How to
use mail tracking data
to provide proof
that a mailing is in
the hands of
the Postal Service.

It's in the Mail!

YOUR MAIL
SNL·WRK
YOUR TAGLINE GOES HERE   16

Postal Service

SNAILWORKS
COORDINATED DIRECT MARKETING PLATFORM

Documenting Mailings Using Intelligent Mail Tracking —
There is so much more to mail tracking than just knowing when your mail got there. The Postal Service follows every piece of mail as it travels through the system, and shares that information with mailers. There are myriad uses for this detailed information. Our objective here is to discuss how to use mail tracking data to provide mailing documentation – proof that a mailing is in the hands of the Postal Service.

How we mail things is changing

Many mailing techniques today create a challenge for documenting that all mail has been produced and mailed for a client. In the past, mailing service providers (MSP's) would present mail to a local postal entry unit, where it would be weighed, tare weight (the weight of trays, pallets, and sacks) would be deducted, and a postal clerk would certify that the actual weight of the mailing matched the claimed rate. MSPs' customers could be assured that all of their mail had been produced and mailed.

Today, MSP's use a variety of mailing techniques that bypass this verification process in order to secure the lowest possible postage rates. These include commingling and co-palletization by third-party consolidators. Even for mail deposited directly with the Postal Service, new procedures such as Seamless Acceptance are taking away the process of weight verification. These techniques benefit all of the parties; lower postage and more efficient handling, but can create uncertainty for some mail owners by taking away that independent certification that all of the mail is there.

Some mailers such as insurance companies are bound to an even higher standard, and need to prove that pieces of mail were sent to meet due diligence requirements. Cancellation notices, changes in terms and coverage – these kinds of mail often require a Certificate of Mailing from the Postal Service, a tedious and expensive process where the Postal Service will certify at a piece level that the piece was delivered.
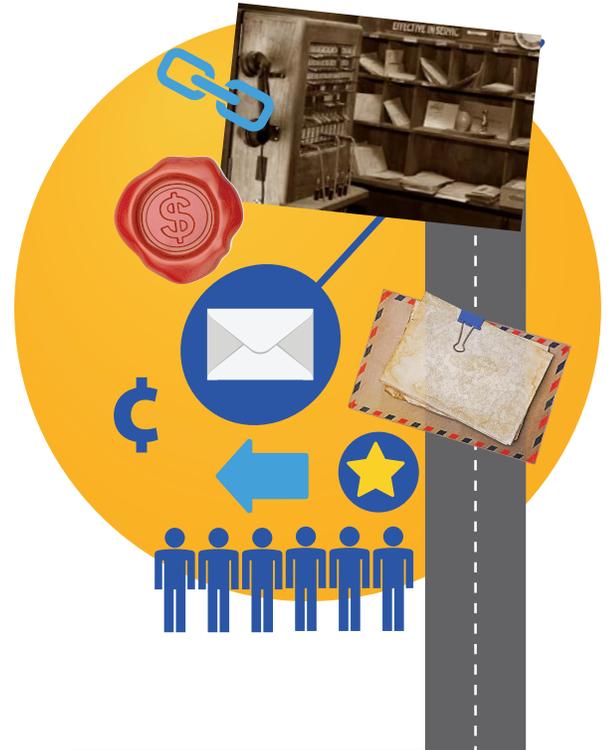
Select Scan Type: First Scan

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Intelligent Mail tracking can help.

When a mailing is sent using Intelligent Mail, the Intelligent Mail barcode (IMb) can be set to capture tracking information as each piece travels through automated sorting equipment. That information is sent to a designated subscriber to Intelligent Mail Tracing who can organize it into usable tracking reports. This is the role SnailWorks plays for our clients. Typically IMb tracking data is used to determine when mail is being delivered, but it can have an even greater value in proving that mail has been inducted by the Postal Service.

Under Full-Service Intelligent Mail rules, every piece of mail must have a unique IMb, essentially a license plate for that piece of mail. When that barcode is scanned by postal equipment, that serves as proof that the mail is in the custody of the Postal Service. So, while Intelligent Mail tracking cannot prove a piece of mail was delivered, it can prove that it was mailed.

Processing the tracking data in a way that you and your clients can understand is where SnailWorks comes in. We are a trusted third-party provider offering unbiased reporting on the induction and delivery of mail. All of our tracking reports are available for first scan viewing. First scan tracking will identify all pieces in a mailing that have any scans.

For letter-size mail First Scan rates are generally well above **95%**

Using the SnailWorks Mail Tracking system, you can set up automatic reports that your clients will receive, showing them that their mail is being processed. It's another touch point for building the confidence of your clients.

Not all mail pieces track the same

Of course there are limitations to any confirmation method. While scan rates on letter-size pieces are typically very high – generally 97% - 99% - they are rarely 100%. Educating mailer owners on how to interpret this information is essential. Again, having an independent third-party tracking company like SnailWorks can be helpful in explaining discrepancies, as well as researching them where required.

Flat size mail remains problematic, often bypassing automated sorting equipment and scanning.

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Building confidence for your clients and credibility for you

In today's complex and changing mailing environment clients will need, more than ever, confidence in their mail service provider. With the role of postal documentation changing, progressive shops are including mail tracking services as a matter of course. There is a growing expectation of tracking on all postal products. Using mail tracking as a mail certification tool is just another way to deliver value and confidence to your clients. SnailWorks can provide you with the tools put it into action!

Contact us at SnailWorks.com
855 697-6245.

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