
BUSINESS MAILERS REVIEW

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USPS Board Committee Meeting

The Temporary Emergency Committee of the Board of Governors of the Postal Service (“TEC”) will meet Nov. 15 in open session at Postal Service headquarters, 475 L’Enfant Plaza, SW, Washington, DC. The public is welcome to observe the meeting beginning at 10 a.m. EST in the Ben Franklin Room on the 11th floor. The TEC is expected to discuss the following items:

1. Call to order and remarks of the Chairman of the Board
2. Remarks of the Postmaster General and CEO
3. Approval of previous minutes
4. Committee Reports
5. FY2016 10K and Financial Statements

6. FY2017 IFP and Financing Resolution
7. FY2018 Appropriations Request
8. Quarterly Service Performance Report
9. Approval of Annual Report and Comprehensive Statement
10. Draft Agenda for the teleconference tentatively scheduled for Dec. 1
11. Appointment of the Chairman of the TEC
12. Adjourn

Following the TEC’s open meeting on Nov. 15, Postmaster General and CEO Megan J. Brennan and Chief Financial Officer Joe Corbett will host a telephone/web conference call to discuss the financial results in more detail.

Schedule for Last Minute Mailers

Post Offices nationwide will be open Christmas Eve, Saturday, Dec. 24, but many will shorten retail lobby hours and close at noon. Post Offices will be open regular hours on New Year’s Eve. Mail delivery will be unaffected.

Revised hours will be posted at each Post Office, and commercial customers are asked to check with their business mail entry units for specific information about holiday hours of operation.

Blue collection boxes having final collection times before 12 p.m. will not be affected. However, boxes with final collection times scheduled after 12 p.m. may be picked up early. Therefore, mail should be deposited into these mailboxes by 12 p.m. for early pickup on Dec. 24 and Dec. 31.

Customers requiring postal services later on Christmas Eve are encouraged to contact their local Post Office. Customers also may call 1.800.ASK.USPS for additional information.

Areas where Post Offices may have different hours from this schedule will communicate information specific to their locations.

Because Christmas Day and New Year’s Day

fall on Sunday this year, Post Offices will be closed on Monday, Dec. 26 and Monday, Jan. 2, the observed federal holidays. Only Priority Mail Express will be delivered on the actual holidays as well as the observed holidays. All Post Offices will be open and regular mail delivery will resume Dec. 27 and Jan. 3.

USPS Domestic, International, and Military shipping deadlines:

- Dec. 15 – USPS Retail Ground
Ground service for less-than urgent deliveries and over-sized packages.

- Dec. 20 – First-Class Mail
Service for standard-sized, single-piece envelopes and small packages weighing up to thirteen ounces with delivery in three business days or less.

- Dec. 21 – Priority Mail
Domestic service in one, two, or three business days based on where the package is mailed and where it is being sent, variety of flat-rate options.

- Dec. 23 – Priority Mail Express
Fastest domestic service, guaranteed overnight scheduled delivery to most locations.

Additional Postal Service holiday information can be found at usps.com/holidaynews.

Pending USPS Price Increases

The Postal Service filed notice back in October with the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) of price changes for Shipping Services products to take effect in 2017, following the end

of the holiday mailing season. By law the USPS cannot raise stamp prices above the rate of inflation, and any

(Continued on Page 3)

Short Takes

“Recent statistics suggest that direct mail (or print marketing) is still one of the most commonly used marketing media, particularly for local retail businesses and, importantly, that young adults are the most receptive to these campaigns. Campaigns may involve mailing sales letters, postcards, brochures, catalogs, coupons or a combination of any of these,” Ballantine touts direct mail’s viability in an increasingly digital world. <https://www.ballantine.com/4-direct-marketing-mailing-must-dos>.

The statistics on which Ballantine relies show direct mail’s continued usefulness. It shows direct mail takes a 43% share of total local retail advertising. The investment appeals to a young audience. Young adults, twenty-four years and younger, respond to a significant extent when compared with other demographic groups. An International Communications Research survey found that 73% of consumers actually prefer mail over other advertising methods. <http://compu-mail.com/blog/2014/07/17/25-direct-marketing-mail-statistics-2014/>.

For advice on targeting young consumers, see Ballantine’s suggestions for finding your best mailing list, see <https://www.ballantine.com/7-reasons-include-direct-mail-marketing-mix>.

The Australian RPAS Consortium (ARC) hopes to deliver medical supplies, including blood supplies, in Australia via drones, reports *Mashable*. The consortium plans to deliver both medical supplies and samples. For example, in addition to blood supplies, anti-venom might be deliverable via drone. Tests will begin in 2016 in rural areas in which it is difficult to reach individuals via car or ambulance. Successful testing in Australia might lead to similar testing in the U.S. <http://www.businessinsider.com/drones-may-soon-deliver-medical-supplies-in-australia-2016-11>.

Retail Dive reports that Sephora is the next beauty supply business to use augmented reality software to enhance shoppers’ online experiences. “The new Sephora Reservation Assistant allows customers to book appointments for makeovers at

Sephora stores nationwide, while Color Match for Sephora Virtual Artist offers a shade matching extension of the existing Virtual Artist bot, which scans images and instantly provides the closest lipstick color match from Sephora’s inventory. Sephora developed Color Match in partnership with Modiface, which builds augmented reality tools for beauty applications.” <http://www.retaildive.com/news/sephora-brings-more-beauty-bot-tools-to-facebook-messenger/429652/>.

The USPS case against Lance Armstrong for government fraud after the USPS-sponsored cyclist admitted doping cropped up again recently. At a hearing in Washington, D.C., federal court, Armstrong’s legal team argued that the USPS benefited from its relationship with Armstrong. News of the cyclist’s doping behaviors did not undermine those gains.

The government argued that the USPS relied on public statements made by Armstrong and team representatives about their use of performance-enhancing drugs. Armstrong’s team used communications by the USPS that assigned an economic value to the relationship far in excess of the cost of sponsorship. To date, the USPS has not quantified the losses it may have sustained after the team’s reputation was tarnished.

It is not known when the judge will rule on Armstrong’s motion to end the suit.

Nov. 11 (11/11) is “Singles Day.” This Chinese holiday has experienced dramatic gains and 2016 is expected to continue the trend. According to *Retail Dive*, *Alibaba.com* “rolled out deals three weeks early, much in the same way that retailers like Amazon have launched early Black Friday promotions well ahead of the holiday.” <http://www.retaildive.com/news/alibaba-momentum-builds-ahead-of-singles-day/429584/>. Last year, Alibaba reported \$14 billion in sales during the event, easily surpassing its previous year record of \$9.3 billion. Billed as an “antidote to Valentine’s Day,” the holiday celebrates singletons everywhere. <http://www.retaildive.com/news/alibaba-launches-singles-day-promotions-three-weeks-early/428724/>.

Pending USPS Price Increases... (cont. from page 1)

changes must be endorsed by the PRC.

Flat-Rate Shipping Services

The average Flat-Rate Shipping Services price change is 3.9%, which results in an average shipping price of less than \$5 per shipment across all shipping products.

The new prices, if approved, mean a price increase for Priority Mail of 3.9% and a price increase for Priority Mail Retail prices of an average of 3.3%.

A comparison of the Priority Mail Flat Rate Box and Priority Mail Flat Rate Envelope prices for these products appear in the first table.

The PRC will review the prices before they are scheduled to take effect on Sunday, Jan. 22, 2017. The complete Postal Service price filing with the new prices for all Shipping Services products can be found on the PRC site under the Daily Listings section, <http://www.prc.gov/dockets/daily>.

Shipping Services	Current	New
Small flat-rate box	\$6.80	\$7.15
Medium flat-rate box	13.45	13.6
Large flat-rate box	18.75	18.85
Large APO/FPO flat-rate box	16.75	17.35
Regular flat-rate envelope	6.45	6.65
Legal flat-rate envelope	6.45	6.95
Padded flat-rate envelope	6.8	7.2

Market Dominant Products	Current	New
First-Class Letters		
Meters	\$0.465	\$0.460
Auto AADC	0.399	0.403
Auto 5-D	0.376	0.373
Marketing Mail Letters		
Auto 5-D DSCF	0.211	0.217
Saturation DSCF	0.151	0.155
Flats-Piece Rated		
Auto 5-D DSCF	0.333	0.335
CR Basic DSCF	0.245	0.252
CR/CR Pallet DSCF	0.240	0.232
CR/CR Pallet DDU	0.233	0.221

First-Class Mail

The USPS also asks the PRC to approve a two cent increase in the price of a First-Class Mail Forever stamp, returning the price to 49 cents, which was the price of a Forever stamp before the USPS removed the exigent surcharge by the PRC. The new prices (see changes in second table), if approved, include a single price for First-Class Mail commercial presort letters weighing up to 3.5 ounces and a reduction in the one ounce meter price to 46 cents. This pricing strategy should keep bills and statements in the mail by continuing to add value to commercial First-Class Mail.

Mailers predicted an increase for First-Class Mail.

They suggested that the USPS first took its case to them. Stephen Kearney, executive director of the Alliance of Nonprofit Mailers, said in his newsletter that the USPS sought to avoid another disaster like the 2015 rate case in which the USPS sought to raise rates. Portions of that case had to be reworked and resubmitted when the PRC questioned the accuracy of the revenue and cost estimates underlying the USPS request.

Standard Mail

The USPS also seeks to rebrand Standard Mail as USPS Marketing Mail. Proposed changes in Marketing Mail include removing

the Flats Sequencing System (FSS) pricing. If this change is approved, mailers will pay for flats based on their volume density instead of the equipment flats are processed on.

Other changes include increasing the piece pound breakpoint from 3.3 to 4.0 ounces for Marketing Mail Flats and Parcel shaped pieces to encourage mailers to include more content and lead to more sales for mailers and, the USPS

hopes, support volume growth.

The incentive for Full-Service IMB remains the same at three tenths of a cent for First-Class and one tenth of a cent for Marketing Mail and Periodicals.

Kearney also predicted beforehand that the USPS would seek to reclassify “standard mail” as “marketing mail” and give some price breaks. “The Postal Service needs nothing more right now than customers and volume,” he said. ‘Rate shock can send away customers and volume that might otherwise stay in the mail.’” <http://www.linns.com/news/postal-updates/2016/october/us-postal-service-seeks-rate-increase-january-2017.html#>. All this suggests that PRC approval may be forthcoming.

Additional Services

Rates for a number of additional services are expected to rise. On average, the price for Parcel Return Service will increase by an average of 5.5%. Adult Signature Required and Adult Signature Restricted Delivery Service prices are increasing 3.5 and 3.4% respectively. The price for Adult Signature Required will increase to \$5.90 and Adult Signature Restricted Delivery will increase to \$6.15. The fee for USPS Package Intercept will increase by 3.2% to \$12.95.

Unchanged Mail Classes

Proposed price changes do not include any price change for Postcards, First-Class Package International Service, Priority Mail Express International, and Priority Mail International, or for additional ounces for Single Piece Letters.

Mailing Rate Decreases

Some mail rates could be lower if the new rate are approved by the PRC:

- The First-Class Mail Parcels (Retail) additional ounce

Reactions to Shipping Price Changes

Both Federal Express Corp. (FedEx) and United Parcel Service Inc. (UPS) have announced their 2017 price increases. Analysts are reacting to them with interest. The biggest surprise for 2017 is that the two commercial shippers are no longer pricing in a similar fashion and at similar rates. FedEx now has published rates that differ, as well as minimum charges, dimensional

price could change from 19 cents to 18 cents.

- While the price of stamps may increase to 49 cents, metered mail could see a reduction to 46 cents, which could increase the *discount* on First-Class Mail from a half cent to three cents.

Basis for Price Changes

Section 3622(d)(1) of title 39 of the U.S. Code limits the percentage change in rates for these Market Dominant Products to the change in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) over the 12-month period preceding the Postal Service's notice of a Market Dominant Price adjustment. When the USPS implements a percentage change in rates, it may use up to a certain percentage of unused rate adjustment authority (i.e., cap space) from past years to supplement the cap space available from the most recent CPI-U.

Barring further questions about the Postal Service's data and calculations, the changes appear likely to be approved.

divisors, many accessorial charges, and fuel surcharges.

Parcel recently published a discussion of the newest rate announcements. Among the viewpoints expressed was that FedEx had moved from follower to leader in the market. Read the article at <http://parcel.industry.com/article-4762-A-Closer-Look-at-the-Recent-FedEx-GRI-Announcement.html>.

Postage Assessments Begin Soon

The Postal Service begins making additional postage assessments starting in November 2016, which will be based on October mailing volumes of business mailers.

USPS Goals

USPS has the following initiatives: "to streamline the acceptance, induction, and verification of commercial mailings: Full-Service Intelligent Mail, Move Update, eInduction, and Seamless Acceptance. These key initiatives leverage existing technology to:

- Improve mail quality by sharing information on mail preparation, identification of trends as well as trend-based quality measurements
- Simplify the induction of mailings through automated and standardized acceptance, verification, and induction processes
- Provide end-to-end visibility through scan data." Read more about the mail entry initiatives at https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_latestnews/documents/tech_guides/MailEntryRoadmap.pdf.

Errors Already Noted

Having established new procedures, the USPS is now moving to enforce compliance with them. A principal concern is the failure to properly document mailings entered into the USPS system. Undocumented errors are only tracked for mailers who are certified as Seamless Acceptance mailers.

An Undocumented error occurs for a Seamless Acceptance approved mailer when the barcode that is attached to a mail piece (letters, cards, flats) is processed through the United States Postal Service (USPS) mail processing equipment (MPE) and there is no electronic payment record available for the IMb mail pieces. These Undocumented errors can result in assessments for the mailer by the USPS and many mailers have paid the penalties and incurred additional investigation costs.

Undocumented errors in USPS Seamless Acceptance mailings will incur *additional* expenses as verification errors are reported on the mailer's USPS Microstrategy Scorecard report. Avoidance of these

additional assessments requires that the mailer produce the missing documentation. Resources are already limited across the commercial mailing supply chain, and the costs to mailers to review, investigate, and respond to the USPS can be high when assessments (penalty fees) are made.

Verification Process

Pursuant to its initiatives, the USPS has established programs for standardizing mail acceptance. As noted above, the USPS has been verifying compliance and producing scorecards that measure mailers' compliance with those procedures. Now the Postal Service will begin Assessments for Electronic Verification Metrics in November 2016 for October data. The assessments result in the removal of the Full-Service discount on those pieces in error above the established thresholds. Automated email Assessment notifications will be sent as described below on the eleventh day of each month. Due to the Veteran's Day holiday, the November 2016 notifications will be sent on Nov. 14. All subsequent due dates for the November 2016 Assessment process will reflect this change.

As a reminder, to submit a mailing as Full-Service, and claim the per piece discount, the following requirements must be met:

- Mailer Identification (MID)
- Service Type Identification (STID)
- By (mail preparer) and For (mail owner) fields
- Barcode Uniqueness
- Entry Facility
- Unlinked CoPal

Assessments are generated at the electronic documentation (eDoc) submitter Customer Registration ID (CRID) level when there are errors that exceed the established thresholds for a calendar month. The Postal Service will send automated email notifications to the user associated to the Verification Assessment Evaluator service for the eDoc submitters Business Customer Gateway (BCG) profile.

The Postal Service strongly encourages all Full-Service mailers to request access to the Verification Assessment Evaluator (VAE) service through the BCG. In the event that a VAE user is not identified, the automated email assessment notifications are sent to the associated to BCG user roles in the following order of precedence: Verification Assessment Evaluator (Business Service Administrator (BSA) or User Role); if no VAE is identified notification is sent to: BSA for Manage Mailing Activity if there is no BSA for Manage Mailing Activity notification is sent to: BSA for alternate PostalOne! service: Audit Mailing Activity, eVS/PRS Customer, Scan Based Payment Customer.

This order of precedence narrowly defines with

whom the USPS will deal in the verification and assessment processes. Only users associated to the BSA or user role for Verification Assessment Evaluator or Managed Mailing Activity services can view and take action on Assessments.

Prior to the Nov. 14, 2016 Assessment Date USPS is encouraging mailers to review their current user roles within the BCG. The USPS website offers a document that provides mailers with step-by-step instructions to review, change and add user roles within the BCG. https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_services/documents/tech_guides/BCGPostageAssessmentSignupReviewUpdate.pptx.

The Postal Service has created a fact sheet which provides an overview of the Full-Service Assessment process: Full-Service Assessment fact sheet. https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_services/documents/tech_guides/Full-ServiceAssessmentFactSheet.pdf.

More information about the assessment process can be found in section 6.0 of the Publication for Streamlined Acceptance for Letters and Flats found at <http://beta.postalpro.usps.com/node/581>.

To ensure mailers are prepared for the November 2016 assessment date, the Postal Service will continue outreach to every mailer and support the Mailer Scorecard Hotline calls. Mailers can access the Full-Service Mail Quality Metrics and reach out to local USPS BMEU staff for assistance. Any irregularities or questions with the Mailer Scorecard should be reported through the webinar hotline calls, PostalOne! Helpdesk at 800-522-9085 or via email at postalone@usps.gov. Include the phrase "Mailer Scorecard" in the subject line of the email.

To locate your Scorecard and analyze your risk of incurring assessments, go to <https://ribbs.usps.gov/index.cfm?page=intellmaillatestnews>.

A number of postal consultants are offering webinars and other services to assist mailers in preparing for the start of the new assessment process. What follows are some additional resources explaining the new process:

- Assurety Consulting & Solutions: <http://www.assuretyconsulting.com/blog/how-to-avoid-assessments-for-seamless-acceptance-imb-undocumented-piece-errors>.
- Window Book: <http://blog.windowbook.com/tag/intelligent-mail/>. Register for and attend a webinar at <https://attendeegotowebinar.com/register/322593791408734209>.

All suggest that mailers act proactively due to tight timelines for challenging assessments.

USPS Holiday Hiring

The Postal Service will hire as many as 40,000 employees on a temporary basis for post offices and distribution centers around the country as it gears up for the busy holiday season. The hiring goal is higher than it was in 2015, when the Postal Service hired 29,000 seasonal workers. The mailing agency announced it expects between 35,000 and 40,000 workers “to process and deliver holiday cards and packages to our customers.”

Seasonal employment can be a pathway to

permanent employment. The agency has not specified how many employees it ultimately aims to hire on a full-time basis. The agency taps its retirees for holiday support as well. Recent retirees help “deliver holiday cheer,” as they have “virtually no learning curve” and require little training.

Holiday season volume grew in 2015, leading the Postal Service to report a profit in the 1Q/FY2016, the first growth in that quarter in five years.

Rethinking Black Friday

Consumer analysts are of two minds on the prospects for growth of sales on traditionally significant shopping holidays. While some predict that consumers will spread their purchases over the year instead of waiting for Black Friday and Cyber Monday, others predict those days will continue to grow.

Some analysts believe consumers’ embracing of the convenience of year-round ecommerce sales and discounting is leading consumers and ecommerce businesses to rethink traditional Black Friday sales. In the second annual JDA Consumer Survey of more than 1000 U.S. consumers conducted by JDA Software Group, Inc., nearly 3 in 4 respondents (73%) say they prefer to do their holiday shopping outside of the holiday season, during ecommerce sales, such as Amazon Prime Day. Forty-seven percent of respondents plan to skip Black Friday or Cyber Monday altogether this year.

Additionally, among the respondents who shopped primarily in-store for Black Friday deals in 2015, 34% are changing their behavior; reporting that this year they plan to shop equally online and in-store (20%), or even primarily online (31%).

“Consumers continue to be less influenced by the Black Friday holiday deals and are expecting retailers to provide them with more personalized options throughout the year,” said Jim Prewitt, vice president of retail industry strategy at JDA Software. “Amazon Prime Day was a hit this summer, it’s interesting to see how much of an impact it had on our survey respondents and their holiday shopping plans. Its popularity will cause many retailers to not only revisit their holiday sales strategy but how they compete throughout the year.” www.jda.com.

Despite this research, Amazon.com, Inc. remains committed to the holiday. Amazon already has begun announcing its Black Friday specials, including dis-

counted prices and curated gift guides in several categories. Amazon has its own dedicated Black Friday page as well as through guides on items in categories like electronics and home goods.

Amazon does not appear to be alone in expecting the traditional sales days to remain critical to holiday sales performance. Indeed, some estimate that nearly every one of the sixty-one days during the holidays “will exceed \$1 billion in online sales as ecommerce sales are expected to grow 11% this holiday season.” <https://www.internetretailer.com/2016/10/26/nearly-every-day-holiday-season-will-be-1-billion-day>.

Adobe’s “2016 Digital Insights Shopping Predictions” reports 31% of U.S. consumers say they will start their holiday shopping before Nov. 1, up five percentage points from a year ago. Adobe surveyed more than 1000 U.S. consumers and expects fifty-three consecutive \$1 billion plus days, making a weak Black Friday less of a concern.

Adobe expects ecommerce sales on Cyber Monday, to set a new record with \$3.36 billion, up 9.4% over last year. It sees Black Friday as gaining on Cyber Monday as the biggest online sales day of the year. Adobe expects Black Friday sales to grow 11.3% to \$3.05 billion. Thanksgiving also is growing. Adobe expects online sales on Thanksgiving to grow 15.6% to \$2 billion. By comparison, web sales on Amazon’s Prime Day event last July 12 were estimated at \$2.5 billion for Amazon and its marketplace sellers, the vast majority of which involved domestic sales. If Adobe’s estimates prove accurate, Prime Day would rank as this year’s third busiest online shopping day in the U.S.

It appears that, even if Black Friday loses its rank, it will remain a major source of revenue.

Free Shipping Delivers Sales

Despite retailers' growing focus on speedy delivery options (one-hour or next day delivery), the new survey by JDA Software shows 56% of consumers say cost is still the most important factor they consider when placing an online home delivery order. One in four consumers claim they do not shop anywhere that does not offer free shipping. Almost half of respondents (46%) claim they are willing to pay for shipping for a particular priority item this holiday season, but they generally prefer to shop with retailers who offer free shipping.

Free shipping remains such a high priority for consumers that 69% of respondents have spent more than they planned, just to reach the minimum threshold to receive free shipping. This trend is particularly prevalent during the holiday season, with 80% of respondents who shopped primarily online during Black Friday/Cyber Monday last year claiming that they spent more than they intended to meet a free shipping threshold.

Retailers and ecommerce seem to be improving when it comes to home deliveries, with 75% of consum-

In-Store Returns Cure Shipping Woes

Half of consumers (50%) find having to pay for return postage and packaging the most frustrating part of returning online items. While 80% of consumers have not used "Buy online return in store" (BORIS) services in the last twelve months, 67% of respondents would prefer to return an online purchase to a store than through the mail. Of those who have used BORIS services in the last twelve months, 40% did so to avoid the hassle of return deliveries.

"As BOPIS is continuing to grow and BORIS is emerging as a core capability to the consumer, more retailers are more likely to merge the lines between online and in-store for both purchases and returns," said Jim Prewitt, vice president of retail industry strategy at JDA Software. "Of the respondents who have used

ers reporting they have not experienced an issue in the last twelve months. However, there is still room for improvement and one of the most common errors consumers report experiencing is also the most intolerable. Of those who did have an issue in the last twelve months, 29% of respondents said they did not receive an item and the retailer/delivery company claimed the delivery was made. This is interesting since nearly 44% of all respondents stated this was the most serious issue that would cause them to no longer shop with a retailer. Overall, retailers are more likely to be blamed for any home delivery issues (55%) over shipping companies (45%).

"Given the rise in e-commerce, retailers are grappling with the demands of an always on supply chain," said Jim Prewitt, vice president of retail industry strategy at JDA Software. "With the continued proliferation of sales and discounting and the challenge of satisfying consumer demand across channels, retailers and manufacturers need an agile supply chain capable of keeping up with changing consumer behavior to better manage inventory and profitability." www.jda.com.

BOPIS in the last twelve months, 32% have also used BORIS services. This only drives home the need for retailers to increase options to meet the demands of digital consumers who continue to influence shopping trends."

Use of BORIS in place of shipped returns may gain new impetus as new rates from FedEx and UPS go into effect immediately after the holiday, when late shipment, back orders, and returns must be processed. (See *BMR 11/07/2016*, p. 4.)

JDA collected responses from 1076 U.S.-based consumers, eighteen-years and older, via a third-party provider to determine the findings of its 2016 Consumer Survey. Among those surveyed, 53% were female and median income was recorded between \$50,000 and \$74,999. www.jda.com.

Stealing the Holidays

News of additional data breaches has been steady. The latest comes from European clothier Primark, which disclosed that skimming devices for stealing payment card data were illegally placed on "a limited number of card payment machines" in two of its U.S. stores in Pennsylvania. The incidents of data theft may have affected some transactions starting July 29, but it appears that not all credit card and debit transactions were affected. <http://www.prnewswire.com>.

Ponemon Institute estimates the average time to

identify a data breach is 201 days. Add to that seventy days to contain the breach. A new whitepaper by IDT911 addresses some elements of proactive response to a data breach, focused on the first forty-eight hours after one learns of the breach. <http://leadsight.insidecounsel.com/files/b/3e/3ef592f6be0806ddc3b69d2aaccf034a.pdf>. The whitepaper addresses how to assemble a response team and what to do to minimize risk and liability.

Briefs

A *Forbes* op-ed recently blamed the USPS's now stalled consolidation efforts for slowing down the mails to the point that votes-by-mail might not be delivered and counted on time. *Government Executive* explained that: "USPS management, however, called the piece 'incorrect and misleading.' The agency said it has been worked with state and federal election officials and is 'fully prepared to deliver election and ballots to ensure that every vote counts.'" http://www.govexec.com/management/2016/10/usps-begins-hiring-surge-preparation-holiday-season/132061/?oref=govexec_today_nl.

A recent *Direct Marketing News* article analyzes lessons for marketers learned from the 2016 presidential elections, including the value of segmentation of messaging and outreach. As the article explains, "Marketers have been saying this for a long while now, but it's usually in the context of using technology and strategies to properly target consumers. However, much of the population has segmented itself throughout the election; often to the degree that reality itself seems to bend on the whim of these increasingly polarized communities."

One of the most intriguing conclusions is that, "Now that users have the power to choose what news and viewpoints they're exposed to, reaching them on a personal level through information gained from data is the only real way to make an impact," says Will Margiloff, CEO at the marketing firm IgnitionOne. Read the article at <http://www.dmnews.com/data-analytics/what-marketers-have-learned-from-campaign-season/article/569196>.

The next election cycle will begin on Wednesday, Nov. 8 when the disappointed parties and candidates begin work on a comeback and the successful begin work to preserve their gains. Here are some helpful links for candidates and campaigns seeking to capitalize on direct mail:

- **Wellstone:** Tips for effective use of direct mail include:
 - "Message reinforcement: Great way to target

specific voters to reinforce the campaign message, offering more detail than face-to-face direct voter contact. In a smaller race, mail can be the dominant paid medium.

- **Niche targeting:** Mail can be used to deliver specific messages (education, health care, budget—or negatives) to targeted audiences who care about those issues.
- **Voter education:** Mail can effectively be used for more 'complicated' actions such as voter registration, early vote, vote by mail, etc.
- **Get-out-the-vote (GOTV):** GOTV mail can be a key part of your field program to turn out voters." <http://www.wellstone.org/resources/tips-direct-mail-and-campaign-literature>.

• **Political Resource Directory:** Tips for combining Google and direct mail include:

"For the same reason political candidates use signs, you should also be using postcard marketing. You want voters to be aware of your candidacy. Direct mail allows you to use targeted mailing lists, so you only mail to the demographics your campaign strategy requires. Mailing postcard campaigns regularly and consistently is guaranteed to build your name recognition, and the laws of marketing say that the more someone sees your name and face, the more likely they are going to be to choose you. Not only will it build your awareness, it will also point voters to your website, where they can learn more about you and your positions on the issues. The more they get to know you, the more trust is built." <http://www.politicalresources.com/for-candidates/campaign-how-to-library/58-campaign-how-to/voter-contact-direct-mail/150-integrate-google-and-direct-mail-marketing-to-win-your-election>.

- **Political Campaign Tips:** "[H]ere's my two cents: if done correctly and vigorously, door-to-door campaigning is the single most effective political campaign tool you can employ in a local election. Targeted direct mail, though, runs a close second, and in some cases is even a more pragmatic method than canvassing neighborhoods." <http://www.politicalcampaigningtips.com/targeted-direct-mail-postcards-flyers-in-political-campaigns/>.

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