

Q: What kinds of lists can I rent/buy?

Mailing lists can be developed by two basic methods: -

1. They may be compiled specifically as mailing lists for rental, often from information in the "public domain". This type of list would include business information available from Companies House or researched by telephoning companies in a specific sector.
2. They may be generated in response to an advertising or direct marketing campaign. Response lists include magazine controlled circulation or subscription lists, exhibition attendees, buyers of business equipment or services or customer lists of any sort.

Q: Where do I get information about lists?

Information about mailing lists for rental is available from the list owners themselves, from list managers or from list brokers. A directory of DMA members who provide these services is available.

In addition, there are a number of directories of lists, published as a general guide with descriptions of lists, costs, etc.

Q: What is the difference between a list owner, a list manager and a list broker?

List owners are the generators of mailing lists, either specifically for rental or as a by-product of their main business. Their aim will be to sell you their list if it fits the profile you are seeking.

List managers take on the job of selling mailing lists on behalf of a list owner. They are remunerated by the list owner on a commission basis according to the number of names they sell.

List brokers buy lists on behalf of clients much like other media buyers. They are a source of impartial advice on mailing lists as they receive similar commissions from all list owners. Most list brokers have a minimum number of names per order and generally deal in higher volume mailings.

Q: What form will the list information take?

Apart from the general information about the origin of the list, which may be in brochures or other advertising literature, you should ask to see a datacard on the lists you are considering renting

Q: What will a datacard tell me?

The datacard is similar to an advertising rate card. It will probably contain the following information: -

Source/profile of the list
Number of names available overall
Number of names available broken down by key selections
Type of selections available
Production formats
Update method and frequency for the list
Price per name or per thousand names
Price per selection
Minimum order quantity or price
Delivery time
Address formats/post-coding/Mailsort.

Q: How are lists priced?

Most lists are priced per thousand names. Small lists may have a one-off price for use of all the names. In addition to the base price, there will usually be further charges for each selection and for the output format you require. Delivery will also be charged extra.

Q: What am I allowed to do with the names?

Most lists are made available for one-time mailing use only. Additional uses, including telephone follow-up, have to be agreed with the list owner. Some lists are made available for more than a one-time use and are sold outright or on licence. In all cases the list owner retains the copyright of the list and is the legal owner of the data. Even if data is supplied in magnetic formats, you will require permission to load it onto your own database.

All lists include seed names which are dummy records addressed to the list owner or his agent. Unauthorised usage of lists will, therefore, be detected by the list owner and may lead to legal action.

Q: Is there any guarantee of quality or response?

It is impossible to predict response rates accurately on any list as it is very much dependent on the offer, the creative treatment and the timing of the mailing. You will not receive guarantees of response from list suppliers although they will be able to tell you in broad terms if the list has worked for similar offers in the past.

Some list owners offer guarantees of deliverability and quality of addressing.

DMA list companies should have a list warranty which states that the list is fairly obtained under the data protection regulations and makes clear the period of updating. The warranty is not a guarantee of response. To check that the list has a valid warranty you can contact the list company directly or the List Warranty Register on 020 7291 3341.

Q: How are lists updated?

Methods of updating vary from list to list. Some are refreshed constantly as a result of telephone or postal contact with the individuals concerned. All lists will be cleaned of goneaways regularly. You should ask the list owner or his agent what the update method is and what the periods of update are.

Q: What happens if I get returns?

No list will be 100% accurate and some returns or goneaways should be expected. The DMA and BCASP codes require that all goneaways should be returned to list owners promptly for removal. List owners operate different schemes to incentivise the return of goneaways. Some offer a credit for returns over a certain percentage. It is a requirement of the DMA code that owners should inform potential users if returns are likely to exceed 3% for a responder list or 6% for a compiled list.

Q: What about the Data Protection Act?

All list owners in the UK must register under the Act and collect data fairly. List warranties state the details of registration and attest that the individuals have been offered an opt-out or that the data has been fairly obtained from publicly available sources.

List users who hold computerised data on individuals, even those at business addresses, are also required to register under the Act. For further information on your obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 please contact the Office of the Data Protection Registrar on 01625 545 745.

Q: Does the DMA have rules about renting lists?

The DMA Code of Practice contains rules which have to be adhered to by list suppliers, processors and users.

You should be familiar with your responsibilities under the Code as well as those of owners, brokers and managers. Copies of the Code of Practice are available from the DMA.

Q: What format will the list come in?

The most common formats are self-adhesive labels, cheshire labels, magnetic tape or diskette. You should ensure that the mailing house can deal with whichever format you order. Your list supplier will be able to advise you of the formats available.

Q: Can I mail anything I like to the list?

Before a list is released you will be required to submit a sample-mailing piece to the list owner for approval. You may only mail the approved piece to the list unless otherwise agreed with the owner. You will need to ensure that the mailing conforms to the British Code of Advertising and Sales Promotion (BCASP) and is legal.

Q: How long will delivery take and can I see the list before it is mailed?

Some lists can be supplied very quickly, even overnight, but most will take around 5-7 working days from the point where the order is approved by the list owner. Most list owners will only allow lists to be delivered to a recognised DMA/DMARC mailing house which will do the mailing on your behalf. If you are buying a list for extended use these conditions will not apply.

Q: Whom do the responses belong to?

When you receive responses to your mailing you can record the details in your own files and may re-use the names for further campaigns without restriction. Non-responders remain the property of the list owner and may only be re-used with permission.

Q: How do I order lists?

You should discuss your direct mail requirements with your list suppliers and be prepared to take advice about how to make selections from the list to reach your target audience.

A count will then be run for you so that exact numbers of individuals to your specification can be supplied. Once you have agreed to the count, the list supplier will produce the data to the desired format. Prepayment may be required.

Other guides available in this series:

DMA Guide "The List Industry"

DMA Guide "Renting Consumer Lists"

Best Practice Guidelines for the Use of Data in Direct Marketing

Top Tips: Suppression Files

How to Buy Information: The ABCs of Data Enhancement

For copies and/or a full DMA publications list please call DMA 020 7291 3300. For information on DMA membership please call Sean Moore on 020 7291 3334, or contact him via e-mail on sean@dma.org.uk.

Useful Information

Advertising Association	020 7828 2771	aa@adassoc.org
DTI	020 7215 5000	dti.enquiries@imsv.gov.uk
Direct Marketing Association	020 7291 3300	Info@dma.org.uk
Chartered Inst of Marketing	01628 427180	marketing@cim.co.uk
Direct Selling Association	020 74971234	ukdsa@globalnet.co.uk
Information Commissioner	01625 545700	mail@dataprotection.gov.uk
Mailing Preference Service	020 7291 3300	dma@dma.org.uk
Mail Order Protection Scheme	01628 641930	enquiries@mops.org.uk
OFTEL	020 7634 8700	enquiries@oftel.gov.uk
Royal Mail	020 7421 2250	
Telephone Preference Service	020 7291 3300	dma@dma.org.uk
TrustUK	020 7291 3300	dma@dma.org.uk

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