EDDM2GO©

EDDM MADE EASY

A FREE EDDM PLANNING WORKBOOK

The Local Business EDDM Playbook

Plan your Every Door Direct Mail offer, postcard, budget, and results

A practical guide for local business owners getting ready for an Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) campaign. Work through it page by page and you'll finish with a one-page campaign brief, a break-even number for your kind of business, and a list of what to verify before anything prints.

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Educational guide. EDDM2GO is an independent printer and mailer and is not affiliated with USPS. Every Door Direct Mail and EDDM are USPS trademarks. All business examples are fictional.

1. Start with the EDDM decision

An EDDM mailing is a real spend, so it's worth an hour of planning first. This workbook walks you through the five decisions that shape one:

- **Goal:** what one result the mailing is for.
- **Area:** which carrier routes get it, and how many homes that is.
- **Offer:** the reason someone should respond now.
- **Budget:** what the whole campaign costs, and how many customers it takes to cover it.
- **Tracking:** how you'll know who responded.

The worksheet in section 8 collects your answers. Fill it in as you go.

What EDDM is

Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) is a USPS service for sending marketing mail to the neighborhoods around your business. Instead of buying a mailing list, you choose mail carrier routes, and USPS says the pieces don't need names or addresses on them.[3] For EDDM Retail, USPS says mailpieces are "simply addressed to 'Postal Customer.'"[1]

Covering an area is not choosing people

A carrier route is the set of addresses one carrier delivers to. When you pick a route, every delivery on it gets your piece. The USPS tool lets you pick residential-only routes and filter routes by age, income or household size, but USPS notes that this data comes from a prior U.S. Census Bureau report.[1][2] Those are averages for the area, not facts about each home.

So a route with a high average income still includes renters, retirees, and the neighbor who recycles everything unread. If you need to reach specific people, like past customers or new homeowners, you need a mailing list, not EDDM.

Two ways to get your EDDM mailing to USPS

- **Full Service.** A printer and mailer prints the pieces, bundles them by route, prepares the USPS paperwork and delivers the mailing to USPS. Their mailing method and limits can differ from Retail, so ask which rules apply to your job.
- **Print Only.** The printer ships the pieces to you, and you mail them yourself through EDDM Retail: at least 200 and up to 5,000 pieces per day per ZIP Code, with no special mailing permit needed.[1] Very large mailings can go through EDDM BMEU instead, which uses a bulk mailing permit.[1][3]

The Retail rules in this guide apply only when you mail it yourself (section 6 lists them). Section 5 shows how the choice changes your budget.

2. Pick a goal and your routes

Pick one goal per mailing. An EDDM postcard that tries to sell every service you offer won't sell any of them well. Your goal sets the offer, the routes, and what counts as a win.

Write the goal so you could check it later. "Get the name out there" is hard to check. "Book 15 new drain-repair jobs from homeowners within 20 minutes of the shop, in the six weeks after the mail date" is easy to check.

Then choose your carrier routes with these questions:

- **How far will you really go?** Use your actual drive or delivery limit, not the one you'd like to have.
- **Do the homes fit the offer?** Houses, apartments and businesses need different things. A lawn service has little to offer a high-rise.
- **Can you handle success?** Start with the number of homes you could serve if the mailing works. Mailing more than you can staff turns new customers into unhappy ones.
- **Will you mail more than once?** A smaller set of routes mailed twice gives you two rounds of results to compare.
- **What should you skip?** Shopping strips, office parks, or routes beyond your limit can wait.

To see real routes and home counts near you, open EDDM2GO's free route map[11] or the USPS route tool.[2] Our how-to guide walks through it.[14]

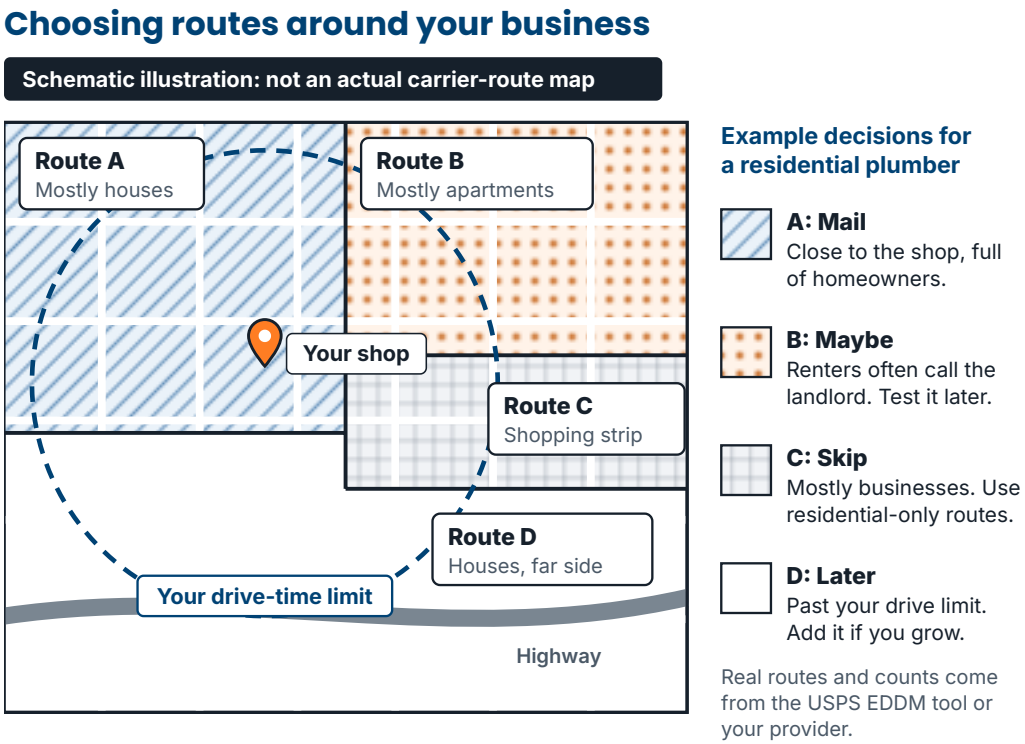


Figure 1. Schematic illustration: not an actual carrier-route map.

3. Create a clear offer

An offer gives someone a reason to call this month instead of "someday." It can be a discount, a free add-on, or a first-visit bonus. Before you print it, check four things:

- **Eligibility.** Who qualifies? New customers only, one per household, homeowners only. Say it on the card.
- **Expiration.** A real end date gives people a reason to act. USPS does not guarantee when Marketing Mail is delivered, so leave several weeks between the mail date and the end date.[5]
- **Capacity.** How many can you honor? If 40 people call in one week, can you serve them well?
- **Margin.** What's left after the discount? An offer that loses money on every job only works if those customers come back. Section 5 shows the math.

Three illustrative offers for fictional businesses

	Larkspur Lane Plumbing	Juniper Street Pizza	Fernwood Lawn Care
Offer	$50 off any drain repair over $250	Free garlic knots with any large pizza	First mow free with a six-visit plan
Who qualifies	New customers, homes in the mailed routes	First order, pickup or delivery	New customers, houses in mailed routes
Ends	Six weeks after the mail date	Six weeks after the mail date, printed on the card	Before the season's first scheduled visit
Capacity check	How many jobs can two crews add per week?	Can the kitchen handle a busy Friday?	How many new yards fit the crew's route?
Margin check	Is the $50 less than the profit on a typical repair?	Cost of the knots vs. a first-order profit	Is one free mow covered by five paid ones?

These are illustrative examples, not actual promotions or recommended prices.

If somebody has to read your offer three times, it needs work. Say it in one line, then add who qualifies and when it ends.

4. Build the EDDM postcard

Start with the size. Ordinary postcards often fail the EDDM rules, and it's the costliest mistake.

Size first: EDDM pieces must be "flats"

USPS calls EDDM pieces flats. For EDDM Retail, a flat must be longer than 10-1/2 inches, taller than 6-1/8 inches, or thicker than 1/4 inch, and weigh no more than 3.3 ounces.[5] No flat can be more than 15 inches long, 12 inches high, or 3/4 inch thick.[4]

- A standard 4 × 6 or 5 × 7 postcard is too small. Neither side is big enough.
- A 6.5 × 9 inch postcard qualifies, because 6.5 inches is taller than 6-1/8.
- 8.5 × 11 and 9 × 12 inch pieces qualify too, because they're longer than 10-1/2 inches.

Check any size with our free size checker,[10] compare sizes in the EDDM sizes guide,[13] and start from a template already sized for EDDM.[9] Using a provider? Confirm their size and weight limits.

Your postcard gets a short look on the walk from the mailbox to the kitchen counter. Give it five parts that each do one job:

1. **Headline.** Name a problem the reader has, in words they'd use.
2. **Offer.** One reason to act now, with who qualifies and the end date.
3. **Proof.** A specific, true reason to trust you: a policy, a license number, or a review you have permission to use. Never invent proof.
4. **Contact.** The one phone number or web address you want people to use.
5. **Response path.** A code, phone line or web page used only for this mailing, so you can count the responses (section 7).

4a. The front

Here's how those five parts fit on a 6.5 × 9 inch EDDM postcard for a fictional plumber.



Figure 2. An annotated postcard front for a fictional business. Illustrative only.

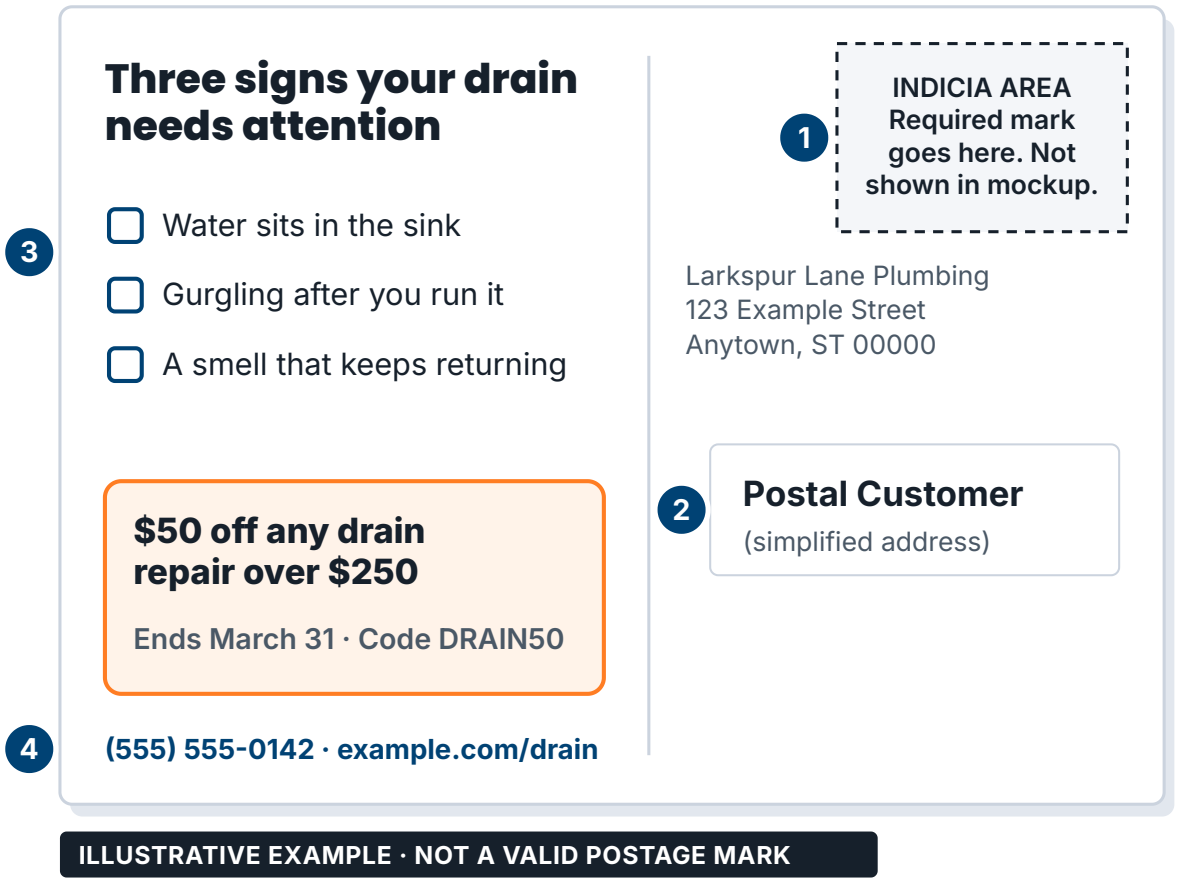
Educational mockup, not production artwork

These mockups teach layout and messaging. They are not print-ready or USPS-approved. Real artwork needs the exact size, bleed, safe area and postage mark your provider or USPS specifies, so confirm those before you design.

4b. The back

The back carries the address side. Leave room for the postage mark (the indicia) and the address block, and use the rest to back up your offer.

Postcard back: the address side



ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE · NOT A VALID POSTAGE MARK

1. **Indicia area**
   Exact mark from USPS or your provider.
2. **Address block**
   "Postal Customer" for EDDM Retail.
3. **Supporting message**
   Short detail that backs up the front.
4. **Repeat the response path**
   For people who only see this side.

Figure 3. The address side. The indicia area is left blank on purpose.

For EDDM Retail, USPS says every piece must include the EDDM Retail indicia above and to the right of the address block.[1][6] Get that artwork from USPS or your provider. Don't redraw it.

4c. Fix the message first

Most weak EDDM postcards have a message problem, not a design problem: too many services, no offer, no reason to respond now.

Same business, two messages

BEFORE

LARKSPUR LANE PLUMBING

Serving the community with quality, pride and dedication. Your satisfaction is our number one goal!

- Residential
- Commercial
- Drains
- Water heaters
- Remodels
- Gas lines
- Inspections
- Leaks
- Sewer lines

Call us today! 555-555-0142 or 555-555-0199
example.com · find us online · email anytime

AFTER

Slow kitchen drain? Let's clear it.

$50 off drain repairs over $250
New customers. Ends March 31.

Written price before any work starts

Call (555) 555-0142
or example.com/drain · Code DRAIN50

- ⊗ No single problem or offer
- ⊗ No reason to act this month
- ⊗ Two numbers, nothing to track
- ⊗ Slogan takes the best space
- ✓ One problem in the headline
- ✓ One offer: who and when
- ✓ One tracked number, URL, code
- ✓ Proof the reader can check

Illustrative example for a fictional business. 555 numbers and example.com are for demonstration.

Figure 4. One problem, one offer, one tracked way to respond.

The "before" card tries to say everything. The "after" card picks one problem, one offer, and one way to respond, so it's easier to act on and to track.

A quick message test

- Read the front out loud. Can you say the offer in one breath?
- Cover the logo. Would a neighbor still know what you want them to do?
- Find the end date and the phone number in a few seconds.
- Ask someone outside your business what the card is offering. Fix whatever they get wrong.

5. Budget and break-even

Add up every cost before you decide a mailing is worth it. How you mail it changes which lines you pay:

- **Full Service:** one quote usually covers printing, bundling, the USPS paperwork and delivery to USPS. Check whether postage is included and shown as its own line.
- **Print Only:** you pay for printing and shipping, then pay postage at the Post Office and do the bundling, facing slips and drop-off yourself. Count your time.

EDDM2GO compares the two side by side in "EDDM Full Service vs Print Only."[8] To price your own routes, try our EDDM quote by ZIP Code.[15]

Use contribution, not revenue. Revenue is what the customer pays you. Contribution is what's left after the direct cost of serving them, like parts, food or crew time. Break-even should use contribution. Otherwise you'll think you're covered when you aren't.

Hypothetical example: a fictional plumber mails 2,500 EDDM postcards

Line	What to include	Example
Postage	2,500 pieces x $0.26 (check the current USPS rate)	$650
Printing	Size, paper, quantity and options	$600
Design	Your time, a designer, or an adapted template	$250
Prep and other	Bundling, drop-off, tracking line, staff time, tax	$100
Total campaign cost		**$1,600**
Average first job	Revenue per new customer	$300
Direct cost of that job	Parts and crew time	$180
Contribution per customer	**$300 - $180**	**$120**

Break-even = campaign cost ÷ contribution per customer = $1,600 ÷ $120 = 13.3, rounded **up to 14 customers**. Dividing by revenue instead ($1,600 ÷ $300) gives 6, which is wrong.

Hypothetical figures, not a quote or a typical result. Postage uses the $0.26 EDDM Retail rate USPS listed on November 20, 2026.[1] Counts the first job only.

5a. Break-even depends on your business

One mailing can pay for itself with one customer or need hundreds. It depends on what each new customer is worth to you.

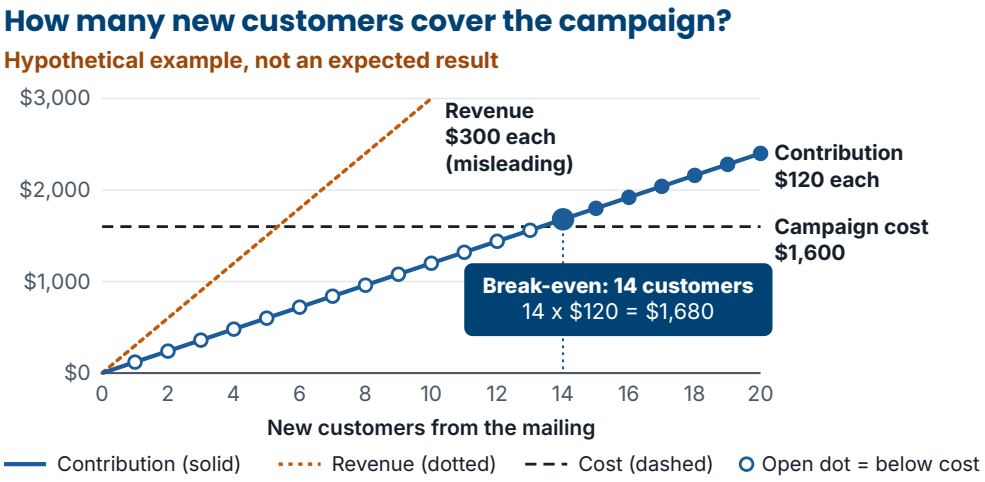


Figure 5. Hypothetical break-even. Contribution, not revenue, decides it.

Same $1,600 mailing to 2,500 homes, fictional businesses

Business, what you count	Contribution per customer	Break-even customers	Response needed
Pools, one project	$8,000	1	0.04%
Plumber, first job	$120	14	0.56%
Pizza, first order only	$8	200	8.0%
Pizza, 6 orders a year	$48	34	1.36%

"Response needed" = break-even customers ÷ 2,500 homes, assuming every response buys. If you close half your calls, double it. All figures are hypothetical.

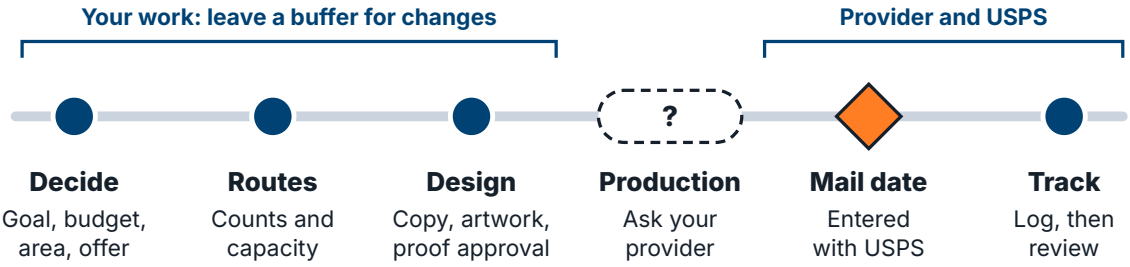
What this tells you

- **High-ticket businesses** (pools, roofing, remodeling) can cover a mailing with one or two jobs. The question is whether you can handle the leads.
- **Low-ticket businesses** (restaurants, coffee shops, car washes) rarely break even on first orders. Count the repeat visits your records show, not a hopeful guess.
- **Is your number realistic?** Compare the response you need with what your past marketing has done. No history? Mail a few routes first. The workbook does this math, including repeat sales.

6. Prepare and launch

Plan backward from your mail week, with a buffer for proof changes. Get production timing from your provider.

Plan backward from the week you want to mail



Why there are no day counts here

Production time depends on your provider and the options you choose. USPS says it "does not guarantee the delivery of USPS Marketing Mail within a specified time."

Figure 6. Planning timeline. Your provider and USPS set the dates on the right.

Final review before you approve

- ☐ Routes chosen, with a total piece count you can serve
- ☐ Piece size qualifies as an EDDM flat
- ☐ Offer states who qualifies and a real end date
- ☐ Phone, web address and code tested; every proof point true
- ☐ Paper, bleed and postage mark confirmed; artwork run through a file checker[12]
- ☐ Someone is ready to answer calls and log responses

Print Only: if you mail through EDDM Retail yourself

USPS rules for EDDM Retail, checked November 20, 2026:

- Send at least 200 and up to 5,000 pieces per day per ZIP Code.[1] A ZIP Code with fewer than 200 deliverable addresses can be mailed in full with fewer pieces.[5]
- Bundle in stacks of 50 to 100 pieces, no higher than 6 inches. Put a facing slip on top of every bundle and write that bundle's piece count on it.[1][7]
- Take or ship the mailing to the Post Office that delivers to your routes.[1][5]
- Bring the postage statement USPS requires. Check the current form on usps.com before you go.

Using Full Service? Your provider handles these steps. Costs: section 5.

7. Track responses and sales

Choose a tracking method before you print, because it has to be on the card:

- **A dedicated phone number** that rings only for this mailing.
- **An offer code** people must mention or enter.
- **A short web address** used only on the postcard.
- **One question** at checkout or on the phone: "How did you hear about us?"

Then calculate three numbers:

- **Response rate** = attributed responses ÷ pieces mailed. Did the card get people to act?
- **Conversion from responses** = new customers ÷ responses. Did your follow-up close the sale?
- **Customer acquisition cost** = total campaign cost ÷ new customers. What did each one cost?

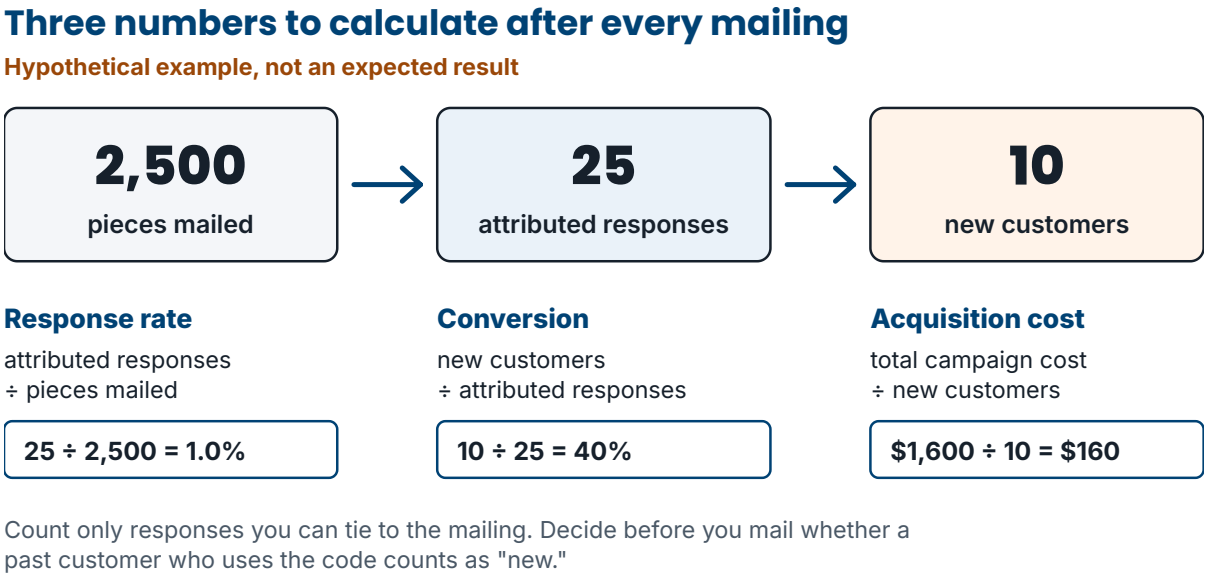


Figure 7. Hypothetical tracking example using the same mailing.

In this example, 10 customers is below the break-even of 14 from section 5. On first jobs alone, the mailing didn't pay back; repeat business may change that.

Know the limits of your numbers

Attribution is never perfect. People keep postcards for weeks, forget the code, or search your name instead. Decide up front whether a past customer who uses the code counts as new, and write the rule down.

8. Your campaign worksheet

Fill this in before you approve a proof. Keep it with your results.

Goal

What result, how many, by when? _____

_____

Routes

ZIP Codes or routes _____

Total pieces _____

Why these routes? _____

Offer

The offer _____

Who qualifies _____

End date _____

Most we can honor _____

Budget and break-even

☐ **Full Service** ☐ **Print Only (we mail it through EDDM Retail)** **Piece size:** _____

Postage: pieces x rate		Average sale (revenue)	
Printing (or full-service quote)		Direct cost of that sale	
Design		Sales counted per customer	
Prep, tracking, staff time, other		**Contribution (B)** = (sale - cost) x sales	
Total cost (A)		**Break-even = A ÷ B**, rounded up	
		Response needed = break-even ÷ pieces	

Tracking

Method _____

Code or number _____

Who logs _____

New if... _____

Who does what

Approves proof _____

Confirms routes _____

Answers calls _____

Reviews results _____

Dates

Target mail week _____

Confirmed mail date _____

First review _____

Final review _____

Notes and lessons for next time

_____

Sources

USPS rules, checked November 20, 2026. Postal rules change, so check current USPS pages before you mail.

1. **U.S. Postal Service, "Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM)."**
   www.usps.com/business/every-door-direct-mail.htm · Retail vs. BMEU, limits, bundling, drop-off, postage.
2. **U.S. Postal Service, "EDDM online route tool."**
   eddm.usps.com/eddm/customer/routeSearch.action · Route types; demographic filters.
3. **USPS PostalPro, "Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM)."**
   postalpro.usps.com/node/3468 · No names or addresses; BMEU volumes.
4. **USPS Postal Explorer, "DMM 101, Retail Mail: Letters, Cards, Flats, and Parcels."**
   pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/101.htm · Maximum flat dimensions.
5. **USPS Postal Explorer, "DMM 143, EDDM-Retail Prices and Eligibility."**
   pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/143.htm · Flat size, weight, entry, delivery time.
6. **USPS Postal Explorer, "DMM 144, EDDM-Retail Postage Payment and Documentation."**
   pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/144.htm · Indicia placement.
7. **USPS Postal Explorer, "DMM 145, EDDM-Retail Mail Preparation."**
   pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/145.htm · Bundles of 50 to 100 with a facing slip.

About the publisher

EDDM2GO is an independent printer and mailer based in Houston that mails nationwide. We print EDDM postcards and flyers, offer Full Service and Print Only orders, and run free planning tools. EDDM2GO is not affiliated with USPS. More about us.

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