

Following the success of Phase One (go to www.usps.com/strategicdirection/mitf.htm to see the Phase One final report) and a November 2003 decision of its Steering Committee, the Mailing Industry Task Force announced it would begin a new Phase Two initiative. In so doing, the Task Force Steering Committee restructured its industry/postal working groups and shifted its focus to support two broad strategic objectives: to stimulate mail channel revenue growth, and to make mail more effective.

Mailing Industry Task Force

P H A S E

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INTELLIGENT MAIL/ ADDRESS QUALITY

Overview

This report is the first about the Task Force's Phase Two activities, and describes in detail the Task Force's new structure; its processes for identifying, developing and implementing concepts and initiatives; and the specific work being done by each of its new subcommittees.

Structure

The Task Force restructuring added new members to its Steering Committee and resulted in subcommittees for three areas of strategic focus: Intelligent Mail and Address Quality; Payment and Pricing; and New Products/Services/Gateway. Deputy Postmaster General John Nolan and Michael J. Critelli, Chairman and CEO of Pitney Bowes continue to serve as co-chairs of the Task Force. Current Steering Committee members include Nolan, Critelli, Charles Morgan of Acxiom, Judy Marks of Lockheed Martin Distribution Technologies, Jeff Jurick of Fala Direct Marketing, Michael Sherman of Crosstown Traders, Hamilton Davison of Paramount Cards, Douglas Denton of MBNA America, Yvonne Furth of Draft, Paul Reilly of Cenveo, David Sable of Wunderman and Bobbie Gaunt of ADVO.

As part of its change in direction, the Task Force developed and, in June, launched an initiative to promote creation of innovative ideas and concepts by which to expand use of the mail by business and individual consumers. The Innovation Incubator Initiative is led by Steering Committee member Sable and by Postal Service Chief Marketing Officer Anita Bizzotto.

"This shift in direction gives the Task Force the opportunity to align its activities with the current needs and objectives of both the mailing industry and the Postal Service," commented Task Force co-chair Michael Critelli. "We're on track to continue to serve as a catalyst for positive postal transformation."

Process Change

"The changes we've made to our strategic direction, our structure and our process are appropriate and timely," said co-chair John Nolan. "They'll support and strengthen the collaborative process that has been the hallmark of this unique public/private partnership."

The Task Force Steering Committee's three new working groups – Intelligent Mail/Address Quality,

PAYMENT/PRICING



NEW PRODUCTS/SERVICES/GATEWAY



“The Task Force, with these changes, continues as a place of common ground for all of us who care about the mail and its future.” — Michael Critelli

Pricing/Payment and New Products/Services/Gateway – replace the seven work groups that had been in place since October 2001, when the Task Force issued its initial report. An eighth committee on industry unification was spun off in 2002, and continues to operate independently as the Industry CEO Council.

The three subcommittees share similar approaches to their work processes. They conduct idea-generating sessions as part of the regularly-scheduled meetings, which has ensured alignment with the objectives of the Task Force. The subcommittees also review and assess ideas coming out of other ideation processes, including a Task Force “all-hands” meeting held in April and the June Innovation Incubator Initiative meeting.

As was the case in Phase One, co-chairs from both the Postal Service and the industry lead each of the three subcommittees. Both the subcommittees and Task Force members involved with the Innovation Incubator Initiative have been meeting regularly since late fall.

“The Task Force, with these changes, continues as a place of common ground for all of us who care about the mail and its future,” said Critelli.

“The path we’re now taking,” added Nolan, “is already starting to deliver the kind of foundation for meaningful results which have characterized our effort from the beginning. There’s a lot of potential here that will be realized.”

Intelligent Mail and Address Quality

The Intelligent Mail and Address Quality subcommittee has carried on the work on two key recommendations from the Phase One effort, while assessing the potential of new initiatives identified by the Task Force.

The subcommittee — led by Michael Critelli, CEO of Pitney Bowes, Charles E. Bravo, U.S. Postal Service Senior Vice President for Intelligent Mail and Address Quality and Charles Morgan, Company Leader of Acxiom — includes representatives from the vendor community, mail service providers and end customers for mail.

During the previous nine months, the subcommittee set broad priorities for intelligent mail and address quality, and identified specific initiatives to support those priorities. The priorities support the Task Force’s goal of growing the mailing industry. For intelligent mail the priority is to increase the use of INTELLIGENT MAIL® products by delivering value for all stakeholders in the mail value chain. The address quality priority is to increase the value of mail by increasing deliverability through improved quality of address information used by mailers.

The subcommittee established several guiding principles for Phase Two:

- Achieve better communications among mailers, vendors, and industry service providers

- Ensure proper management of information throughout INTELLIGENT MAIL programs to support privacy
- Achieve lowest combined costs from piece design to in-home delivery
- Support a more efficient and effective Postal Service
- Ensure mail is delivered accurately and on time, every time



Intelligent Mail

The subcommittee is actively pursuing two key INTELLIGENT MAIL initiatives and supporting industry efforts in other key areas. The initiatives focus on using INTELLIGENT MAIL codes for services in addition to the current Confirm® tracking service offered by the Postal Service.

The first initiative is to extend the value of INTELLIGENT MAIL codes by using them to trigger USPS Address Quality services. It would offer mailers the opportunity to obtain both tracking and address quality services from a single bar code. Subcommittee members believe such an enhancement will increase the use of INTELLIGENT MAIL services, improve the accuracy of Address Change Service (ACS) transactions and lead to improvements in overall address quality. It represents a key first step in the development of the Postal Service’s OneCode Vision™ (in which a suite of services would be requested by printing a single bar code).

The second initiative supported by the subcommittee is use of INTELLIGENT MAIL codes to help automate the processing of returned mail. Mailers who receive a wide variety of return-to-sender mail are interested in finding ways to increase the efficiency of handling that mail returned by the Postal Service. Under this initiative, mailers would include data in the mailer-applied portion of INTELLIGENT MAIL Codes to help them identify mail and the type of content. By including this information in a machine-readable code, mailers will be able to use automated equipment to achieve more efficient processing of return to sender mail.

The subcommittee is also supporting efforts to communicate the value of INTELLIGENT MAIL products, supporting industry migration to the 4-state barcode, and supporting efforts to develop the information-based indicia used for PC postage and meters as a potential alternative means for mailers to access INTELLIGENT MAIL services. Future efforts will focus on simplifying the access to Special Services using INTELLIGENT MAIL codes and supporting efforts to extend in-process tracking to packages, trays and containers of mail.

Address Quality

Address Quality has two additional areas of focus. The first initiative is to develop an improved address quality feedback loop between USPS

and mailers which would provide more information about address-quality issues with a mail piece. This will help mailers to improve the quality of address information in their mailing lists and information systems, and will improve the timeliness of address information available to mailers.

In addition to this effort, the subcommittee is working on a proposal from the Task Force's April all-hands meeting to develop a certification process for mailing lists. While the Postal Service previously developed such a program, mailing industry adoption of the program was limited. As part of this initiative, the developed program will be reviewed, enhancements will be identified, and ideas for increasing industry adoption will be developed.

The subcommittee continues to support efforts to improve address quality through innovations and improvements in postal hygiene and Move Update technologies. This includes improving the accuracy of data input through electronic validation of address change information with technology tools such as Internet Change of Address, and telephone change of address. These initiatives play a key role in improving the timeliness of information in mailers databases, and improving the timeliness of information used to forward mail.

Intelligent Mail

INITIATIVE	TIMELINE	BENEFIT
One Code Address Change Services (ACS) - The initiative will improve the accuracy of Address Quality services by replacing the manual processing of ACS requested by mailers with an electronic process. Services will be simplified by streamlining IM codes (eg, combining CONFIRM service and ACS service into a single code, the 4-State code). This will also enhance real estate on the envelope with fewer lines of addressing required for coding.	Complete proof of concept by December 2004	Increased reliability of electronic ACS. Streamlining of IM codes. Customer satisfaction in IM services. Increased usage of IM services.
Automated Return Mail Processing - Commercial mailers would like to include information in the 4-state code that would help them to automate the processing of returned mail.	Assess mailer interest, develop approach and test with mailer by June 2005	Automation of returned mail leads to efficiencies and reduced costs.

Address Quality

INITIATIVE	TIMELINE	BENEFIT
Address Quality - The initiative will provide an improved Address Quality feedback loop between USPS and mailers. The feedback would provide more information about the quality of the address information on the mail piece.	Assess current feedback loops and identify enhancements by June 2005	Customer satisfaction in the quality of address feedback they are receiving. Increased reliability and usage of address quality and change services.
Mailing List Certification - A more widely accepted certification program will be created to increase industry adoption of the certification process of mailing lists.	Review existing programs and identify enhancements by June 2005	Purchasers of these mailing lists will be assured that the addresses are accurate and timely, offering them current data consistent with address quality standards that maximizes their mailing list investment.

Pricing and Payment

In beginning Phase 2, the Payment/Pricing subcommittee has committed to looking beyond the current horizon to develop and investigate ideas of interest to the mailing industry. Since 2002, different groups within the Postal Service have been working to implement concepts presented in the Transformation Plan. This has opened the door to a generation of new ideas and initiatives within the Postal Service. The Postal Service has discussed with the subcommittee its pricing strategy (customization, simplification, encouraging efficiency). The strategy's underlying principle is that pricing should reflect the value derived by customers from the services. The strategy is reflected in several initiatives undertaken by the USPS in recent months. *PostalOne!* has recently been nationally deployed and is in use in all of our acceptance units where PERMIT is operational¹. The system replaces the aging Permit system allowing it to be completely retired by the end of September.

The subcommittee is led by co-chairs Judy Marks of Lockheed Martin Distribution Technologies, Postal Service Vice President and Treasurer Bob Pedersen, and Postal Service Vice President for Pricing and Classification Steve Kearney. The subcommittee is assessing several "priority" initiatives based upon ideas developed by Task Force members. It's working closely with the Postal Service on their review and possible development. In exploring these initiatives, the Postal Service has indicated it is remaining open to all possibilities since these ideas are still in the beginning phases of consideration.

Customization: Negotiated Service Agreements

The USPS filed two Negotiated Service Agreements (NSAs) with the Postal Rate Commission on June 21. The NSAs are with Bank One Corporation and Discover Financial Services. Both have been ruled by the Commission as being functionally equivalent to the Capital One agreement. Functionally equivalent agreements have three components: a declining block rate structure, a commitment by the companies to convert to electronic Address Change Service (ACS), and agreement to exceed established address hygiene requirements.

Subcommittee co-chair Steve Kearney told the *Mailers Companion* that, "A good NSA benefits both the customer and the Postal Service. It provides customized prices to the customer in exchange for extra mail volume from them – volume and revenue that we otherwise would not get. For [the Postal Service], it lowers our costs and it focuses on retaining and growing an area of business that is in play, one that could grow or decline depending on how well we perform."

Simplification: Priority Mail Flat-Rate Box Proposal

On June 3, the Postal Service filed with the Postal Rate Commission for approval of two new flat-rate box options for Priority Mail. The two boxes will be offered on a two-year trial basis under the Postal Rate Commission's rules for experimental classifications. Much like

the Priority Mail flat-rate envelope that has been available since 1991, the flat-rate boxes will be priced at a single, predetermined rate regardless of weight or destination zone. This reinforces the Postal Service's commitment to meeting customers' needs for convenience and simplicity when sending packages.

Both boxes will be priced at \$7.70. The respective box sizes are 14" x 12" x 3.5" and 11.25" x 8.75" x 6". The boxes will be available at postal retail locations and can also be ordered online from www.usps.com.

Encouraging Efficiency: Periodicals Co-Palletization

Periodicals co-palletization is designed to move large and small publications, out of sacks and onto pallets with an additional advantage of mail being entered closer to destination for better service. Both of these changes are expected to make the processing of Periodicals mail more efficient and less expensive. However, even with the existing co-palletization discounts in place (per mail piece discounts), the current rate structure may not provide sufficient incentive for small circulation, heavy weight, high editorial content, national publications to co-palletize and drop ship their mail when appropriate.

As an expansion of the existing MC2002-3 co-palletization experiment, the Postal Service designed an alternative set of discounts to include these smaller publications that are prepared in smaller sacks largely entered at the origin. Eligible publications must have a mail circulation of no more than 75,000 addressed pieces, weigh 9 ounces or higher per copy, and with 15 percent or less advertising content. The co-palletization discounts will apply to editorial pounds based on zones that are skipped as a result of this co-palletization and will require drop shipment to either a destination area distribution center (DADC) or a destination sectional center facility (DSCF).

The Postal Rate Commission has approved this two-year experiment. Applications for participation in the experiment were available beginning September 1. The starting date for the experiment is October 3.

PostalOne!

The *PostalOne!* system was developed in response to mailing industry demand for a more convenient, flexible and robust system that would leverage the power of the internet to transform mail acceptance. At a high level, the initiative is comprised of two components: the replacement of the legacy Permit system, and the use of electronic "linkage" to perform more mailing activities "on-line rather than in-line".

The first component is almost fully implemented after deploying over 6,000 new computer systems and training over 13,000 acceptance



1. There are many acceptance units that do not employ technology solutions which included PERMIT system. *PostalOne!* replaced PERMIT. It did not replace technology at all acceptance units.

employees in the use of the new *PostalOne!* system. Nationwide deployment finished in early August, and its final functionality makes the replacement of the legacy Permit system complete. In fall of 2004, the introduction of the first of a series of potential new “electronic” services will begin. The first new service is eMIR (Electronic Mail Improvement Report), which will provide near real-time links between USPS operations employees and mail preparers. eMIR is designed to provide detailed feedback (including pictures) of problems encountered with mail preparation. This new link connects to the Business Service Network (BSN), creating a closed feedback loop for customers and those who support them.

Mailers using the *PostalOne!* system already enjoy paperless transactions since the system is designed to electronically link with the mailers acceptance unit to provide Web-based postage statements and other critical mailing documents. The system is featured at the September National Postal Forum in Washington.

Top Priority Initiatives Going Forward

2ND OUNCE FLEXIBILITY

This initiative could give some mailers greater flexibility in designing mail pieces and inserting solicitations into their First-Class mailings. This could make paper billing a more attractive alternative to electronic bill presentment by allowing mailers to cross-sell their products and services to customers who are more likely to read them in their statements.

ENABLING CREDIT

The Postal Service is exploring mediation between a third-party provider and mailers to provide a credit payment option. This initiative could provide financial benefit to mailers without adversely affecting Postal Service cash management.

CYCLICAL PRICING

This initiative can be defined as tailoring rates to factors like the time of year, month or day of week by which a mailer sends prospecting mail. It introduces variations in postal services’ pricing using premiums and discounts to increase mail volumes and level mail fluctuations.

Future Direction

The Payment/Pricing Subcommittee will continue to work diligently with the mailing industry to explore new ideas and solutions that benefit the mailing community and the Postal Service. The priority initiatives currently under consideration will be actively pursued into the next fiscal year. These initiatives convey the commitment of the Postal Service to the ideas presented in the Transformation Plan and offer a unique opportunity for the Postal Service to respond to the needs of the mailing industry. The two new NSA filings, the Priority Mail flat-rate box proposal filing, and the upcoming roll-out of *PostalOne!* enhancements indicate the move toward the shared goals of the mailing industry and the Postal Service.

Pricing and Payment

INITIATIVE	TIMELINE	BENEFIT
CURRENT		
Negotiated Service Agreements – Cap One functionally equivalent	Ongoing	Cost savings; FCM growth; increased contribution; customer specific costing
Negotiated Service Agreements – Baseline	Ongoing	Volume growth, cost savings customized pricing that reflects unique conditions
Repositionable Notes Market Test	Ongoing	Pricing aimed at capturing value from the customer on products
Priority Flat Rate Box	August 2004	Shaped-base pricing where weight is not a factor
Periodicals Co-palletization	July 2004	Supports greater containerization and reduces handling costs for small circulation, heavy weight, and high editorial periodicals
Omnibus Rate Case Filing	2005	Continue funding USPS universal service obligation and continued network expansion. Adjust pricing to reflect changed costs and market conditions. Use predictable price changes to reduce the effect of large, random price changes on business customers.
<i>Postal One!</i> : New Service Introduction	2004	Reduce cost of doing business
FUTURE		
2nd Ounce Flexibility	TBD	Reduce incentive for electronic presentment; retention of FCM; possible conversion of Standard
Enabling Credit	TBD	Added convenience and financial benefit for mailers at no expense to the Postal Service.
Cyclical Pricing	TBD	Growing volume by providing incentives for mailers to increase volumes during non-peak mailing periods.

New Products, Services, and Gateway

With the restructuring of the Task Force to focus on stimulating mail channel revenue growth and making mail more effective, the New Products, Services, and Gateway subcommittee grew out of the former Gateway group that had been active in Phase One. The subcommittee – led by co-chairs David Sable of Wunderman, Michael Sherman of Crosstown Traders and USPS Vice President for Product Development Nick Barranca -- retained some of the members from Phase One but also reached out to new participants. The subcommittee quickly adopted the following charter:

- Work together in a collaborative process with a wide variety of business segment representatives to further the common good of the mailing industry.
- Stimulate revenue growth within the mail channel by increasing the value of mail through new or enhanced postal products and services.
- Leverage the Postal Service’s far-reaching, frequent and efficient customer contact (gateway services) that take the post office to the door of businesses and consumers.
- Identify strategic initiatives with value-added services that provide long-term, sustainable advantages given potential competitive responses and offerings.

Process

The subcommittee began by discussing options for establishing a framework for identifying, evaluating, and moving forward on initiatives consistent with the group’s charter. The group considered the value mailers and their customers gain from the mail, and discussed why individuals and institutions use the mail. The group eventually developed a model based on three “M’s” — Money, Merchandise, and Messages.

The subcommittee used Money, Merchandise, and Messages as a framework for categorizing and evaluating ideas that had been identified by MITF for consideration. The initial screening process resulted in 25 initiatives being identified as worthy of further evaluation. Most of these initiatives were mapped to the Messages and Merchandise categories with a few Money-oriented initiatives identified. The subcommittee decided that the Money initiatives would best be handled by the Payments and Pricing subcommittee and so they were transferred to that group.

The subcommittee then set up four work teams to pursue the Merchandise and Messages initiatives. The four work teams are:

- Quick, Easy and Convenient
- Simplified, Closed Loop Business Mail Systems
- Consumer to Consumer
- Business to Consumer

Initiatives

The work teams prioritized their initiatives and designated six key ideas as Tier I initiatives to be developed first. The six initiatives and the teams working on them are:

QUICK, EASY AND CONVENIENT

New Package Service Options (Simplified returns, retail overnight/localized delivery, and new drop-ship options)

The initiative has a three-prong effort to provide convenient and inexpensive methods to allow retailers to send merchandise with local next-day delivery and to allow consumers (household or business) to send or return merchandise. Initial steps include collection of prior related research and tests for evaluation by the team to solidify an operating plan and business case.

SIMPLIFIED CLOSED LOOP BUSINESS MAIL SYSTEMS

Total Relationship View

An initiative to consider opportunities arising from content-rich bar code implementation. The initial step will be to develop a map of the opportunities.

Business Reply Mail Redesign

An initiative to pursue improvements in BRM to make it more convenient to mailers and improve the accuracy of information and reduce USPS costs.

National Permit

An initiative that involves exploring the opportunities to provide mailers with new options for a national mailing permit. First deliverable will be to design the scope of the service and determine benefits to the mailing industry and the Postal Service.

CONSUMER TO CONSUMER

Reinforce the Value of Mail to Consumers

The Consumer to Consumer team is exploring the sources of consumer satisfaction arising from receiving the mail and intends to identify the

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“It’s not just about new products and services. It’s also about the need to focus on innovative ways to use existing, powerful products and services, as well as the postal brand.”

— John Nolan

New Products, Services, and Gateway

INITIATIVE	TIMELINE	BENEFIT
QUICK, EASY, CONVENIENT		
New Package Service Options - The initiative has a three-prong effort to provide a convenient and inexpensive method(s) to allow retailers to send merchandise with local next day delivery and to allow consumers (household or business) to send or return merchandise. Initial steps include collection of prior related research and tests for evaluation by the team to solidify an operating plan and business case.	Complete collection of research and design pilot test by Oct. 2004. Launch a pilot test by January 2005.	Greater convenience for consumers; increased sales for merchandisers, and additional package services revenues for the Postal Service
SIMPLIFIED CLOSED LOOP BUSINESS MAIL SYSTEMS		
Total Relationship View - a view of the opportunities arising from content rich barcode implementation. Initial step will be to develop a map of the opportunities.	Complete map by December 2004.	Customers will benefit from more options and greater efficiencies and value. USPS will benefit from providing increased value to customers and greater internal operating efficiencies.
Reply Mail Improvement Plan - A three-phase initiative that will:		
1) Automate the manual and time intensive processes involved with applying for, designing and approving Business Reply Mail (BRM).	Phase 1 – Reply Mail website - Launch at NPF, Sept. 2004.	To automate the manual and time intensive processes involved with applying for, designing and approval of Reply Mail.
2) Streamline the accounting process for BRM to provide more efficient and consistent delivery and accounting of BRM.	Phase 2 – Automated Accounting System, Jan. 2006.	To streamline the accounting process for BRM. This will provide more efficient and consistent delivery and accounting of BRM.
3) To supply images or data files of the “data side” of Reply cards, speeding the transfer of information and reducing processing and delivery costs.	Phase 3 - Reply Card Scanning – Pilot possible by Feb. 2005.	To supply images or data files of the “data side” of reply cards, speeding the transfer of information and reducing processing and delivery costs.
National Permit – provides mailers with new options for a national mailing permit. First deliverable will be to design the scope of the service and determine benefits to the mailing industry and the Postal Service.	Complete concept design by Sept. 2004.	Greater convenience and consistent image for mailers. Reduce materials handling and improve inventory management.
CONSUMER TO CONSUMER		
Reinforce the Value of Mail to Consumers – This initiative will identify common life events and design a test of whether mail-based communications built around those events will help strengthen the value of mail to consumers.	Complete Mail Moment research by October, 2004. Complete map of relevant common life events by January, 2005. Design test of concept by February, 2005.	Provide consumers with relevant, timely messages that reinforce the value they receive from the mail. Greeting card companies and the Postal Service would benefit from additional revenues from the new products and postage arising from this program.
BUSINESS TO CUSTOMER		
Premium Forwarding Service – a personalized service for sending mail from a permanent address to a temporary address through a bundling process, using Priority Mail®, rather than piece by piece through the Computerized Forwarding System (CFS). This service is designed for customers who want to receive all of their mail at a temporary address for a period of time not less than two weeks and not to exceed one year. Initial steps include testing the concept to determine operational feasibility and market demand.	Complete a plan for the PFS concept by November 2004.	Postal customers will have new choices for temporary forwarding of their mail; there will be positive benefits to the Postal Service’s brand and image.
Direct Mail – Business Environment Assessment (DM-BEA) – This effort seeks to identify and understand initiatives that could negatively affect the direct mail industry in the U.S. It will attempt to prioritize potential negative impacts from the most immediate to the most significant with a focus on privacy, security, and environmental challenges. The analysis will consider possible solutions to prevent, forestall, or react to such challenges. This effort will also evaluate programs instituted by foreign posts that strive to identify recipients’ preferences to various forms of direct mail.	Complete analysis by the end of September 2004.	The USPS and the direct mail industry will be better positioned to understand and quickly react to impending challenges to the use of direct mail. Advertisers and merchandisers would be assured of a more predictable business climate for targeted promotions. USPS would benefit from greater value in the mail.

“The Innovation Incubator Initiative is one of the most transformational concepts we’ve developed.” — David Sable

factors driving the “mail moment” so as to promote, protect and extend the value of mail. The team will work with the greeting card industry and the Postal Service to analyze whether specialized mail-based communications that target common life events would help reinforce the value of mail to consumers. The first step is to update the USPS Mail Moment Market Research which quantitatively measures consumer reactions to various mail events. Secondly the group will complete a map of the common life events that could be the target of such a program.

BUSINESS TO CONSUMER

Premium Forwarding Service

A personalized service for sending mail from a permanent address to a temporary address through a bundling process, using Priority Mail®, rather than piece by piece through the Computerized Forwarding System (CFS). This service is designed for customers who want to receive all of their mail at a temporary address for a period of time not less than two weeks and not to exceed one year. Initial steps include testing the concept to determine operational feasibility and market demand.

Direct Mail – Business Environment Assessment (DM-BEA)

A program to build plans to prevent, forestall, or react to potential business challenges to the direct mail industry. Focusing on various security, privacy, or environmental scenarios this initiative will assess the immediacy and impact of each and the pros and cons of potential solutions.

The subcommittee also designated a number of other initiatives as Tier II initiatives. These are initiatives that the subcommittee wants to explore further but which will take longer to develop.

Task Force Innovation Incubator Initiative

The Task Force’s new innovation development process – the Innovation Incubator Initiative – was launched in late June at the first-ever “Innovation Summit” held at Postal Service Headquarters in Washington.

Culminating a comprehensive planning and development process, the two-day event attracted more than 30 executives from Fortune 100 and other leading-edge companies. The conference produced over 90 concepts targeted for further study and possible development.

Postal and industry executives hailed the event as a potential model for ongoing innovation generation efforts by the Postal Service and the Task Force. “This is an approach we’ve talked about introducing into our organization in the past,” said USPS Chief Marketing Officer Anita Bizzotto, “The Innovation Summit is a good first step towards building an innovation development process that works.”

Several Postal Service executives – including Nolan and Innovation Incubator Initiative co-sponsor Bizzotto – participated in the idea-generating sessions. Postmaster General Jack Potter kicked off the event by welcoming the participants and endorsing the effort as one that would ask attendees to “brainstorm how to make mail more relevant” for them in their businesses. “By collaborating on innovative ways to build the business,” the Postmaster General remarked, “we will open up new opportunities to grow and prosper in the future.”

“The Innovation Incubator Initiative,” commented David Sable, “is one of the most transformational concepts we’ve developed.” Among the companies participating in the Innovation Summit were IBM, Amazon.com, AT&T, Pitney Bowes, Alva Learning Systems, TIAA-CREF, MBNA America, Idea Crossing, Microsoft, State Farm Insurance, the Internal Revenue Service, Delphi, Lands’ End, Lockheed Martin, Intellareturn, the Association for the Advancement of Retired Persons, Cambria Consulting, Sprint, Convergys, American Express and Cisco Systems. Creative Advantage, an innovation planning and facilitation firm, assisted Task Force manager Paul Basile in directing the idea-generation sessions.

Conclusion

With the launch of Phase Two completed and its activities fully underway, the Mailing Industry Task Force is well-positioned to capitalize on new and innovative approaches with which it can achieve its new strategic objectives.

“Our efforts to move ideas from concept to implementation, our action plans and our regular, detailed reports to the mailing industry all underscore our ongoing commitment to accountability and results,” said co-chair John Nolan.

“We began the Task Force with an understanding that we needed to make a difference,” said co-chair Michael Critelli. “That vision still drives us in Phase Two, and what we’ve already accomplished gives us the confidence that we’ll continue to succeed.”