

Bright Ideas



Marketing in These Tough Times

The second installment of our series covers mailing smarter with good list hygiene.

MORE THAN JUST A GOOD IDEA

Good list hygiene is not just a good idea, it's also requirement. That is, it's a requirement for obtaining the cheapest postage.

GOOD DATA

Starting with good data can be a challenge if you're operating with a really old list. First, we process a list using an address standardization system. Using CASS (Coding Accuracy Support System) we standardize addresses (changes elements such as Street to St) which then will show us which addresses require manual intervention. These "bad" records should be viewed as an opportunity to clean up a mailing list.

WHO MOVED?

Using the USPS National Change of Address Service (NCOA) to update a mailing list is another requirement that helps to save money. It removes records where a person has moved and not left a forwarding address, as well as updates those records where a new address has been provided.

COST SAVINGS

Working with a clean database saves money because postage on non-deliverable addresses adds up (not to mention printing/ mailing costs).

USPS receives 7,000 address changes every hour and records 45 million moves every year. That's enough address changes to populate New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania!



Just remember the 3 C's of address quality: Complete, Correct, & Current - using these methods you will be able to reach your customers and prospects AND spend less!

Ask your TMD representative today about this and other cost saving ideas. ■

Opinion Sharing

We recently ran two polls via LinkedIn. We had run these same polls in 2009. The 2010 results gave us some interesting insight into direct mail opinions and how things have changed since last year.

DIRECT MAIL DETAILS

Our first poll was titled "When using direct mail, which of these is more important?" and the choices were: cost of mailing services; cost of postage; speed of USPS delivery or knowing 'where' your mail is.

The results were rather surprising. 42% of respondents felt the *cost of services* was the

most important with *cost of postage* and *USPS delivery speed* tied for second with 21%. *Knowing "where" your mail is* came in last with 14% (this was the leading choice last year). All of the respondents came from small companies and 80% of them fell in the 35-54 age range (final 20% were age 55+).

DIRECT MAIL DESIGN

The next poll was "Which mail piece design are you more likely to read?" with the choices: full color postcard, b&w postcard, self mailer, letter in envelope or "I read all my mail".

Last year the full color postcard reigned supreme, but this year, it was tied with a letter in an envelope. Interestingly, last year the age of respondents were mostly in the 18-24 range, whereas this year, the majority of respondents were 35-55+. The postcard was favored in the 18-24 & 25-54 age ranges

and 75% of the letter readers were in the 55+ age range.

For more details on the results (or to take a poll), please connect with us on LinkedIn or visit our blog online. ■



CONTENTS

MARKETING SERIES	1
OPINION SHARING	1
SERVICE INSIGHT: TRACKING	2
INTRODUCTIONS	3
MAIL DESIGN UPDATE	3
INDUSTRY NEWS	4

SERVICE INSIGHT:

Do You Know Where YOUR Mail Is?



The USPS has been having major delivery issues the past few months. It hasn't been in the news. If you haven't heard about it, you must not have been sending out mailings.

WHY THE SLOW DELIVERY?

We can only speculate as to why there has been a decline in delivery standards. The retirement of a large number of employees, dating back to October 30, 2009 is when it seemed to start. There have been a lot of staff changes to accommodate the lower work force. Many employees are being moved into new positions, and some positions have been eliminated.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Planning your next direct mail project has gotten trickier than ever. You can no

longer depend on the USPS's published service standards to predict when your mail will arrive. Although we do see some mail arrive within the published times (3 to 5 days for First-Class Presort and 7 to 10 days for Standard), we've also seen mail take as long as 20 to 30 days to reach its destination.

So how can you plan for your next wave? Or to staff your call center? Using the USPS CONFIRM service is exactly what you need to use when you want to know "where" your mail is.

TMD'S TRACK N TRACE SERVICE

Utilizing the USPS CONFIRM service, we will barcode every piece in your mailing to give you a snapshot of where your mail is and when you may expect it to be delivered.

Although not all postal facilities are equipped for 100% scanning of mailpieces, the results you will see will give you a good idea of where you mail is, and when it will be delivered.

WWW.TMDTRACKING.COM - YOUR WEBSITE FOR MAIL TRACKING

When you're ready to find your mail, you simply log onto our website for reports, maps and more.

You can even track individual pieces of mail, see what machines they ran on at the post office and when!

So, when you're ready to take your mailings to the next level...just give us a call and we'll show you how you can keep an eye on your mail, from the comfort of your office. ■

Recent Blog Posts

www.TheMailingDepartment.com

Points of Hue

Colors to use (and avoid) when designing direct mail - what colors are you using in your mail design?

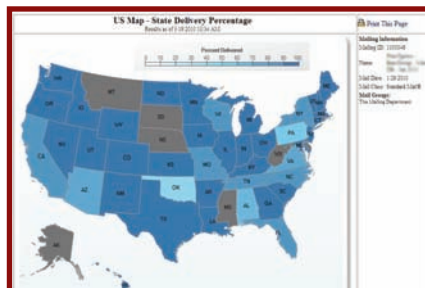
The Critical 5/8 Zone

Don't have critical information covered by USPS stickers on your mail piece, design with critical 5/8 zone in mind.

DMM Updates

Be informed on the latest USPS updates. Visit us online to learn more about us, our service, read our blog and connect with us on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. ■

Mailing ID	Mailing Name	Mailing Date	Total Pieces	% Scanned	% Final Scan	% On Time	Last Scanned
1000048	...	01/28/2010	17,062	99.5 %	98.2 %	12.5 %	2/2/2010
1000048	...	01/28/2010	1,006	95.4 %	99.1 %	92.6 %	2/22/2010
901820	...	11/13/2009	549	98.7 %	84.0 %	94.4 %	12/1/2009
901701	Multiple Stores	10/30/2009	2,116	92.5 %	75.9 %	23.6 %	11/10/2009
901965	STORES 104-111	10/16/2009	18,974	94.4 %	94.3 %	69.0 %	10/30/2009
901964	STORE 95	10/16/2009	7,742	99.2 %	98.8 %	100.0 %	10/28/2009



INTRODUCTIONS:

Meet **Tony Perrone**, our face on the road

Tony has been with TMD for 2 years, but he's been in the mailing industry for much longer. Tony started his experience with mail while working with his family's mailing business when he was 16 years old.

Tony has done everything from machine operations and warehouse management to shipping/receiving and deliveries. Tony is our face on the road as well as at our back door. Tony's ability to keep our warehouse organized has helped our production team to work more efficiently and get projects out faster. And of course, he's the one getting those projects out the door by acting as a postal liaison with in-plant USPS verification and driving the sealed trucks to the post office.

We're proud to have Tony on our team. He works hard to keep our operations running smoothly and he makes a mean cup of coffee too.

On a personal note, Tony enjoys football (especially when the Chicago Bears have a good

defense) and Sox baseball. He also, surprisingly enough, enjoys driving long distances; has driven across the US & Canada in

his lifetime, twice! He also enjoys camping and "the great outdoors." For 13 years straight he has driven and trekked up to Beaver Bay, MN where his uncle has a cabin and 40 acres, just South of the Canadian border. ■



MAIL DESIGN UPDATE:

Getting Flats Ready for Future Total Automation

FSS

The new Flat Sequencing System (FSS) that the USPS is installing around the country is going to make sorting flat size mail more efficient and accurate. This new equipment will orient the mailers into uniform stacks, read the mailing address and then sort them down to carrier levels for delivery.

In order for the mailers to be read and sorted, the design of the mailers must meet postal regulations that took effect this past fall. Although the new designs have been a requirement for six months, we still see some mailers designed incorrectly.

DESIGNING FOR AUTOMATION

Although the new designs are only required for Standard mail (First-Class Mail is exempt), it's good to use these standards on all of your mail pieces. One thing always rings true with the post office - if they "suggest" you do it one way, it's best to start doing it that way now as it will eventually become required.

The design change makes sense if you can picture how a carrier will sort

through the mail for delivery. All flat mail is stood on one end (portrait orientation) so that the carrier can flip through the tops of the pieces and easily read the addresses. So, all addresses need to be in the top half of a flat mailer. If your piece is landscape, the mailer will be turned during the sorting process, so just print the mailing address to the right of the half way point (see diagrams).

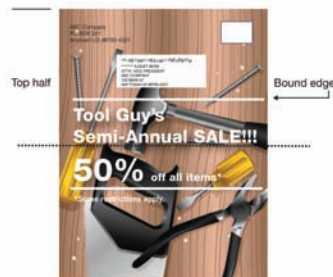
OOPS, WHAT IF...

What if you forget to update your designs? Failure to comply means your pieces will need to be mailed First-Class. This can be a very costly mistake as most Standard flats may be heavy and if you are forced to send via First-Class, you'll find the postage increase quite painful.

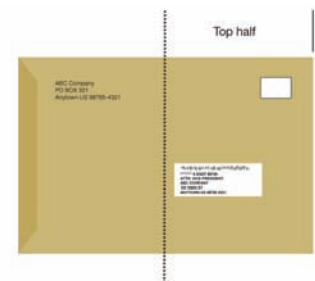
An alternative is to insert the mis-designed flat into an envelope or a polybag; however, the cost of the additional material/services will usually outweigh the increase in postage.

FOR MORE DETAILS

This article is also available on our blog. Just visit our website and click on the blog link to read this and other mail design tips and industry news. ■



Catalog addressed on back cover. "Top" is the upper edge when the spine is on the right.



Large envelope. "Top" is the left or right edge as viewed in this horizontal orientation. The "top half" could be either the left or right half.

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USPS Postal Facts

584
average number of mail
pieces processed each day

24
average number of mail
pieces processed each hour

43.8
number of address changes
processed in 2009

INDUSTRY NEWS:

Postal Updates

Here's a few of the changes that we've seen lately. If you have any questions, please let us know.

MOVE UPDATE PENALTIES

Effective January 7, 2010 the USPS instituted the penalty fees for mailings deemed to have failed to use an approved Move Update method. TMD uses NCOA on all customer mailings to avoid the 7¢ per piece fee that the post office will charge if a mailing fails. We do not charge extra for this service.

ROUND-STAMPED STATEMENTS

Effective March 15, 2010, many of our customers were disappointed to find out that we would no longer be able to provide round-stamped 3602s (or other postage statements). The USPS has decided to discontinue this practice in light of everything

going electronic. We can still provide a receipt of mailing, but those original stamped copies will no longer be made available. As a general practice, we will still be delivering our mail with a copy to be date stamped (by their time clock) for our records and will be happy to provide a copy of this document.

USPS MOBILE™ APP

Do you use an iPhone or iPod Touch? Ever wish you knew where the closest post office was? Well, there's an app for that! Just do a search for "USPS" and you'll see the free USPS Mobile app available for download. It can help you find the closest post office as well as track Express Mail packages!

Follow us on Twitter to receive future DMM updates via our blog. ■