

# Will Outsourcing Mail Processing Help Your Business Grow?

## *Mailing Systems Technology*

*By Chet King, Postal Affairs Manager for UPS Mail Innovations*

It's the classic dilemma for small and medium enterprises (SMEs): Your company is performing well and you are hoping to grow and do business with more customers in new markets to increase your bottom line. But growth often doesn't come easy—or inexpensively. As your business grows, it's important to keep a close watch on your expenses and maintain focus on your core competencies.

One effective way to help your small business grow is to embrace affordable automation technologies that streamline various business processes. These technologies, such as those capable of automating the business mail process, can free up employees, allowing them to focus on critical primary business functions.

Of course, the sticker price alone may make an in-house investment in automation technology unreasonable for many SMEs. In this case, working with proven partners to outsource non-core business functions can minimize costs and maximize efficiencies.

Business mail processing is one area where coordinating with a third party may be beneficial for SMEs. A mail services provider can combine operational expertise, knowledge of U.S. Postal Service rates and regulations, and innovative, efficient automation technology to provide cost-effective mailing solutions.

Of course, outsourcing mail operations may not work for every SME. While it can save time and money for many companies, it may be more beneficial for some to manage mailing in-house.

Consider the following questions to determine if your business would benefit from outsourcing its business mail processes:

*What type(s) of mail are you currently sending?* Are you sending mail at the most optimal class, based on content and delivery time? Your business may be paying a small premium per mail piece if you're using the wrong class of mail, which can aggregate into a large expense.

Depending on the type(s) of mail you are currently sending, a third-party mail services provider could help improve delivery speed or reduce your mailing-related costs.

*How do you process your mail?* Do you have an automated system for sorting and applying postage, or is this done by hand by your employees? Outsourcing mail operations can shorten the process and reduce human error. Automation technology enables mail services providers to properly weigh, apply postage, and sort mail efficiently so it can be quickly delivered to its proper recipient as quickly as possible.

*How much does your outbound mail weigh?* If your mail is within the weight requirements and fits the regulations for First Class mail and you are currently shipping via the U.S. Postal Service, a mail service provider may significantly reduce your costs while still offering timely delivery for

less-than-a-pound mail. This is a standard example, but mail providers offer services for a variety of mail types and sizes.

*Where is your mail going?* Is your mail being shipped to recipients in the United States, or are recipients of your mail pieces located overseas? Perhaps you process a combination of both domestic and international mail. It is important to do your homework to determine if outsourcing proves a fit for your situation, as rates and qualifications differ according to the mail's final destination. Seek out a mail services provider with strong expertise of domestic and international mail processing.

*Is your mail time sensitive or particularly valuable?* Are you shipping high-value items, or does your mail need to get to recipients by a certain deadline. Additionally, security and visibility into your mailings may be especially important. Seek out a mail provider with the visibility to provide real-time updates on your in-transit mail so you can breathe easy as it's being processed and delivered.

*How frequent are your mailings?* Do you send your mail on a periodic basis, such as weekly, monthly, or annually? Understanding the frequency of your mailings allows you to estimate how much time is being put into mail processing, and whether that time can be better spent on other functions.

Setting yourself up with a mail services provider is a relatively simple process. A sales representative will visit your business to evaluate current practices, deliver a rate proposal, provide you with the proper materials, and set up your account. You'll be provided with forms that ask for specifics about your mail, with questions similar to those posed here. The final step is developing a tracking system customized for your business, and setting up lines up communication regarding your mailings.

For many, it makes good business sense to outsource all, or a portion of, a company's mailing operations. Using a third-party mail processor can be an effective way to keep costs down and maintain your focus on your core competencies.

***Chet King, Postal Affairs Manager for UPS Mail Innovations, has more than 25 years of experience in the postal industry. Visit [www.upsmailinnovations.com](http://www.upsmailinnovations.com) or call 1-800-500-2224 for more information about UPS Mail Innovations and its services.***