

MEMO to MATTERS

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Synchronicity



Insight is good. Timely insight is better, which is why more and more businesses are turning to the Postal Service's Confirm service to track their marketing messages. They can know when their direct mail will reach their customers. They can anticipate customer replies or orders. They can measure how successful their campaign was in generating sales, and they can use this information to plan future campaigns. Synchronicity!

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Synchronicity

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“Confirm service is the way of the future — I can’t imagine operating without it,” says Martin Bernstein, manager of Media Transportation/Small Package and Postal Relations at JCPenney, one of the many business mailers who take full advantage of this mail tracking service.

Confirm uses a special barcode to electronically track First-Class Mail, Standard Mail and Periodicals letter-size and flat-size items. It provides information about mail that businesses send to customers (“Destination Confirm”) and reply mail that customers send back (“Origin Confirm”). Confirm can provide information about when the mailpiece was processed (time and date), where the mailpiece was processed (the processing facility), how the mailpiece was processed (the sort operation) and barcode data (PLANET Code and POSTNET Code).

Retailer and catalog merchant JCPenney has turned to Confirm to help the company more accurately pinpoint the delivery of retail mailpieces and coordinate its marketing messages with store events. Analysis of Confirm data has allowed JCPenney to adjust delivery time so that retail promotional pieces arrive just before store events. The company can also predict with greater accuracy the impact direct mail will have on store traffic and product sales.

“Direct mail marketing is critical to meeting our sales plans,” says Bernstein. “Confirm serv-

ice allows us to maximize the value of this advertising channel. We now know that if we send someone a mailpiece, we’re going to get a higher purchase from them versus someone who didn’t receive the flier.

“We hope to expand our application of this valuable service, using it on our catalogs to take advantage of knowing when they will hit so as to properly staff call centers and including it on Business Reply Mail to better quantify the success of promotions.”

This near real-time information provided through the Confirm service brings tremendous value to customers, says USPS Vice President of Product Development Nick Barranca. “Confirm is an important step in the development of ‘intelligent mail’ products for our customers — technology they can use to help achieve their marketing objectives.”

Another Confirm user — Bank of America — uses the service for its credit card, deposit and loan consumer products. It tracks the progress of mail delivery to determine whether an issued credit card is received by a customer and follows the progress of account statements to predict when a payment is on its way back.

“We’ve become more intelligent about the way we mail due to Confirm service,” says Peter Glenn, director of Postal Affairs at Bank of America. “Using the data we’ve received about mail delivery trends and customer reply habits, we’ve changed our internal processes and procedures in order to achieve maximum results and efficiency.”

Confirm is a powerful tool — for both small and large mailers. Want to give your business a confident edge? Go to www.planetcodes.com for more information about Confirm. ■

Q. How do businesses use Confirm service technology?

A. Businesses in the retail and service industries use Confirm service data technology to track their direct mail pieces and responses. They can accurately time delivery of their marketing messages to synchronize with other marketing events, support store promotions and boost sales. They can also track incoming reply mail from customers to better fulfill customer orders, manage staffing and inventory more efficiently and measure response rates to evaluate mailing success.

Q. How can Confirm service be used as a tool for customer acquisition?

A. You can use delivery trend data supplied by Confirm service to adequately staff your call centers for higher call volumes. The near real-time accuracy this data provides can help your customer service department manage customer inquiries more effectively and produce greater overall customer satisfaction. Also, you can be certain that coupons and special offers reach current customers before the expiration date or end of a promotion, giving them ample time to respond.

Q. How can Confirm service help strengthen relationships with existing customers?

A. When analyzing the impact of your advertising, Confirm service helps eliminate mail delivery as a variable. Information is generated to tell whether or not the mail reached the household in time to support promotions. No longer can mail delivery be the “unknown factor” in determining the success of a campaign.

Q. How can Confirm service help monitor the success of my retail advertising campaigns?

A. Confirm service tracking information can be used to better target delivery of your communications, ensuring that time-sensitive offers reach potential customers before the respond-by date. This timely delivery helps encourage higher response rates. Direct mail companies are using this information to focus on in-home dates rather than mail dates and are synchronizing in-home delivery with other marketing events, such as e-mail and telemarketing. They have also benefited from the ability to cross-reference delivery and demographic data. Each of these features helps promote effective acquisition strategies and messaging.

EMCM COULD BE COMING TO A PCC NEAR YOU

Here's an opportunity to have the Postal Service's Executive Mail Center Manager Program (EMCM) delivered to your Postal Customer Council (PCC). EMCM provides training classes on key areas of interest to the mailing community, such as marketing, mailpiece design, mail center operations, postal products and services, mail center safety, technology, quality management and mail center finances. The program originally was launched in December 2002 as a one-week residency program conducted at USPS training facilities in Norman, OK, and Washington, DC. But now the program can also come to you.

EMCM classes can be conducted in your city through sponsorship by a PCC. There are eight monthly training modules at a cost of \$120 per person for each module. A PCC must guarantee 25 registered participants in order to get the program delivered on site. To date, the Baltimore, Cincinnati and Columbus PCCs have reserved dates for program offerings beginning this fall.

And, of course, the residency program is still an option. The next scheduled class is Oct. 13 — 17 in Norman. If you're interested in registering for either program, or need more information, please e-mail emcm@usps.com.

POSTMASTER GENERAL AT INDIANAPOLIS

The Indianapolis Postal Customer Council (PCC) will hold its annual fall workshop Oct. 28 at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. Speakers will include Postmaster General John E. Potter and Bill Polian, president of the Indianapolis Colts. Other features of the workshop include a vendor area, educational mailing seminars and prizes. Contact Kim Yates at 317-464-6164 if you have questions or to request a registration form.

CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER AT TWIN CITIES

The Twin Cities PCC (Minneapolis & St. Paul, MN) will be hosting its annual Midwest Mailing Forum Oct. 22 — 23. The theme is "Transforming the Future." Kicking off the first day of the event will be Chief Marketing Officer and Senior Vice President Anita Bizzotto. Other key speakers will include Sylvester Black, vice president, Western Area; Rick Stanek, commissioner of public safety for the state of Minnesota; and William Cope Moyers, vice president of external affairs for Hazelden Foundation. Contact Jim Ahlgren at 612-349-4426 or Sandy Chabot at 651-293-3365 for more information.

FYI

A new product will help mailers stay in touch with customers. It's called the National Change of Address Linkage System Product (NCOALink).

NCOALink will give mailers access to secure data storage technology which protects the customer change-of-address

data from unauthorized use or access, while providing a convenient means for updating outdated customer addresses.

The new product will be available under license from USPS to both individual mailers and service bureaus starting Oct. 1. USPS processes about 44 million address changes a year. ■

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Delivery Confirmation and Signature Confirmation services — First-Class Mail and Package Services parcels

The holidays are fast approaching. When you get ready to mail, keep in mind that for First-Class Mail and Package Services, Delivery Confirmation service or Signature Confirmation service may be used only for mail meeting the definition of “parcel” in the *Domestic Mail Manual* (DMM)

Letter-size pieces and flat-size pieces mailed at First-Class Mail rates are ineligible for Delivery Confirmation and Signature Con-

firmation services. Flat-size pieces sent at Package Services rates are also ineligible for either special service.

AVAILABILITY OF DELIVERY CONFIRMATION AND SIGNATURE CONFIRMATION SERVICES

■ **Priority Mail:** All Priority Mail pieces, regardless of mail processing category, are eligible for Delivery Confirmation service or Signature Confirmation service.

■ **First-Class Mail:** Only parcels are eligible for Delivery Confirmation service or Signature Confirmation service.

■ **Package Services:** Only parcels are eligible for Delivery Confirmation service or Signature Confirmation service.

■ **Standard Mail:** Only pieces subject to the residual shape surcharge are eligible for Delivery Confirmation service (and only with the electronic option). Stan-

dard Mail pieces, regardless of mail processing category or whether a residual shape surcharge is applied, are not eligible for any form of Signature Confirmation service.

The following table summarizes the availability and restrictions. The definition of a parcel, for the purposes of using either Delivery Confirmation service or Signature Confirmation service, is in DMM S918.1.2 and S919.1.2. ■

AVAILABILITY OF DELIVERY CONFIRMATION AND SIGNATURE CONFIRMATION SERVICES TABLE

Mail Class	Letter-Size	Flat-Size	Parcel
Priority Mail	YES	YES	YES
First-Class Mail	NO	NO	YES
Standard Mail*	NO	NO	YES
Package Services	NO	NO	YES

* Standard Mail: Signature Confirmation service not available. Only electronic option available for Delivery Confirmation service if residual shape surcharge paid.

New merchandise return offering

If you receive merchandise returns from your customers, here’s a way to save your business some money — get a discount for picking up merchandise return items at a designated postal facility rather than wait for delivery of these items directly to you.

Effective Oct. 19, this enhanced service will make it particularly convenient for merchants who use Parcel Select service. “They can pick up merchandise return items at the same time they’re dropping off packages for delivery,

although customers don’t have to drop off anything to take advantage of this new offering,” says Jim Cochrane, manager, USPS Package Services.

The charge is \$2 for each parcel picked up at the designated

Post Office. For bulk mail center pick-up, merchants can save from 24 cents to \$1.51 per piece. ■

Making the mail even safer

Identity thieves ripped off consumers for \$5 billion last year, according to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). Banks and businesses lost even more.

While only 4 percent of identity theft originates with the mail, the Postal Inspection Service, through an aggressive program of deterrence, education and investigation, is working to keep identity thieves as far away from the mail as possible.

To combat this growing crime, the Postal Inspection Service has launched “Operation: Identity

Crisis” — a consumer education campaign to prevent citizens from being victims of identity theft.

Joining the Inspection Service in this initiative are the FTC, the Secret Service, the Department of Justice and various financial organizations.

“The goal is to provide people with information that will help them fight back against identity thieves and decrease the number of identity theft victims throughout the country,” said Chief Postal Inspector Lee Heath. This year, postal inspectors have made more

than 3,000 identity theft arrests.

Identity theft involves acquiring key pieces of someone’s personal identifying information, such as name, address, date of birth and Social Security number. Identity thieves use the information to commit fraud such as applying for loans, credit cards and Social Security benefits.

TV actor and Law and Order star Jerry Orbach, a victim of identity theft, is the campaign’s spokesperson. He will appear in a nationally distributed public service announcement about preventing

identity theft. The campaign also includes posters in all 38,000 Post Office lobbies, numerous banks and other financial institutions throughout the country.

Other highlights: newspaper ads in 17 cities, a direct mailing of 3 million pieces containing prevention tips to residents in the top 10 states where identity theft has been reported, and the production of Identity Crisis, a 12-minute film that will be distributed nationwide.

Need more information? Go to www.usps.com/postalinspectors. ■

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Potter to Forum: Let's work together to make Postal Service better

Postmaster General John E. Potter told the National Postal Forum that the Postal Service and mailers need to work together to move USPS forward in the 21st century.

"This is not Jack Potter's Postal Service. This is yours — our mailers' and our customers' Postal Service," Potter told the fall Forum, which was held Sept. 21 — 23 in Kansas City, MO.

Potter said the Postal Service's efforts at improving service and cutting costs paid off during Fiscal Year 2003, which just ended. Service for overnight First-Class Mail, as measured by EXFC (exter-

nal First-Class Measurement system*), hit a record-breaking 95 percent for the past two quarters, said Potter. He told attendees USPS is \$1.2 billion under budget in non-personnel costs.

On postal reform, he praised the entire mailing industry for supporting the effort that led to Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) reform legislation. The legislative change will save the Postal Service billions that otherwise would have resulted in overpayment into CSRS.

And Potter noted the extensive work of the President's Commis-

sion on the Postal Service and its recommendations to the president on postal reform. "We must have legislative change," Potter said.

Revenue growth is the key to a financially sound Postal Service, said Potter. He said USPS is working hard to give mailers different options for using the Postal Service. He mentioned the recent negotiated service agreement with Capital One and products such as Customized MarketMail and Repositionable Notes — which allow mailers to attract customer attention through innovative mailpiece design.

Potter said these developments came about by working together. A successful mailing industry depends on a successful Postal Service. "We all must work together to make it better," said the PMG.

**EXFC externally measures collection box to mailbox delivery performance. EXFC continuously tests a panel of 463 ZIP Code areas selected on the basis of geographic and volume density from which 90 percent of First-Class Mail volume originates and 80 percent destines. EXFC is not a system-wide measurement of all First-Class Mail performance. ■*



A better barcode

MY HOW TIME FLIES!

In 1999, the Postal Service established the first barcode discount for mailed parcels, rewarding package shippers for helping in the shift to automated processing of parcels, and in the process improving service consistency and postal efficiency.

A year later, it set a four-year transition period for customers to convert to one standard barcode symbology, Uniform Code Council/European Article Number (UCC/EAN) Code 128, again to improve performance. (Symbology refers to the bars and spaces

in a barcode, their size and how they are grouped to represent numbers and letters in a condensed space.)

Time is almost up. Effective Jan. 10, 2004, customers who want to qualify for a 3-cent auto-

one-dimensional symbology available today," said Jim Cochrane, USPS manager of Package Services. "It's rapidly becoming the most widely accepted barcode symbology used in the shipping industry.

barcode symbology will help us raise the bar on parcel processing. It's an important step to improving service consistency and efficiency."

To earn the 3-cent automation parcel barcode discount, shippers must mail at least 50 machinable Package Services parcels at a time. For more information on how to qualify for this discount or to convert to UCC/EAN Code 128 barcode, go to <http://pe.usps.gov>, search words "Barcoding Standards for Parcels" or www.usps.com, search words "Publication 91 Barcode Specifications." ■



mated parcel barcode discount must use UCC/EAN Code 128.

"The UCC/EAN Code 128 barcode is considered by many to be the most reliable, compact,

"Our shipping customers want better service, and we want to provide them with the very best," said Cochrane. "Adopting UCC/EAN Code 128 as the sole

POSTAL NEWS BRIEFS

R-E-S-P-E-C-T USPS #1 IN NEW SURVEY

USPS was the #1 ranked transportation company in online customer responsiveness, according to a recent survey by the Customer Respect Group (CRG).

CRG — an international research and consulting firm — looked at more than 1,000 websites in detail and determined 25 attributes that combine to create the entire online experience." The attributes were grouped together and measured as

indicators of principles, attitude, transparency, simplicity and responsiveness. USPS scored 8.8 out of 10.

RECOGNITION

USPS Service and Market Development Vice President John Wargo received the Postmaster General Leadership Award at the National Postal Forum in Kansas City, MO.

Postmaster General John E. Potter praised Wargo for his leadership in building the forum over the past two decades and for "his creativity, his perseverance, his

commitment to growing this business and, most of all, his genuine concern for the needs of our customers."



USPS Vice President John Wargo (left) with Postmaster General John E. Potter.



The Postal Service honors country music legend Roy Acuff.

Transformation gets Strategic. And you can read it now online

Improving operational efficiency. Driving growth by adding value. Enhancing a performance-based culture. Pursuing regulatory and legislative reform. They're the key strategies of the Postal Service's Transformation Plan. They define what we do and how we're doing it — today and in the future.

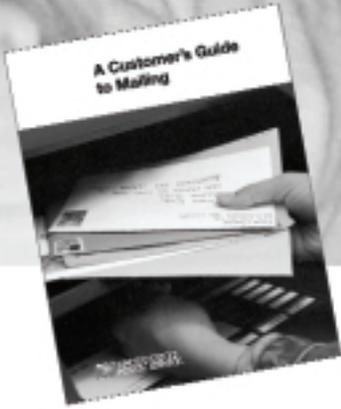
That's where the Postal Service's Five-Year Strategic Plan comes in. It applies measurable goals to Transformation Plan strategies. It explains how those goals are set and how they're measured. And it shows our progress against those goals.

We're transforming. And the Five-Year Strategic Plan provides an objective way for every postal stakeholder — Congress, mailers, employees, suppliers and the American people — to evaluate our performance using valid measures and reliable data.

Our latest Five-Year Strategic Plan, covering fiscal years 2004 through 2008, has just been released. Click here to take a look:

<http://www.usps.com/strategicdirection>

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in **one** place.



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Change Service Requested

Click-N-Ship: It's so easy

Now it's even easier to ship online with the Postal Service, thanks to two new features at Click-N-Ship. This popular online shipping solution at www.usps.com/clicknship allows customers to prepare and print shipping labels — with or without postage — for their packages whenever they need to — 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

In response to customer requests, Click-N-Ship now allows registered users to store their credit card information online and save time — no need to enter this information each time to pay for an Express Mail or Priority Mail label.

Customers are able to store up to three credit card numbers in

their profile to use for postage payment. All credit card information is encrypted and secure on www.usps.com.

Also new at Click-N-Ship is e-mail ship notification. Customers can request that Click-N-Ship send an e-mail notification to the recipient of their package telling them the label number and their shipping date.

These new features currently are available for Priority Mail and Express Mail services. USPS plans to add them to Global Express Mail and Global Express Guaranteed services by next spring.

Click-N-Ship: It's the fast, easy and always available way to bring the Post Office to your home. ■

