

Testing, Testing, 1, 2, 3: Raise More Money with Direct Mail Tests

by Mal Warwick

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250 pages with glossary and index

Reviewed by: Marc A. Pitman, <http://fundraisingcoach.com>

Testing, Testing, 1, 2, 3 delivers exactly what it promises—it thoroughly examines the in’s and out’s of testing direct mail fundraising. This book doesn’t give hard-and-fast rules for direct mail success but it would be helpful to read this book before you find those hard-and-fast rules. Warwick persistently reminds us that what has been proven to work well for one organization has been proven to bomb with another organization!

According to Warwick, “direct mail fundraising is counterintuitive.” He advocates you test and find what works well for *your* organization. And then, keep testing to see what works better. One successful small change can mean a lot of money for your nonprofit over time.

Testing, Testing, 1, 2, 3 clearly outlines *what* to measure and *how* to measure it. I was quite disappointed to find my favorite direct mail “rules”—signing with blue ink, using live stamps, and writing four page letters—were included in his list of least effective things to test!

Warwick’s style is wonderfully understandable and non-threatening. For people like me—non-statistician working with smaller nonprofits—the first two parts are the meat of the book. The third section is a series of tests Warwick’s organization has done. There are lots of numbers and some interesting information but I kept feeling like I was missing something.

Testing, Testing, 1, 2, 3 is an incredibly practical handbook on how to structure statistically accurate test of your direct mail program. It’s an excellent book if your nonprofit regularly sends acquisition mailings to lists of more than 20,000 names. But even if your organization sends to a smaller universe, this book will still help you avoid some very costly pitfalls.

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