

Phone books provide names for companies' mailing lists

By Patty Pryor

Do you ever wonder how your name shows up on so many mailing lists? There are companies based all over the country whose sole purposes are the compilation of such lists, with names obtained from an almost endless number of sources.

The companies are of two types, said Donna Inzinga of Direct Mail/Marketing Association in New York. First, she said, a general compiling company draws names from different sources, such as telephone directories, which do not necessarily indicate that the names represent mail order customers.

A brokerage firm, however, compiles lists of people who are already mail order buyers, she said.

The brokerage firm acts as "middle man" between sources of lists and the companies wanting to obtain those lists, said Betty Berger, vice president of Dependable Lists, Inc. in New York.

Her company represents about 30,000 kinds of mailing lists, including magazine subscribers, book club members and credit card holders.

"At this stage, being a nationally known broker in business for 30 years, we get a lot of lists from list owners automatically," she said.

Even though it already represents 30,000 list owners, Berger said, Dependable Lists is continually seeking new sources of names.

"If we are interested in seeking other kinds of lists not available to us," she said, "we look through magazines and newspapers for space advertisers, and then we make direct contact with those advertisers."

Some of the lists are sold for considerable profit, Berger said. The price, established by the list owners, depends on the category of the list, she said.

List owners sometimes sell their lists among themselves, she added, but that situation is rare.

"It stands to reason that only a small percentage would do that, because it's competitive," she said.

List owners will more often exchange different types of lists with each other, she said.

Many direct mailers are targeted at recent graduates, but various sources within the university said that their lists are not sold or released to the public at all.

"They don't get any lists from us, I'm sure of that," said Shirley Thompson of the Registration and Records Office.

"We publish a commencement list after graduation, but that has no addresses," she said.

However, the registration office does have an open address book with every registered student listed, Thompson said.

Max Hoffmann, of the UNL Alumni Association, said that its lists are available only to colleges within the university, the Nebraska Foundation and the Alumni Association itself.

Finally, Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity publishes the Buz Book, listing addresses of registered students, but any student wishing to delete his listing from the publication has that option.

"Lists of names come off all kinds of things," Thompson said. "Graduates are just getting the beginning of it, so they might as well get used to it."

Correction

In a Wednesday Daily Nebraskan story about UNO expansion, it was incorrectly reported that Regent Kermit Hansen was absent from the October meeting of the NU Board of Regents.

Actually, Hansen was present and Regent Kermit Wagner of Schuyler was absent.

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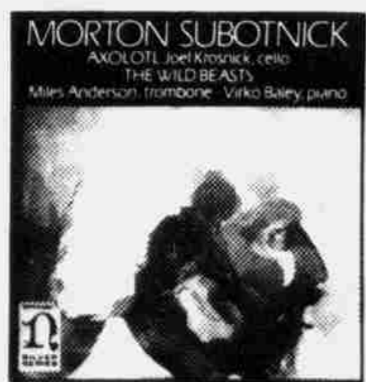
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