

Low hanging fruit: commingled mail

Companies earn workshare discounts—without doing the work

Many companies cut back on expenses over the past few years in response to poor market conditions. As the economy begins to pick up, however, smart companies will remain diligent and look for new ways to save money without cutting back on service.

Postage is an expense item where there are many ways to save money. In fact, recent innovations now make it possible for small and mid-sized businesses to take advantage of discounts that once seemed out of reach—especially when it comes to postal presort.

Commingling services level the playing field

The USPS provides incentives for mailers to prepare mail so that it is easy to deliver – and the more work you do, the more you can save. The lowest rates are available to mailers who can sort, tag and tray mail in bundles going to specific ZIP Codes™ or carrier routes.

Most mailers, however, do not have 500 pieces of First-Class Mail® going to the same neighborhood—the volume necessary to achieve the lowest rates. Many mailers do not consistently generate enough mail on a daily basis to qualify for even the most basic presort discounts. Other companies simply don't feel it is worth the time and effort to sort, tray and tag mail according to USPS specifications. If any of these situations describe your company, you may want to learn more about commingled mail.

- What is commingling?
- Why are commingling services free?
- How does commingling work?
- Is commingling right for everyone?
- How much can I save this year?

What is commingling?

In simplest terms, mail from multiple companies is combined and sorted together in a single pass. This increases the number of mail pieces going to any one ZIP Code, which provides for greater postal discounts.

While it may sound odd that you would combine your mail with mail from other companies, that is exactly what happens when your mail goes to the Post Office. Here, it is done in advance in order to save money.

Why are commingling services free?

The USPS provides postage discounts when mail arrives already presorted. In the case of commingling, parts of those savings go to the company who does the work, and parts of those savings go to the mailer. In essence, mailers can get the advantages of presort discounts without doing any of the work, investing in any technology or paying any fees.

How does commingling work?

Different companies approach commingling in different ways. Best practices, which are followed at all Pitney Bowes presort facilities, include:

- Prepare mail like today – except you pay less postage.
Mailables do not need to sort, tray or tag their mail. Simply set your postage meter for a lower amount.
- Your mail gets picked up right from your office.
Representatives come to your office to pick up your mail. There are no extra trips (in fact, you no longer need to take mail to the Post Office yourself.)
- Your mail is combined with mail from other companies—including major mailers.
All of the mail is sorted in ZIP Code order and packaged for the fastest mail delivery.
- Your mail is inducted to the Post Office and delivered like usual.
Mail is inducted into the USPS mailstream. In some cases, a service provider may bypass the local USPS center and truck mail directly to a USPS Network Distribution Center or and Sectional Centers Facility that is closer to the final destination.

Is commingling right for everyone?

Any organization interested in saving money should consider commingling their mail. That said, most service providers have guidelines and eligibility requirements based on mail volume and frequency of mailings.

Some mailers—like those who mail several hundred pieces a day—may request a daily pick-up. Other companies may have larger, less frequent mailings such as marketing programs, newsletters or invoices. The easiest way to find out if your mail qualifies for these no-work, no-hassle savings is to simply ask. (Pitney Bowes offers an easy online tool that can help you determine if this type of service is right for you at <http://www.pitneyworks.com/presortxttra>.)

How much can I save this year?

It is not unusual for organizations to save thousands (or tens of thousands) of dollars each year. When you consider that this is “found money” for doing little or no work, it definitely qualifies as low-hanging fruit.

How can I learn more?

If you are interested in learning more about commingled mail and presort savings, you can contact Pitney Bowes Presort Services at 1-877-9-MAIL-SVCS (877-962-4578) Or, you can read more about our presort solutions at www.pb.com/mailservices.

Every connection is a new opportunity™