

Mail Date Blocking: The Debate

QUIETLY IN LIST circles the need for blocking mail dates is being debated; does it make sense to continue this practice?

Mail date blocking or limitation of names released to outside organizations dates back to the beginning of list relationships between two groups. The logic then dictated that if the organization releasing names had a house file mailing, no names would be provided to any other organization for a given amount of time thus protecting those names from receiving any other offers that would detract from giving.

Today blackout calendars continue to be employed by many organizations ... it can be argued that the original logic which was contingent upon the name being truly unique is now inaccurate. The duplication of names between outside files and house files has grown over time. Most major mailers (nonprofit and commercial) participate in a cooperative database or two or more. The growth of rental databases with enhanced selection capabilities almost ensures every name within the US is on at least one other file but likely many more. Donors are also consumers on a commercial file(s) that do not limit or block mail dates. The concept of a truly unique name is a passing memory of days gone by. Merge purge as well as cooperative profile reports will detail this phenomenon for each list owner.

The debate has become; do I the list owner want the revenue / exchange or am I agreeable to have another organization receive this benefit on those names where our files duplicate?

At Specialized Fundraising Services we work with our list owners in a variety of ways depending

on their organizational needs - from offering guidance on when to bend the rules for out of category mailers to complete removal of blackout dates based on testing results. We are committed to "going beyond the list."

FOR INFORMATION

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