Greener Mail
6 SIMPLE TIPS FOR MORE ECO- AND BUDGET-FRIENDLY MAILINGS

In today's economic climate businesses are forced to make tough choices every day. When it comes to evaluating mail and shipping costs, protecting the environment and protecting the bottom line should not be mutually exclusive. For businesses relying on direct mail for advertising or business operations, a handful of small changes can save money and reduce the environmental impact of mail campaigns.

The saying goes, "Garbage In, Garbage Out", which is why sustainable mail practices must start with data quality. The United States Postal Service (USPS)® estimates that close to 24% of all mail is addressed incorrectly. The result is that between 4 and 6 Billion pieces of mail are returned as undeliverable—a cost of nearly $2 Billion each year.

The following 6 tips can help cut the cost and cut the environmental impact of your mailings, which will help the planet and your bottom line.

1. STANDARDIZE

Ensure that addresses in your customer database are spelled and formatted correctly. Using CASS Certified™ software to standardize the addresses in your database—or better yet at the point of entry—can dramatically improve the quality and deliverability of your mail. Improved deliverability directly translates into a reduction of Undeliverable Mail (UAA) and the fiscal and environmental costs associated with it.

Example of a standardized address:

SAMPLE ADDRESS INPUT:

802 W COOTA AVE
SANRA BARBRA, CA
93102

DOTS ADDRESS VALIDATION OUTPUT:

802 E COTA ST.
SANTA BARBARA, CA
93103-3129

2. VALIDATE

Make sure the addresses in your mailing database are valid and deliverable addresses. Some addresses are not considered to be valid delivery points by the USPS. Using software that performs Delivery Point Validation (DPV)™ will ensure the addresses you are mailing to match one of the more than 145 Million deliverable addresses on file with the USPS.

3. APPEND BAR CODES

Each delivery point in the United States is assigned a unique bar code. Bar codes assist the Post Office in the automated sorting and delivery of mail. By appending bar codes to your mailings you can improve delivery rates and decrease delivery times. Marketers using delivery point bar codes for bulk mailings can often qualify for additional postage discounts.

4. FILTER

Use a Residential Delivery Indicator (RDI) ™ and regional data flags to filter your mailing database to identify addresses as residential or business, and ensure your mailings are reaching your targeted audience. For example if your business is B2B, removing residential addresses in your mailing list can cut down on waste and unwanted mailings. Parcel shippers can also save on shipping costs and surcharges by using RDI to verify delivery type status prior to shipping. The ability to "filter-in" your best prospects is a key quality of any successful mailing campaign. Filtering by region can improve mailings for retail-centric offers allowing you the land a neighborhood near your business. "Filter-out" by maintaining in-house do-not-market lists for prospects and customers who do not wish to receive future mailings.

5. UPDATE

Make a continuous effort to keep your lists accurate. The USPS now requires marketers to update their mailing lists with a third party service at least every 3 months. This is part of the federal Move Update standard and USPS's ongoing effort to reduce the amount of UAA mail. The National Change of Address Linkage System (NCOA Link ®) from the USPS makes change-of-address information available to mailers.

6. USE SUSTAINABLE PRINT TECHNOLOGIES

With the wide availability of eco-friendly printing products, it is now easier and more cost effective for companies to adopt sustainable direct mail practices. Consider using any or all of the following eco-friendly alternatives to conventional print technologies:

• Post-consumer recycled paper

- Papers made from alternative materials, such as sugar cane
- Paper certified by Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)
- Agri-based Inks, such as soy

Balancing a commitment to the environment and growing your business has never been easier than it is today. It all starts with data quality. DOTS Address Validation web services can help your business get started with more complete and accurate contact data. Offering both real-time and batch processing services, Service Objects has flexible plans to meet your business needs.

Using these simple 6 steps can help your company save money on postage, improve the effectiveness of your mailings and create sustainable direct mail practices that will help reduce your company's footprint.

ABOUT SERVICE OBJECTS

Service Objects is the industry leader in Real-Time Contact Validation solutions. Service Objects develops and delivers information solutions that improve the integrity of online transactions and contact verification. Each day businesses rely on Service Objects to validate hundreds of thousands of contacts to reduce fraud and improve customer contact through data validation and enhancement of incoming leads, Web orders, and customer contact information. Service Objects has verified nearly 800 million contact records - with availability of 99.995 percent - for more than 1,400 companies in over 25 diverse industries. A privately held company, Service Objects is headquartered in Santa Barbara, California. For more information about how Service Objects can help improve your mailings through better quality data, contact sales@serviceobjects.com , or call 800-694-6269.