



Project Spotlight: Winston-Salem State University

Issue: Winston-Salem State University wanted to execute a direct mail project to recruit students. The project was to include database management, managing replies from interested students, and physical handling of various types of mailers.

Solution: Winston-Salem State selected OTM Partners to handle the creative design of the initial brochure to prospective students. Two offers were developed by OTM. One offered a DVD tour of WSSU and a Viewbook of the University, while the second offer was for the Viewbook only. At the end of the project the offers will be measured to see which, on a percentage basis, garners more response.

PostMark's Assistance in the Project: Our involvement in the project began with a review of the mail piece to ensure it met postal specifications in order to minimize postage on the outgoing pieces. Additionally, we worked with OTM to supply our

business reply permit for returning requests for additional information. PostMark, then received the original data file with selected records for mailing each version. In production, PostMark ink jetted both the outgoing address on the front of the brochure and the address on the reply card along with a 3 of 9 barcode. Prospective students that reply also have the option of indicating a major of interest to them. When PostMark receives the reply cards, we are scanning the 3 of 9 barcode, entering major information if indicated, and any address changes. The files created from the scanning are then imported into Access. In Access queries are created to update the original data file we received appending to the records, which offer was received, the date received, and major if indicated. From there, at WSSU's request, we will fulfill requests for each offer and provide reports to the University on the number of returns per week.

Did You Know?

2005 will be the first year ever that volume for Standard Rate mail has exceeded the volume of First Class mail. This translates into a decrease in revenue for the Post Office. However, the upside is this drives the need for efficiency and improvements in delivery of mail.

Source: www.targetmarketingmag.com

Hurricanes can wreak havoc on mailing lists

During hurricanes there are things that are affected that are obvious such as power, water, and food. However, even for those of us removed from locations that took direct hits there are things affected that are not so obvious, such as mailing lists. If you have residents of the Gulf Coast or south Florida on your mailing list, this may be a great time to consider utilizing National Change of Address. Within a couple of weeks of Hurricane Katrina, the Post Office reported more than 300,000 changes of address forms being filed. Recently, some customers have had their lists run through NCOA as a regular part of their data maintenance and have had change rates ranging from 3.16% up to 19.15%. As a note these lists did not have much exposure in the hurricane-affected areas, so the changes were a normal part of list maintenance.

Coffee Still Costs more than a Stamp



It's coming. No longer can we ignore the elephant in the room. The rate case for the Post Office has been approved for implementation in 2006. It will cost \$0.39 to mail a first class letter that weighs one ounce or less, which is a \$0.02 increase or 5.41%. The good news is that all other increases are less. Non-profit mailers will feel the smallest increase. The rate for a 5-digit barcoded non-profit letter will only be \$0.006 per piece (\$6 per 1,000 pieces mailed).

On average the rates for First Class mail had the largest increase of 5.42% across the rates for letters less than one ounce. Standard mail rates will increase from only \$0.01 for a 5-digit barcoded letter up to \$0.014 for a basic non-automated piece. However, the discounts that our current customers enjoy from delivery to the BMC and SCF will be increased as well. For all standard rate mail delivered to the BMC for destination in NC, SC, southern VA, and some of eastern TN will receive a \$0.022 discount. For those mailings qualifying for SCF rates that discount will now be \$0.027 per piece.

It is important to keep a perspective on these rates from the postal service. For example, the IRS allows companies to reimburse mileage at \$.485 per mile¹, but the Post Office will transport a letter across the country for \$0.39 per piece. With gas prices today, it costs much more than that for you to drive to and from work.

The Post Office is under pressure to continue to streamline its operation, provide better service, and compete in an ever-changing market. While the internet makes our lives easier from online bill payment to acquiring information, it has at the same time eroded some of the Post Office's revenue stream. Being a government agency and under the control of Congress the Post Office is required to do certain things and must go through protocols to change anything. Therefore, many expect in the coming years, you will see postal reform bills in front of Congress to aid the Post Office in its flexibility.

¹ Source: <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=147423,00.html>



Getting Connected

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