

# Fax Marketing:

*Immediate, Targeted and Cost-Effective*



## Tips & Pitfalls

### What you should know before using Fax Marketing

Fax Marketing can be an extremely cost-effective means of marketing and is perfectly legal. However it has its controversial side which can cause problems for people who are not properly prepared. This document presents some of the issues we consider to be important background reading for managers planning to use this marketing method.

#### 1. Handling Complaints

Complaints from ungrateful recipients are "par for the course" with faxing huge volumes of unsolicited material and are the sole responsibility of the client. However the distribution of the complaints with time is usually different from the distribution of positive enquiries following a fax broadcast. The majority of people complaining will do so within minutes or hours of receiving their fax because they are annoyed. However, 24 to 48 hours later we would expect quite a different picture as the positive responses show through which can be expected to come in more steadily over the next days, weeks and even months.

So, before you use faxing for the first time, please note: If you order several thousand faxes to go out all on the same night you are strongly advised to be prepared for plenty of complaints the following day which will consume time and resources.

##### 1a. The FPS (Fax Preference Service, regulated by OfTel)

The FPS maintains a database of fax numbers of people who do not wish to receive unsolicited faxes. All numbers transmitted are screened against the latest FPS database, in accordance with OFTEL legislation currently in effect - currently, the OFTEL guidelines state that the latest FPS numbers should be screened every 28 days or less. The FPS system is good but not perfect and some issues follow.

Lots of people have heard about the FPS and may say they are registered when they're not in order to add weight to their complaint. Of course it is impossible to know one way or the other on the spur of the moment when the person is on the phone grumbling. Some people may have registered themselves within the last few weeks but their block is not yet implemented because of the 28 day delay.

Furthermore, the FPS itself does make mistakes every once in a while - the semi-automated registration procedure relies on the standard human/computer combination, which is not infallible. The FPS operators read messages from voicemail systems, then transcribe the number to the computer system. Some registrations fail because people enter their fax number using the number keys on their phone instead of actually saying the number out loud. Others give their phone number instead of their fax number by mistake and others talk too quietly or with regional accents which result in messages which are impossible to decipher.

##### 1b. Routine complaints

When you receive a complaint we recommend the following: (if they say they are registered with the FPS, see 1c. below)

1. "Sorry to trouble you. I can write down your fax number and have it excluded from future offers" etc
2. Tell them their number will be added to the removals list and they should not receive your document again.
3. Add their number to your list and send the list to us after a couple of days when the complaints have finished. We will ensure your document is not sent to the same numbers again if/when you re-target the same area at a later date.
4. If they threaten further action or want compensation for being disturbed or reimbursement for fax paper/ink/toner etc (some do!) we recommend you inform them you have used a perfectly legal promotional method and you are not liable for the running cost of their fax machine [any more than an unfeasibly slow motorist is responsible for the wear on your brake linings - Ed]. Tell them if they want to stop receiving promotional faxes they need to get their fax number registered with the FPS. Offer to give them the number of the FPS and if you have the time to make it sound like you went to quite a bit of bother to look it up for them they will be thanking you as they put the phone down. The FPS registration line is 08450 700702.

Please remember these complaints are your complaints regarding your document and so are your responsibility. Do not refer these complaints to us.

##### 1c. FPS complaints

If your document is accidentally sent to a person who has taken the trouble to register with the FPS, their annoyance is understandable and they should quickly be directed to the company responsible for the problem which is ourselves. You have no need to spend time dealing with these people. You should simply inform them that the faxes are sent through an agency and if they have an FPS-related problem they should contact them immediately. We recommend the following:

1. Ask whether they registered AT LEAST 28 DAYS AGO (this is the maximum lead-in time before the block is implemented).
2. Tell them you used an agency for your fax broadcast (and therefore it is not your fault they have been faxed)

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3. Give them our number 01270 259000 (or fax 01270 259001) and conclude the call.
4. If they threaten further action or want compensation or reimbursement from you for fax paper/ink/toner etc. just refer them to us. Remember, a genuine FPS complaint is a database mistake of some form and you can tell them it is NOT your responsibility. Please do not refer ordinary complaints to us because they ARE your responsibility! (See 1b. above).

No liability is accepted for the consequences of any complaints, whether or not they are from people who are registered with the FPS. Before we will accept your order you must accept that complaints, including some FPS complaints, are an inevitable part of this marketing method.

## **2. Proof of Transmission**

The standard rates shown in the price guide include a Summary Report which shows the number of successfully transmitted documents. A full report is available at extra cost of 0.5p per fax but this should be requested before transmission takes place because extra charges of 1p per entry will be charged if logs are requested retrospectively. In the event of a genuine dispute the difference between these figures will be refunded if the dispute is upheld by the contents of the log.

## **3. Targeting**

Unless you specifically choose one or more categories or dialcode areas at the time of your order, faxes will be transmitted to random business fax numbers from the BT listings and other sources.

## **4. Faxback Removals Service**

Our clients may optionally make use of a fax-back number service which is supplied as a bonus completely free of charge. It is a dedicated standard fax machine on one telephone line which quite naturally will give an engaged signal if it is already receiving a document when another one is sent or an error if it runs out of paper. No liability is accepted for telephone complaints regarding unavailability of this service, which potentially could arise from a recipient who is even more angry than usual because he has been unable to send his complaint by fax so now he is having to use the telephone. We take the viewpoint that in the absence of the faxback number the recipient would have probably called anyway. An alternative faxback number which can accept three simultaneous faxes is available at extra cost if required.

## **5. Response Rates**

Responses to fax marketing vary considerably and depend on numerous factors outside our control. We act as "the postman" for your document and therefore no liability or concessions will be entertained in the event of alleged poor response rates. Neither do we charge you extra if you have a fabulous response.

## **6. Transmission Policy**

One attempt is made to transmit the document. If for any reason the transmission is unsuccessful (disconnected, engaged etc.) the number will be bypassed and the next one used. This factor, coupled with the fact that hundreds of faxes are sent simultaneously means there is inevitably a discrepancy between your requested quantity and the number of successful transmissions. We prefer to transmit a slight shortfall and credit your account with the difference rather than asking for more money if an excess is sent.

## **Acceptance**

Clients must acknowledge that they have read and accept this above document before an order can be accepted. Please also see the Fax Marketing Terms of Business.

I HAVE READ AND ACCEPT THE NH FAX MARKETING TIPS & PITFALLS:

Signed ..... Date .....