



Why New Move Mailing Lists Work

by David Bancroft Avrick

One of the major mailing list categories is Change-of-Address (CHADS) or "New Move" lists. There are currently over 900 New Move lists on the marketplace - and each one has a number of mailers using the list. In the United States alone, close to 25% of the households move every year.

Approximately 43 million people move every year.

When we examine "why" New Move lists work - several things are obvious:

A New Location Requires New Stuff.

When I move, I am faced with new needs. My curtains and rugs no longer fit. I may need a new bank loan or even a new pool service. I need a wide variety of goods and services for my new location.

I may have left my parents' home - and moved into the first place of my own. If that's the case, I need just about everything (there's even a good chance Mom and Dad have kept my bedroom furniture and converted my old bedroom into a guest room).

With 50% of Americans getting divorced, there are a plethora of people starting over. One partner usually gets to keep most of the "stuff" - the other has to start from scratch. Often the newly divided couple have to scale down economically - so the king size bed doesn't work for either person.

If I've received a job promotion and I'm moving "up" - I may no longer want my chain-store living room, dining room or bedroom furniture. While I'm trading in my Honda for a Lexus, I'm

also trading in my stainless steel cutlery for silver plate.

If I moved because of a marriage or new child I will certainly want all kinds of "stuff" for my new household or for the child's nursery. And, with my new responsibilities I will probably also feel a need for insurance, and will probably want, and need, additional credit cards to handle my new expenses.

Long Distance Moves Translate To A New Persona.

When you relocate over a long distance you truly leave your old "life" behind. You leave your old friends and neighbors,

your old hangouts, you leave your old lifestyle. Now that you're in a new house, or apartment, in a different part of the country - you want to surround yourself with new "stuff" that reflects your new self-image. You're no longer your parent's child, your spouse's partner, or the person who used to live on Main Street. You're a new person and you not only want new stuff - you want different stuff.

If, all of your life you've lived in New York surrounded by earth tones, now that you've relocated to Colorado you're throwing away your browns and ochre, and replacing them with greens and blues. If you just moved near the water you're a prospect for swimwear and beach totes. Move to Texas, and before you know it, you're strutting around in boots. Move to a golfing area, your entire wardrobe changes.

You're a new you - and you want to surround yourself with things that remind you of that

and reflect your new persona. This is a time of reevaluation of your personal preferences, and the exploration of new lifestyle options. The oak table is gone - glass and chrome are in. The wall-to-wall carpet is gone -polished hard wood with area rugs is in. The suits and ties are gone - khakis are in.

Long distance moves force you to look at yourself - and your "stuff". You look at that oak table and ask, "do I really want to move this table 1,300 miles". There's a good chance the answer is "no" - you're moving on to a new life.

The long distance move also translates to a new barber, grocery store, hairdresser, dentist, optician, bank - you name it. If it's a product or service you use - you need a new supplier.

Most People Who Profitably Mail New Move Lists Are NOT Selling New Stuff Or Selling Products Or Services That Help Reflect Your New Self-Image.

Most new moves are made within the same zip code. The people that are moving keep the same job at the same company, they continue to shop at the same stores, their kids attend the same schools, they belong to the same clubs, and they keep their same friends (although they do change neighbors).

So, why are these people responsive to direct mail offers? What makes these local New Move names "work"? In order to understand why, you must take one step backwards. It's NOT the fact that the person has just moved - it's the REASON BEHIND WHY THEY MOVED.

The best way to look at this is to examine who is profitably mailing New Move lists. The most significant user categories are magazines, music clubs and credit card or financial solicitations.

Between these three categories a BILLION New Move names are mailed annually. That's a lot of mail. That translates to over \$400,000,000 in annual direct mail expense for lists, computerization, printing, mailing and postage. That's over a million dollars a day.

Why do New Move names respond?

The answer lies in the understanding of the reasons that precipitated the new-move ... in the subconscious psychological factors at work. The consumer, who receives and responds to the direct mail, is generally unaware of these factors.

The factors that create a new move are also the variables of life stress. These are the epochs of life. They include leaving home, graduation, co-habitation, marriage, divorce, having a child, empty nest, new job or promotion, loss of job, divorce, sickness or widowhood, newfound wealth or personal economic downturn, etc. These are the most stressful events of our lives.

Many of these changes symbolize increased autonomy and experimentation. Perhaps for the first time the individual can decide on their own, without the approval or influence of others. This is expressed in making decisions to subscribe to magazines of your liking, or signing up for a music club that offers *your personal* kind of music, or accepting a credit card solicitation for *your own* card. All of these actions are an expression of your freedom and independence, a confirmation of your right to make decisions for yourself, a fulfillment of your personal yearnings and desires.

These life changes often compel an individual to gain a semblance of control by deciding what to receive and what to reject.

There is a need to affiliate.

Life stress drives the need for affiliation. The new move demands that a person regain familiarity or symbolic attachment by ordering something associated with another person's interests or involvements ... or even denying the other by ordering something contrary to the other person's tastes. The just divorced person specifically subscribes to a magazine his ex-spouse would object to - or purchases music that her ex-spouse disliked.

Another social and psychological variable is preference of the familiar. Someone might not have been interested in a specific mail-order offer before he moved. However, after the

move, even if it's only a short distance, he is receptive. People prefer the familiar to the unfamiliar. If given an opportunity people will surround themselves with "sameness". The catalog that was previously uninteresting now represents familiarity.

An interesting psychological test is to show an individual a group of pictures. These pictures are then mixed with another group of unseen photographs. Ask the person to view the larger set of pictures and to identify the pictures he or she "likes". The individual will tend to pick the previously viewed pictures, even if viewed only for a few seconds. When people move, even a short distance, and the things they can connect to their previous life are the things that are more familiar to them, and therefore more "liked" and valued.

Moving compels the individual to hold onto the familiar, even to the point of having control of what will be delivered to the new address, especially regularly and repetitively. Being able to determine what "arrives" enhances a sense of ownership and sense of place. When you receive mailings, magazines, catalogs and merchandise at your "new address" you establish a feeling of being connected once again.

There are other needs.

Obviously, specific precipitants and motivations for moves may sometimes be associated with specific mailings. A woman getting married, and looking forward to entertaining guests, might become interested in subscribing to Gourmet Magazine. A person who just entered the job market, or who received a significant promotion, might decide to subscribe to the Wall Street Journal or Business Week.

Another factor is a sense of "newness". You have a new home and you want to surround yourself with "new stuff". Along with your new curtains and new carpeting you might want new magazines and new furnishings. Change begets change. You just changed your home, you're much more open to other changes. When direct mail solicitations come to you, you're willing to try a new product or a new supplier.

There Is A Clutter Factor.

As a direct marketer, there is another factor at work. Almost all direct mail is sent bulk rate, and is not forwarded. There is a short window, immediately after a new move, during which very little mail is being delivered to the consumer. When direct marketers send their mailings to new move addresses, they have the advantage of significantly less clutter. A less crowded mailbox means a higher probability of the mailing being read. When you couple this with the psychological factors, you get a consumer response of "Wow, someone knows where I am".

Several fundraising non-profits send out name-and-address labels to new move names. Here they are fulfilling an important "need" for the consumer; everyone loves to see their name, with their new address, in print. The new mover is significantly more thankful for these labels than a person who has been at that address for years. And that thankfulness is expressed in donations.

What Does This All Mean?

There are both simplistic and deep-seated factors that drive the responsiveness of "new move" mailing lists. This has been discovered by hundreds of mailers, but many thousands have not yet uncovered this potential. There are millions of names available on a 30-day hotline basis. If you have not tested change of address/new move names you are possibly missing out on a great opportunity. If you have tested them, and they didn't work ... it's probably a good idea to take another look at your test and your offer. Possibly you need to add some other criteria, such as bankcard holder, or gender selection, to make the lists work for you.

The bottom line is that New Move names are responsive.

Thanks to Ralph M. Daniel, Ph.D., Jerry P. Martin, M.D., and Lizbeth J. Martin, Ph.D. for their insightful contributions.