



---

# 18 Proven Ideas for a *Better* Response Device

By Hugh Chewing

---

## INTRODUCTION

The response device is one of the most important components of the mailing. After all, it's used to complete the sale.

Yet too often, the response device is the last thing we get to when creating the package. Consequently, it's rushed and doesn't get the attention it deserves.

We work hard to make sure our envelope design grabs the reader's attention. And we work and re-work our letter copy until we get the reader fired up and ready to part with their money. Unfortunately, the sale is often lost once the reader gets to the response device. Either it's too confusing, too complicated or it lets them forget why they wanted to respond in the first place.

To help keep this from happening, here are *18 Proven Ideas for a Better Reply Device*. You don't need to test any of these ideas. Just be sure they are all included when you design your next mailing.

---

**CHEWNING DIRECT MARKETING**

[www.cdmdirect.com](http://www.cdmdirect.com)

Phone: 949-854-5401 . Email: [HChewing@CDMdirect.com](mailto:HChewing@CDMdirect.com)

©Chewing Direct Marketing

## 18 Proven Ideas for a Better Reply Device

1. Include one. Make it easy for the respondent to reply. And show them know that a reply is expected.
2. Write the response device *before* you write the letter. This will force you to describe the offer, benefits and call to action in a brief, concise and easy to understand fashion which, in turn, will help you write a better letter.
3. Title it. And consider your wording. Acceptance Form is better than Application Form because “application” implies possible rejection. Savings Certificate is even better. One respected direct response consultant claims that just adding the term “Certificate” to the response device’s title will increase results.
4. Put the recipient's name, address, and mail code on the reply form – not on the back of the return envelope. And don’t make the recipient write their own name and address. This slows things down and gives the recipient time to reconsider their action.
5. Include the name and mailing address of the organization -- the person who is waiting for your reply. Even if they lose the return envelope, the recipient will still be able to reply. While part of the package, the reply should be able to withstand the test of a stand-alone device.
6. Repeated the benefits promised in the letter.
7. Show a guarantee. The reply form is the prospect's last opportunity for resistance and a guarantee will help overcome this reluctance.
8. Speak in the first person. The reply is the recipient writing back to the letter writer.
9. Tell the reader exactly what to do. (I'm enclosing my check for..." Note: the speaker has changed from the letter.)
10. Tell the reader who to pay their check payable to. And it’s “Make Your Check Payable. . .” not “Your Checks.” Then, tell the reader what to do with the check (put it in the enclosed postage-free envelope and mail it back today).
11. For fundraising, list specific asking amounts on the reply form. And when possible, show what these asking amounts will accomplish. (\$15 will help seven children receive life-saving vaccines.)

---

**CHEWNING DIRECT MARKETING**

www.cdmdirect.com

Phone: 949-854-5401 . Email: HChewning@CDMdirect.com

©Chewning Direct Marketing

12. Again, for fundraisers, test odd asking amounts – if you can explain the odd amount. For example, “\$15.50 will help nine children. . .”
13. Make sure it stands out. Your reply device should pass the “drop it on the floor test” and be easily identifiable from the other package components.
14. The reply is an action device. Use warm, action colors.
15. Make it easy to use. The type should be no smaller than 10 point – and larger if you're writing to seniors.
16. When the reader must make choices, use check-off boxes. But don't give them too many choices. This is when you want them responding, not thinking.
17. Make sure the reply device fits into the return envelope.
18. If you have a tear-off stub on the response device, use it to recap the benefits and guarantee – or even as a free bookmark.

I'm a great believer in testing. However, each of these 18 ideas have been tested and retested. Ignore them at your own risk.

---

**CHEWNING DIRECT MARKETING**

[www.cdmdirect.com](http://www.cdmdirect.com)

Phone: 949-854-5401 . Email: [HChewning@CDMdirect.com](mailto:HChewning@CDMdirect.com)

©Chewning Direct Marketing