

Back-checking Explained

We have a responsibility to provide evidence to substantiate that the distributions we undertake are completed thoroughly and to the required standards, Industry governing bodies recommend that this should be in the form of back-checking.

Back-checking is conducted retrospectively once the distribution has been completed and is a measurement of recollection of a delivery. The majority of distribution companies provide face to face back-checks which are conducted by the distribution team leader at the doorstep with members of the public. Once a distribution has been completed, the team leader will call at people's homes and ask them to confirm whether they can recall the leaflet being delivered, recording the responses on a back-checking sheet.

Here at The National Door to Door Company we go further than this and arrange for all of our shared and solus distributions to be back checked independently by a third party Telephone Back-checking company. We do this because an independent audit is impartial and therefore the results objective and have a much greater value as a form of evidence of distribution. It also means that the distributions that our teams carry out are independently monitored, a more superior form of quality control over the industry required 'self-auditing' method.

Independent Telephone back-checking

We contract the DBC Online Partnership to conduct our telephone back-checking. Once deliveries have been completed in an area they complete a spot-check randomly selecting a number of roads and then contact members of the public by telephone to ascertain if they can recall delivery of the item being made. Leaflets are pieces of unaddressed mail and anybody can answer the phone when the back-check is made so inevitably negative recollection is common.

Taking this into account, we expect to establish a level of positive recall between 40% and 60% to substantiate that deliveries have been completed to the standards that we expect from the teams that we use. Because back-checking has to be completed retrospectively, people often have difficulty in recalling a specific leaflet. Elapsed time is one factor that can affect recall, but there are many other factors also that will impact on a person's ability to remember deliveries.

Examples of factors that can affect Recall

- **Item Size** – larger sized items can be more memorable than smaller ones
- **Brand Strength** – recognisable brands or items delivered regularly are usually more memorable than one-off deliveries
- **Perceived Value** – Items with a perceived value (e.g. Council publications, money off coupons) can be more memorable
- **Creative Design** – an item's creative design can impact positively or negatively on recollection
- **Attitude towards Unsolicited Deliveries** – unfortunately some people dispose of leaflets immediately on receipt
- **Volume of other material delivered daily / weekly** – leaflet delivery is a popular form of advertising but the more that people receive the more difficult it can become to recall individual items
- **Multi-occupancy properties** – often the person who answers the phone when the back-check is made won't have seen the leaflet, if someone else in the house has picked it up.