

Streamline postal production with workshare transparency



Truman Pope, Specialty Print Communications

Postage is typically the largest expense of a direct mail campaign, ranging from 30% to 70% of the total investment. Shouldn't mail owners know what they're paying for?

Unfortunately, too many in our industry don't take the time to explain the workshare process to marketers. As mail owners become more sophisticated, breaking down the process to its core shouldn't be that difficult. At a high level, it could be explained this way:

Participating in the workshare process allows marketers to leverage privatized transportation systems to bypass many of the USPS delivery steps that transport mail from point A to point B. Workshare delivers mail closer to its final destination, making in-home windows more predictable. The USPS rewards workshare in the form of discounts.

Typically, a successful effort can yield cost savings of 3.4 cents per piece. For 10 million mail pieces, that's \$340,000. By accessing privatized operational efficiencies, aggregating mail for greater volume discounts and inserting mail deeper into the

postal stream, marketers can realize significant benefits and advantages.

Sharing this level of detail may seem like an overload of information for a marketer. However, this honest approach can lead to a more collaborative working relationship. It also establishes a common language with mail owners. The USPS system is littered with a unique vocabulary. If we use a common language and understand each other, we can achieve better solutions more efficiently.

An educated mail owner is better suited to understand and resolve delivery issues. They focus on in-home delivery rather than drop dates. In a customer survey that we conducted, honesty was determined to be one of the most important factors in selecting a vendor-partner. Transparency in this matter amounts to integrity, the foundation of mutually beneficial relationships that lead to positive word of mouth and referrals. Workshare education and transparency levels the playing field.

Keeping workshare details close to the vest may make life easier in the short term and allow for some financial gain. However, a long-term and transparent approach leads to problem resolution and enhanced company reputation. Bringing transparency to the workshare process isn't just the right thing to do – it can also help streamline production and make direct mail more effective.

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Do your research and choose the right Hispanic call center



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In recent years, direct response has seen a surge in the number of U.S. Hispanic campaigns being rolled out around the country. While many elements factor into the success of these campaigns and the sales they garner, it seems that many companies are failing to perform a thorough evaluation and losing sales. When performance and profits are on the line, it pays to put time into vetting one of the most important pieces of the puzzle: the Hispanic call center.

Regardless of how on target a company's U.S. Hispanic advertisements are, the Hispanic call center can be the make-or-break factor that boosts product sales beyond expectation or drags them so low a campaign has no choice but to fold. For example, Ab Rocket, the in-home abdominal trainer, was a successful English campaign that became a successful Spanish campaign, due in large part to the call center selling it, staffed with agents who not only believed in the product but used the product and were trained well on a script tailored specifically to the product's audience.

When dealing with U.S. Hispanics – who like to establish a friendly rapport with their

customer service representatives before dealing in any monetary transactions – it's necessary to have agents that are gracious, vibrant and responsive. However, there are issues to consider other than attitude.

It's also important to understand the quality control process of any U.S.-based call center, since many do not have Spanish-speaking managerial staff to monitor quality. Dig deep. Does the call center verify 100% of its orders? This is a tactic that prevents charge-backs and keeps the call center, the marketers and their participating merchant banks in good standing, but you would be surprised at how many call centers don't put it into practice – or only verify a much smaller percentage.

In terms of off-shore call centers, it's always recommended to choose one in a Spanish-speaking country. It's necessary that the call center ensures payment card industry compliance with U.S. telemarketing legal and regulatory requirements. Inquire about the technical capabilities of the call center, including what kind of switch operators they're working with, and whether there are back-up systems and triage systems. What is the call center's reporting capabilities? Is real-time reporting available?

With so much work being put into the creation of your U.S. Hispanic campaign, don't let it fall flat because you chose the wrong call center. Do your research. Choose wisely. The results will be worth the effort.

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