

AMi eNewsletter

Supporting Marketing with Impact

Ideas for Impact

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Network with Us!



The More the Merrier

USPS Highlights



The USPS has been around since 1775 for a reason.

Check out some of what the USPS does for us every day:

- Handles 40% of the world's card and letter mail volume
- Processes an average of 24 million pieces of mail every hour
- Operates without any tax dollars
- Provides shipping supplies--tape, labels, international mailing products, and Priority Mail and Express Mail envelopes and boxes--for free.

January 2011

Lessons Learned from the USPS



Yes, the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) has presented the mailing industry with a number of challenges recently. Rate increases. Threats of more rate increases. A potential delivery-day decrease. We know all about its controversial management and financial troubles. And yet...

The postal service has been in the game for quite some time. It's not immune to poor management and economic trouble and like most profits and non-profits, it has had to come up with some creative solutions to taxing problems.

Therefore, instead of focusing on what the USPS is doing wrong, we'd like to look at what it may be doing right. Maybe we could learn something.

Don't forget to check out [this month's blog](#) for more lessons inspired by the USPS.

If you have any questions under the marketing umbrella, let us know. [Send your questions to us today](#). We are here to help!

Expand Your Focus

Increasing sales may mean expanding your sales pitch.



In a notice to the Postal Regulatory Commission this month, the U.S. Postal Service announced its plans to sell open-loop gift cards from approximately 2,000 retail locations beginning in May. The USPS hopes to "increase customer convenience, while enhancing revenue and encouraging the use of the mail for gifting purposes" with the endeavor.

The cards, which will be issued by banks, electronic payment networks, or service providers, not specific merchants, will cost buyers a fee beyond the gift card's value. While this may hinder sales, it doesn't hide the lesson: don't overlook opportunities to expand your business.

While collecting a few dollars for each gift card sold may not do much to offset the USPS's \$8.5 billion loss in 2010, it could be a pebble in the path to recovery. Besides, people pay for convenience. Think bags of pre-shredded cabbage at the grocery store. People also pay for the absurd. Remember pet rocks?

If you haven't done so in a while, step back and interact with your organization through the eyes of a customer, donor, or member. What else could you offer to make the picture or the experience more complete? Think about what your prospects do before, during, after, or with your products or services, and you just might find your gift cards.

Revisit Your Rules

Removing road blocks could lead to more traffic.



In an attempt to reach more customers--particularly small businesses that don't currently utilize mail because of cost--and increase mail circulation, the USPS announced revisions to its simplified addressing requirements.

Effective January 2, 2011, organizations can now mail saturation standard letters, flat-size mail pieces and irregular parcels to city routes using mail delivery route information only instead of names and exact addresses. Previously, this practice was limited to mailings for rural routes and the government. The change allows business mailers to save money by eliminating the need for a mailing list and reducing the time needed to prepare the mail.

The lesson here? Within reason, be as accommodating to your target audience as your resources allow. Examine your membership requirements, product offers, and donor strategies. Would membership grow if you accepted students as well as professionals? Would revenue ramp-up if your non-member prices more closely resembled your member prices? Could sales or donations soar if you lowered your order minimum or restructured your donor program? The more opportunities you can offer to prospects sitting on the edge, the more chances you have to engage them.

AMi Direct provides marketing solutions that increase your response rates and ROI.



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