response rates while hobbies, pets, sports and transport sectors comprised the largest number of non-respondent companies. Virgin Holidays, Voyages of Discovery, Honda Lawn & Garden and several automotive brands including Mercedes Benz, Mitsubishi and Skoda came out on top, responding within one day with a personalised response. Other brands such as Vauxhall, Laura Ashley and Everest Windows fared less well, taking over a week to respond or not responding at all.

Sally Hollis, chair of the DMA Response Management Council and Managing Director of Arden Direct commented:

“The findings should be of particular concern to business as more and more shoppers are using both the web and catalogues to purchase goods – with this increasing by about 60 per cent in the run up to Christmas. The internet offers consumers a massive choice and they are quick to move on if they don’t get a prompt response. It’s a proven fact that a fast personalised reply will result in

more sales - businesses need to buck up their ideas by going back to basics and focus on offering good customer service.”

Jos Dewing, head of marketing & reservations, Voyages of Discovery & Swan Hellenic, said:

“Our customer is always at the very centre of our marketing approach and we treat every marketing request as we would expect our own to be treated with regular reviews and internal testing of procedures. With this in mind, we are delighted to have been rated so highly within this useful research project by the DMA and will continue to improve and develop our approach to fulfilment so that we remain at the top of our field.”