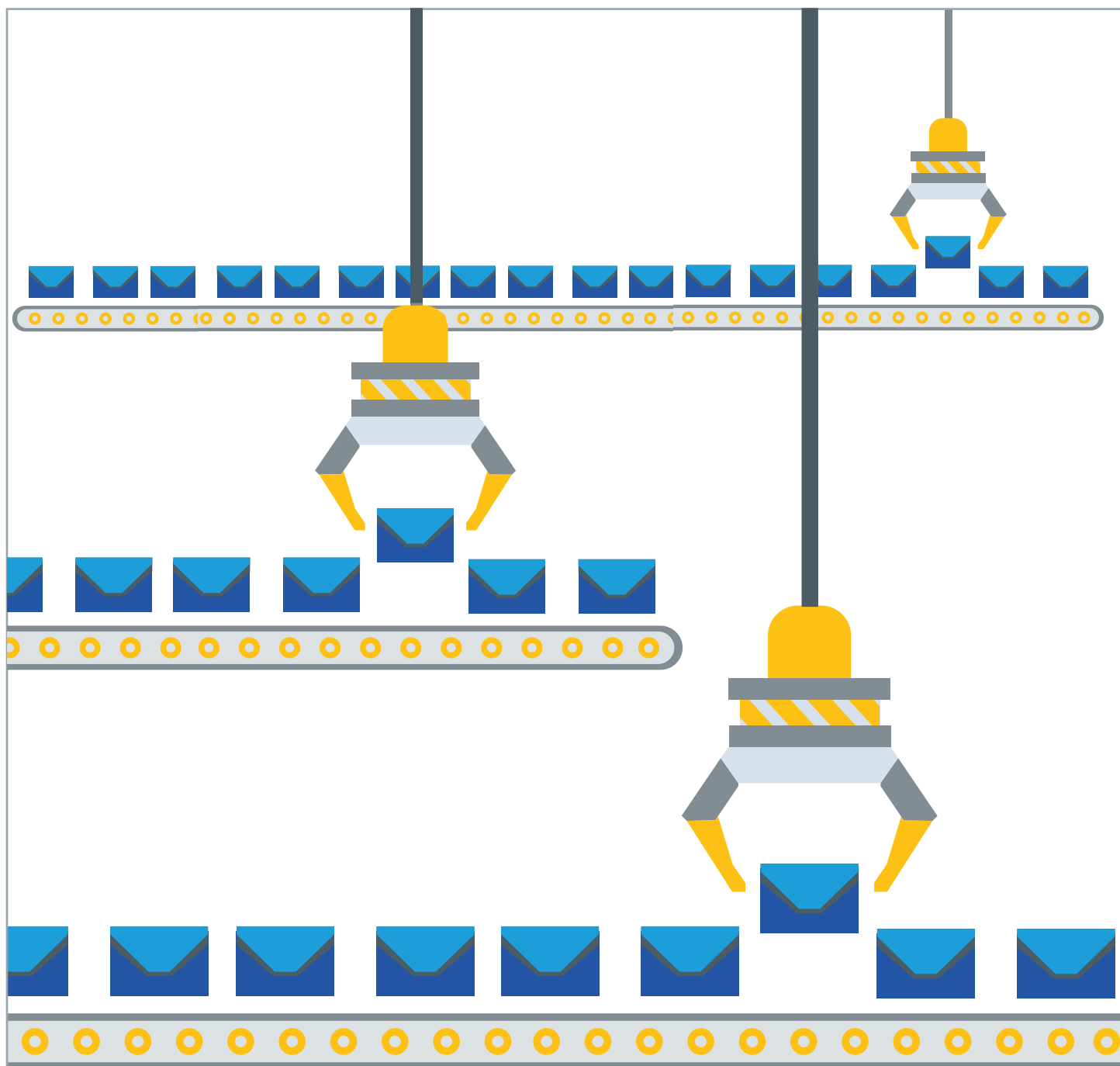


2018 Annual Mail Industry Survey

Developed by Idealliance Postal Operations & Technology Council Leadership



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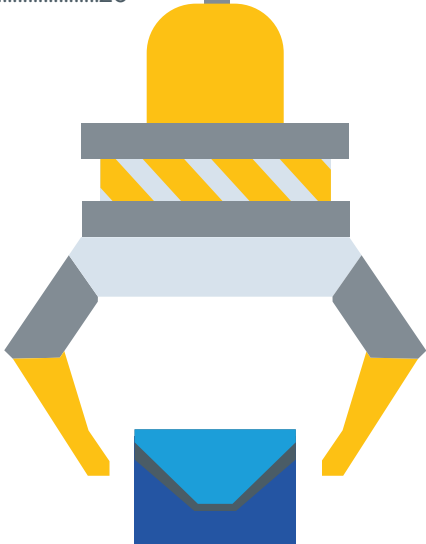
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Idealliance Mail & Postal Portfolio

Idealliance – with its Postal Operations & Technologies Council and nine focused working groups – is a collaborative and forward-thinking force for change and development in the mail supply chain.

The companies engaged in Idealliance create, produce, and prepare more than 60 billion pieces of mail each year. Mail and postal issues are at the core of Idealliance's graphic communications mission and catalog and direct marketers, equipment manufacturers, fulfillment companies, list management companies, logistics companies, mail preparers, mail owners, manufacturers, printers, publishers, software developers, and transportation carriers are actively engaged.

We focus on innovation in mail technology and supply chain while working collaboratively with the U.S. Postal Service to meet the new challenges of mail preparation and distribution in five areas of work:

1. Engage all partners in the supply chain across all mail classes and shapes in an open environment focusing on total combined costs;
2. Advance expertise in establishing and developing industry specifications and leading practices – Mail.dat® and Mail.XML™ specifications defining mail preparation for the industry and the Postal Service are produced by Idealliance;
3. Create educational programs for the industry to train current and prospective professionals including the MailPro® Certification with nearly 1,500 professionals, and monthly *Postal Highlights* newsletter, quarterly Postal Focus webinars, and online community;
4. Serve as an acknowledged expert and innovator in Postal Service networks, products, and services, as well as industry supply chain technologies and workflows; and
5. Coordinate and fuse print-digital to maximize communications and commerce using our leadership in information technologies.

Postal Operations & Technology Council Leadership

Co-Chairs:	Stephen Colella, Calmark Group Paula Stoskopf, LSC Communications
Vice Chairs:	David Propst, Pitney Bowes Software Susan Pinter, Arandell Corporation
Past Chairs:	Rose Flanagan, Data-Mail Phil Thompson, Quad/Graphics
Staff:	David J. Steinhardt President Emeritus dsteinhardt@idealliance.org 703.837.1066

About Idealliance

Idealliance, a global thought leader in the graphic communications industry since 1896, is a non-profit industry organization with 11 strategically located offices around the world. Idealliance serves brands; content and media creators; manufacturers; service providers in print, packaging, mail, and marketing; and material suppliers and technology partners worldwide.

We do our work through Standards Innovation, Print and Digital Workflows & Technologies Collaboration, Research & Industry Insights, and Certification & Training. Our specifications have transformed the graphic communications industry by defining production workflows for color (GRACoL®, SWOP®, XCMYK™, G7®, BrandQ™), content management (PRISM®), mail supply (Mail.dat®, Mail.XML™), and paper (papiNet®). ISO recognizes Idealliance as the world's foremost certifying body for competencies, systems, materials and facilities required to function as a state-of-the-art operation in a dynamic and highly competitive graphic communications marketplace. Join us in the transformation of our industry.

Contact us at www.idealliance.org or (703) 837-1070.



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Foreword

The mail supply chain—vast and complex—creates, produces, and delivers print communications that are integral to our lives and significant to our economy.

In 2016 Idealliance launched an annual survey of all the partners in the mail supply chain: mail owners and marketers, mailing processing operations, mail service providers, logistics experts, transportation providers, printers, software developers, creative and marketing services providers, and data and list managers. The survey's aim is to deliver an independent, thoughtful, and candid assessment, based on first-hand knowledge, of how the chain is performing, why it is doing so, and how that performance can be improved, with a focus on the U.S. Postal Service.

This report summarizes results of the 2018 Idealliance Mail Industry Survey, the third in the series of surveys dedicated to measuring the performance of the mail supply chain. Topics include overall experience with the USPS, satisfaction with 10 USPS functions and 22 program systems, and how the USPS can be an even better business partner. It also includes a careful comparison with previous survey results as a first step toward identifying performance trends.

From 2017 to 2018 the five core areas for improvement in the mail supply chain's relationship with the U.S. Postal Service remain the same:

1. Keep postal rates predictable.
2. Listen to us.
3. Improve mail delivery predictability and reliability.
4. Communicate more effectively on changes to processes and regulations.
5. Increase knowledge of USPS personnel to improve accuracy and consistency.

The results of the 2018 Mail Industry Survey will help focus the work of the Idealliance Postal Operations & Technologies Council and the wide array of Idealliance mail working groups. We hope they will also be a valuable and constructive tool in improving the relationship and partnership with the U.S. Postal Service among all mail supply chain partners.

We sincerely welcome your feedback and suggestions on how we can improve the survey and effectively utilize its findings.

Participant Profile

- **Number of Participants:** 149
- **Company Functions:** 59.7% represent companies whose primary responsibility is mail service provider (39.6%) or print provider (20.1%). Additional functions—more than four-fifths offer at least one—such as marketing services (52.9%), data and analytics (52.9%), logistics and transportation services (43.8%) order fulfillment services (42.1%), and list and subscription services (33.1%), show how extensive our research group's involvement in the mail supply chain is.

What is your organization's PRIMARY function? What ADDITIONAL functions does it serve?

Function	Primary	Additional	Total
Mail Service Provider (Including lettershops and presort houses)	39.6%	48.8%	88.4%
Print Provider	20.1%	59.5%	79.6%
Mail Owner	15.4%	25.6%	41.1%
Software Provider	6.7%	12.4%	19.1%
Logistics and Transportation Service	2.7%	43.8%	46.5%
Marketing Services Provider/Creative and Design Services	2.0%	52.9%	54.9%
Data and Analytics	2.0%	52.9%	54.9%
Order Fulfillment Services	1.3%	42.1%	43.4%
Production Agency	1.3%	12.4%	13.7%
List and Subscription Services	0.0%	33.1%	33.1%
Other	8.7%	0.0%	8.7%

- **Mailing Operation Size:** 20.0% ship or mail an average of 95.2 million pieces per week and 20.0% ship or mail an average of 91,200 pieces. The average for the middle 20.0%: 2.3 million pieces mailed or shipped per week.

Approximately how many pieces does your organization mail or ship per week?

	Quintile				
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Pieces Mailed or Shipped (weekly average)	95,190,500	9,910,000	2,334,813	465,250	91,229

- **Primary Work Responsibility:** 58.3% are owners/managers (36.2%) or responsible for postal/government affairs (22.1%). The primary responsibilities of the others range from production (11.4%) to software integration (1.3%).

What is your PRIMARY function at work?

Response	Percent	Response	Percent
Owner/Manager (CEO, Vice President, General Manager, etc.)	36.2%	Creative/Design	2.7%
Postal/Government Affairs	22.1%	Logistics & Transportation Planning	2.0%
Production (Presorting, mail production, etc.)	11.4%	Software Development	2.0%
Client Services	5.4%	Software Integration	1.3%
Mail Production Planning	4.7%	Other	12.1%

- **Association Membership:** 82.5% are members of at least one of our industry's associations, with 67.7% members of two or more. The highest percentages are members of Idealliance (63.9%), PostCom (38.3%), NAPM (27.1%), and DMA (24.8%).

To which associations do you currently belong?

Response	Percent
Idealliance	63.9%
PostCom (Association for Postal Commerce)	38.3%
NAPM (National Association of Presort Mailers)	27.1%
DMA (Data & Marketing Association)	24.8%
ACMA (American Catalog Mailers Association)	18.8%
PIA (Printing Industries of America)	16.5%
AMEE (Association for Mail Electronic Endorsement)	12.0%

Response	Percent
Alliance of Nonprofit Mailers	9.8%
MMA (Mobile Marketing Association)	9.8%
NPPC (National Postal Policy Council)	9.0%
MPA (Association of Magazine Media)	6.8%
EMA (Envelope Manufacturers Association)	3.8%
PSA (Parcel Shippers Association)	2.3%
Other	0.0%

Overall Experience with the USPS

We first asked our research group to rate their overall experience with the USPS as a partner and supplier in the mail supply chain from 7, for “very satisfied,” to 1, for “very dissatisfied.”

Please rate your overall experience with the USPS as a partner and supplier in the mail supply chain.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. The majority, 65.9%, are mostly or somewhat satisfied with the USPS, down fractionally from 66.7% last year.
2. 23.0% are dissatisfied, up from 17.9% last year, due largely to an increase to 15.6% from 11.3% in the percent who are somewhat dissatisfied.

	2018	2017
Very Satisfied	4.4%	4.6%
Mostly Satisfied	36.3%	41.0%
Somewhat Satisfied	29.6%	25.7%
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	6.7%	10.8%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	15.6%	11.3%
Mostly Dissatisfied	5.2%	5.6%
Very Dissatisfied	2.2%	1.0%

Use of USPS Program Systems

We next listed 22 USPS program systems and asked our research group which they have used and, for those they have, how recently. The similarities between this year and last year are far more significant than the differences.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. The four programs with the highest usage rates—usps.com, Domestic Mail Manual, Postal Explorer, and Rapid Information Bulletin Board System—are the same both years and in identical order. All have been used by at least 90.0% of our survey group and by at least 65.0% within the last six months.
2. The three programs with the next highest usage rates—Business Customer Gateway, PostalOne!, and Full-Service Intelligent Mail—are the same both years but in a different order. All have usage rates approaching 90.0% and exceeding 83.0% within the last six months.
3. The five programs with the lowest usage rates—Electronic Verification System, Every Door Direct Mail, Address Management Service, Shipping Services Enrollment, and Product Tracking & Reporting—are the same as last year. Each has been used by less than half and, for Shipping Services Enrollment and Product Tracking & Reporting, by less than two-fifths of this year’s survey group.
4. One program, Postal Pro, recorded an increase in usage of more than 10 percentage points, to 81.9% from 69.9%.
5. Two programs, Electronic Verification System and Every Door Direct Mail, recorded a decrease in usage of more than 10 percentage points: Electronic Verification System to 47.5% from 58.7% and Every Door Direct Mail to 45.0% from 55.2%.
6. Three programs recorded an increase in usage of at least three percentage points, while 10 recorded a decrease of at least three percentage points.

Program System	Year	Have Used	Past 6 Months	7 to 12 Months Ago	More than 1 Year Ago
usps.com	2018 2017	97.7% 98.4%	90.8% 91.5%	5.3% 4.8%	1.5% 2.1%
Domestic Mail Manual (DMM)	2018 2017	93.8% 96.3%	82.3% 87.9%	8.5% 4.7%	3.1% 3.7%
Postal Explorer (pe.usps.com)	2018 2017	92.0% 94.7%	85.6% 86.7%	4.0% 2.1%	2.4% 5.9%
Rapid Information Bulletin Board System (RIBBS)	2018 2017	91.2% 94.6%	65.6% 82.8%	20.0% 7.0%	5.6% 4.8%
Business Customer Gateway	2018 2017	89.5% 90.1%	86.5% 83.8%	0.0% 1.6%	3.0% 4.7%
PostalOne!	2018 2017	89.2% 92.4%	83.1% 84.2%	3.8% 4.3%	2.3% 3.8%
Full-Service Intelligent Mail	2018 2017	87.9% 86.9%	83.1% 79.8%	2.4% 2.7%	2.4% 4.4%
Postal Pro	2018 2017	81.9% 69.9%	76.4% 60.8%	3.1% 5.1%	2.4% 4.0%
Centralized Account Processing System (CAPS)	2018 2017	74.4% 79.1%	68.8% 68.1%	2.4% 5.5%	3.2% 5.5%
FAST (Facility Access & Shipment Tracking)	2018 2017	65.6% 73.6%	58.2% 60.4%	4.9% 6.0%	2.5% 7.1%
IMb Tracing	2018 2017	73.0% 69.3%	60.3% 56.3%	7.1% 6.8%	5.6% 6.3%
Mailpiece Tracking	2018 2017	71.1% 71.3%	59.4% 59.0%	7.0% 4.5%	4.7% 7.9%
Address Change Service (ACS)	2018 2017	72.6% 70.9%	54.8% 47.8%	4.8% 9.9%	12.9% 13.2%
Container, tray, and bundle visibility	2018 2017	66.1% 60.8%	52.9% 51.1%	8.3% 4.5%	5.0% 5.1%
eInduction	2018 2017	57.7% 64.3%	53.7% 59.3%	1.6% 3.3%	2.4% 1.6%
Incentive Enrollment	2018 2017	59.5% 58.8%	23.0% 39.0%	26.2% 7.7%	10.3% 12.1%
Any Assessment Process	2018 2017	55.1% 61.4%	47.5% 51.1%	5.9% 6.8%	1.7% 3.4%
Electronic Verification System (EVS)	2018 2017	47.5% 58.7%	34.2% 46.4%	8.3% 7.3%	5.0% 5.0%
Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) Tool	2018 2017	45.0% 55.2%	20.0% 26.8%	10.0% 12.0%	15.0% 16.4%
Address Management Service (AMS)	2018 2017	44.2% 47.2%	26.7% 27.3%	4.2% 8.0%	13.3% 11.9%
Shipping Services Enrollment	2018 2017	38.8% 40.7%	16.4% 16.9%	6.9% 9.9%	15.5% 14.0%
Product Tracking & Reporting (PTR)	2018 2017	37.9% 41.8%	26.7% 26.6%	4.3% 8.5%	6.9% 6.8%

Satisfaction by Step in Mail and Shipment Processing

Our next set of questions drilled deep into mail supply chain performance. The first question asked our research group to rate their satisfaction with the USPS at seven steps in mail and shipment processing from 7, for “very satisfied,” to 1, for “very dissatisfied.”

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Payment had the highest very satisfied rating, 15.7%, up from 12.6%, and again had the lowest dissatisfied rating, 5.9% down from 8.9%. Nearly 59.0% are mostly satisfied (36.3%) or somewhat satisfied (22.5%) with payment.
2. Majorities are also mostly or somewhat satisfied with tracking (67.7%), verification (60.2%), and induction (58.8%). Moreover, the percent who are dissatisfied declined for all three, to 9.8% from 17.0% for tracking, to 11.7% from 16.5% for verification, and to 8.5% from 13.3% for induction.
3. As in 2017, issue resolution and finding information had the highest dissatisfaction scores, 36.1% and 30.2%, respectively. For both, nearly as many are dissatisfied or indifferent as are satisfied.

Step	Year	SATISFIED			Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	DISSATISFIED		
		Very	Mostly	Somewhat		Somewhat	Mostly	Very
Payment	2018	15.7%	36.3%	22.5%	19.6%	4.9%	1.0%	0.0%
	2017	12.6%	48.4%	14.5%	15.6%	5.7%	1.9%	1.3%
Verification	2018	13.6%	37.9%	22.3%	14.5%	7.8%	2.9%	1.0%
	2017	11.0%	40.3%	17.1%	15.2%	10.4%	4.9%	1.2%
Induction	2018	11.6%	33.6%	25.2%	21.1%	7.4%	1.1%	0.0%
	2017	11.3%	40.0%	18.7%	16.7%	9.3%	4.0%	0.0%
Onboarding	2018	10.4%	20.8%	28.6%	28.5%	7.8%	1.3%	2.6%
	2017	5.6%	41.7%	24.1%	14.7%	6.5%	7.4%	0.0%
Tracking	2018	7.8%	30.4%	37.3%	14.7%	8.8%	1.0%	0.0%
	2017	12.6%	29.6%	22.6%	18.2%	11.3%	3.8%	1.9%
Issue Resolution	2018	6.7%	17.6%	26.1%	13.5%	17.6%	12.6%	5.9%
	2017	6.0%	23.6%	26.3%	10.1%	16.2%	11.7%	6.1%
Finding Information	2018	3.4%	25.2%	23.5%	17.7%	16.8%	8.4%	5.0%
	2017	6.0%	26.9%	24.2%	13.2%	15.4%	9.9%	4.4%

Satisfaction With Critical USPS Functions

We measured satisfaction with 10 USPS functions, such as understanding industry business models, providing stable computer systems, and aligning documentation with the actual behavior of USPS programs, on a scale of “excellent,” “good,” “fair,” and “poor.”

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Excellent ratings are rare, ranging from 8.7% for “as business partner” to 3.2% for “making the industry aware of how customer data is being secured, what is being acquired, and how it is being used.” The average excellent rating: 5.2%
2. “Providing an intuitive business customer gateway”—58.1% excellent or good, 38.8% fair, and just 3.1% poor—and a “testing onboard environment that meets industry needs”—57.4% excellent or good, 38.2% fair, and just 4.4% poor—score highest, just as they did in 2017.
3. “Providing a stable computer system that meets client needs” recorded the biggest ratings increase: 48.5% excellent or good, up from 41.1% in 2017 and 51.5% fair or poor, down from 59.0% last year.
4. “As a business partner” and “understanding how their systems are used on a daily basis by mailers” recorded the biggest ratings declines. For as a business partner, excellent/good ratings fell to 41.4% from 54.3% last year, while fair/poor ratings rose to 58.6% from 45.7%. For understanding how their systems are used on a daily basis, excellent/good ratings fell to 29.4% from 41.9% last year, while fair/poor ratings rose to 70.6% from 58.0%.
5. “Balancing the needs of the industry in developing program systems” and “understanding industry business models and incorporating them into USPS systems” scored lowest, as they did in 2017. The former was rated excellent/good by just 26.5% of our survey group and poor by 23.5%, and the latter was rated excellent/good by just 16.6% and poor by 33.4%.

Statement	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
As a business partner	2018 2017	8.7% 13.4%	32.7% 40.9%	44.2% 37.0%	14.4% 8.7%
Providing a testing onboard environment (i.e., TEM and pre-Prod) to meet industry needs	2018 2017	7.4% 11.0%	50.0% 43.8%	38.2% 32.9%	4.4% 12.3%
Providing a Business Customer Gateway that is intuitive and allows me to quickly access the USPS applications I use most often	2018 2017	7.1% 12.7%	51.0% 47.5%	38.8% 33.1%	3.1% 6.8%
Providing stable computer systems with response times and system uptimes that meet the needs of my organization	2018 2017	5.1% 4.3%	43.4% 36.8%	40.4% 47.9%	11.1% 11.1%
Communicating functionality of change and enhancements to existing USPS program systems	2018 2017	4.8% 6.6%	30.5% 31.4%	45.7% 44.6%	19.0% 17.4%
Balancing the needs of the industry and the USPS to develop USPS program systems	2018 2017	4.1% 1.7%	22.4% 35.8%	50.0% 47.5%	23.5% 15.0%
Aligning documentation (i.e., DMM, Publications, and Guides) with the actual behavior of USPS program systems	2018 2017	4.0% 6.5%	30.3% 30.9%	45.5% 44.7%	20.2% 17.9%
Understanding industry business models and incorporating them into USPS systems	2018 2017	3.9% 3.4%	12.7% 25.2%	50.0% 43.7%	33.4% 27.7%
Understanding how their systems are used on a daily basis by business mailers	2018 2017	3.9% 4.8%	25.5% 37.1%	45.1% 40.3%	25.5% 17.7%
Making the industry aware of how customer data is being secured, what is being acquired, and how it is being used	2018 2017	3.2% 5.4%	30.1% 28.8%	41.9% 41.4%	24.7% 24.3%

Program System Ratings: Functionality, Data Report Quality, and Ease of Use

We returned to the 22 USPS program systems listed earlier, this time asking our research group to rate each as “excellent,” “good,” “fair,” or “poor” on three dimensions: functionality, data report quality/level of information, and ease of use/user support documentation. Two sets of data follow. The first is by dimension, showing how each program system scored on the dimension indicated. The second is by program system, showing how each system scored on all three dimensions.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Full Service was rated excellent or good more often than any other program system on all three dimensions, scoring higher on each this year than last year. The percentages, with 2018 listed first: functionality, 86.0% from 80.9%; data report quality, 84.0% from 79.1%; and ease of use, 77.9% from 74.4%.
2. eInduction had the second highest excellent/good rating in functionality (83.4%) and data report quality (78.7%) and was tied for third in ease of use (72.4%). All three scores were higher than last year's.
3. Mail Transport Equipment Ordering (MTEOR) had the third highest excellent/good rating in functionality (73.5%) and data quality (76.1%), and was tied for third highest in ease of use (72.4%). However, all three scores were a bit lower than last year's 77.0%, 77.1%, and 74.7%, respectively.
4. Seamless Acceptance, Seamless Acceptance Assessment, Informed Delivery, eInduction Assessment, Informed Visibility, and Label Lists all recorded substantially higher excellent/good ratings this year than last year on all three dimensions.
5. Move Update Assessment and eVS/Product Tracking System received the lowest excellent/good ratings on both functionality and data report quality. Specifically, just 46.6% rated Move Update Assessment excellent/good on functionality and just 40.5% on data report quality. The corresponding results for eVS/Product Tracking System: 42.3% and 48.0%.
6. IMb Tracing: Legacy Piece/Tray/Pallet and PostalPro scored lowest on ease of use, rated excellent/good by 45.6% and 40.0%, respectively. The ratings for eVS/Product Tracking System (48.0%) and Move Update Assessment (47.6%) were not much higher. Only Move Update Assessment had a higher excellent/good rating this year than last year.
7. Overall, the 22 program systems our research group evaluated scored highest in functionality and lowest in ease of use: At least two-thirds rated 11 programs excellent/good in functionality, eight in data report quality, and seven in ease of use. Conversely, at least two-fifths rated six programs fair/poor in functionality, nine in data report quality, and 12—or 52.2%—in ease of use.

PROGRAM SYSTEMS: FUNCTIONALITY					
Program System	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Seamless Acceptance	2018 2017	32.4% 2.0%	41.2% 58.0%	20.6% 26.0%	5.8% 14.0%
Full Service	2018 2017	25.4% 21.3%	60.6% 59.6%	12.7% 17.0%	1.3% 2.1%
Mail Transport Equipment Ordering (MTEOR)	2018 2017	24.5% 18.9%	49.0% 58.1%	14.3% 20.3%	12.2% 2.7%
Seamless Acceptance Assessment	2018 2017	17.9% 0.0%	42.9% 47.6%	25.0% 31.0%	14.2% 21.4%
eInduction	2018 2017	16.7% 10.9%	66.7% 57.8%	14.6% 25.0%	2.0% 6.3%
Informed Delivery	2018 2017	16.1% 3.3%	50.0% 40.0%	25.8% 40.0%	8.1% 16.7%
Centralized Account Processing System (CAPS)	2018 2017	16.1% 14.6%	53.6% 74.4%	26.8% 9.8%	3.5% 1.2%
Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) Tool	2018 2017	15.2% 14.8%	45.5% 42.6%	30.3% 29.6%	9.0% 13.0%
Enterprise Payment System	2018 2017	11.5% NA	50.0% NA	34.6% NA	3.9% NA
Full Service Assessment	2018 2017	11.5% 11.3%	55.8% 57.5%	25.0% 22.5%	7.7% 8.7%
Postal Wizard	2018 2017	9.1% 9.0%	59.1% 64.2%	22.7% 23.8%	9.1% 3.0%
IMb Tracing: Legacy Piece/Tray/Pallet	2018 2017	8.5% 6.3%	51.1% 57.8%	25.5% 28.1%	14.9% 7.8%
Informed Visibility	2018 2017	8.0% 0.0%	60.0% 36.5%	26.0% 53.7%	6.0% 9.8%
Electronic Verification System (eVS)	2018 2017	7.1% 4.2%	50.0% 64.5%	42.9% 25.0%	0.0% 6.3%
eInduction Assessment	2018 2017	5.9% 1.8%	52.9% 41.1%	29.4% 37.5%	11.8% 19.6%
PostalPro	2018 2017	4.9% 8.7%	53.7% 59.1%	28.0% 30.5%	13.4% 1.7%
Move Update Assessment	2018 2017	4.7% 0.0%	41.9% 47.1%	34.9% 41.2%	18.5% 11.7%
Label Lists Including Mail Direction File	2018 2017	4.2% 0.0%	58.3% 44.3%	33.3% 48.6%	4.2% 7.1%
PostalOne!	2018 2017	3.6% 3.8%	66.7% 61.3%	27.4% 32.1%	2.3% 2.8%
Address Change Service (ACS)	2018 2017	2.1% 8.3%	66.7% 51.4%	29.2% 36.1%	2.0% 4.2%
Facility Access & Shipment Tracking (FAST)	2018 2017	2.0% 8.3%	64.0% 66.7%	28.0% 20.8%	6.0% 4.2%
Address Management Service (AMS)	2018 2017	0.0% 9.8%	70.8% 63.4%	20.8% 24.4%	8.4% 2.4%
eVS/Product Tracking System (PTS)	2018 2017	0.0% 0.0%	42.3% 61.5%	46.2% 34.6%	11.5% 3.9%

Program System Ratings: Functionality, Data Report Quality, and Ease of Use

PROGRAM SYSTEMS: DATA REPORT QUALITY/LEVEL OF INFORMATION					
Program System	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Mail Transport Equipment Ordering (MTEOR)	2018 2017	26.1% 14.6%	50.0% 62.5%	17.4% 18.1%	6.5% 5.6%
Full Service	2018 2017	18.8% 18.9%	65.2% 60.2%	14.5% 22.5%	1.5% 2.2%
Seamless Acceptance	2018 2017	18.8% 0.0%	50.0% 46.9%	28.1% 36.7%	3.1% 16.4%
Centralized Account Processing System (CAPS)	2018 2017	17.9% 14.8%	46.4% 60.0%	32.1% 17.5%	3.6% 7.5%
eInduction	2018 2017	17.0% 8.7%	61.7% 51.6%	19.1% 32.2%	2.2% 8.1%
Enterprise Payment System	2018 2017	16.0% NA	52.0% NA	20.0% NA	12.0% NA
Seamless Acceptance Assessment	2018 2017	16.0% 0.0%	36.0% 41.5%	40.0% 31.7%	8.0% 26.8%
Informed Delivery	2018 2017	15.3% 9.8%	42.4% 28.6%	25.4% 39.3%	16.9% 21.4%
Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) Tool	2018 2017	14.7% 21.3%	47.1% 43.1%	23.5% 29.4%	14.7% 11.8%
Informed Visibility	2018 2017	12.2% 1.8%	53.1% 32.5%	28.6% 52.5%	6.1% 12.5%
eInduction Assessment	2018 2017	8.6% 0.0%	54.3% 40.7%	25.7% 38.9%	11.4% 18.5%
IMb Tracing: Legacy Piece/Tray/Pallet	2018 2017	8.5% 8.3%	44.7% 46.9%	31.9% 34.4%	14.9% 10.9%
Full Service Assessment	2018 2017	8.2% 11.3%	53.1% 50.0%	32.7% 28.8%	6.0% 10.0%
Electronic Verification System (eVS)	2018 2017	7.4% 3.8%	51.9% 59.6%	33.3% 25.5%	7.4% 10.6%
Postal Wizard	2018 2017	7.0% 9.0%	62.8% 62.7%	23.2% 23.9%	7.0% 3.0%
Address Change Service (ACS)	2018 2017	6.5% 6.3%	54.3% 51.4%	34.8% 37.2%	4.4% 5.7%
PostalOne!	2018 2017	4.8% 2.0%	63.9% 65.0%	27.7% 29.2%	3.6% 2.9%
Label Lists Including Mail Direction File	2018 2017	4.2% 0.0%	47.9% 44.3%	39.6% 40.0%	8.3% 14.3%
PostalPro	2018 2017	4.1% 10.9%	49.3% 50.9%	32.9% 36.1%	13.7% 1.9%
eVS/Product Tracking System (PTS)	2018 2017	4.0% 3.3%	44.0% 63.0%	32.0% 25.9%	20.0% 7.4%
Move Update Assessment	2018 2017	2.4% 0.0%	38.1% 43.3%	45.2% 43.3%	14.3% 13.4%
Address Management Service (AMS)	2018 2017	0.0% 8.3%	75.0% 61.0%	16.7% 26.8%	8.3% 4.9%
Facility Access & Shipment Tracking (FAST)	2018 2017	0.0% 4.2%	51.1% 54.9%	40.4% 33.8%	8.5% 5.7%

PROGRAM SYSTEMS: EASE OF USE/USER SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION					
Program System	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
eInduction Assessment	2018 2017	26.1% 1.9%	50.0% 40.7%	17.4% 38.9%	6.5% 18.5%
Mail Transport Equipment Ordering (MTEOR)	2018 2017	21.3% 15.0%	51.1% 59.7%	19.1% 20.8%	8.5% 5.6%
Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) Tool	2018 2017	17.6% 15.1%	41.2% 40.0%	26.5% 27.3%	14.7% 18.2%
Full Service	2018 2017	17.6% 15.7%	60.3% 58.7%	19.1% 20.7%	3.0% 4.3%
Seamless Acceptance Assessment	2018 2017	16.0% 0.0%	36.0% 42.6%	36.0% 30.0%	12.0% 27.4%
Informed Delivery	2018 2017	15.5% 0.0%	50.0% 40.7%	25.9% 29.7%	8.6% 29.6%
eInduction	2018 2017	12.8% 10.4%	59.6% 54.8%	25.5% 25.8%	2.1% 11.3%
Seamless Acceptance	2018 2017	12.5% 1.4%	46.9% 46.0%	34.4% 36.0%	6.2% 18.0%
Enterprise Payment System	2018 2017	12.0% NA	56.0% NA	32.0% NA	0.0% NA
Centralized Account Processing System (CAPS)	2018 2017	10.7% 11.2%	53.6% 61.3%	26.8% 22.4%	8.9% 5.0%
Full Service Assessment	2018 2017	8.2% 10.7%	59.2% 49.4%	24.5% 32.1%	8.1% 8.6%
Electronic Verification System (eVS)	2018 2017	7.1% 5.6%	46.4% 44.6%	32.1% 38.3%	14.4% 12.8%
IMb Tracing: Legacy Piece/Tray/Pallet	2018 2017	6.5% 5.7%	39.1% 48.4%	39.1% 34.4%	15.3% 12.5%
eVS/Product Tracking System (PTS)	2018 2017	4.0% 3.7%	44.0% 48.1%	32.0% 33.3%	20.0% 14.9%
PostalPro	2018 2017	4.0% 11.1%	36.0% 36.9%	40.0% 39.6%	20.0% 12.7%
PostalOne!	2018 2017	2.4% 4.3%	53.0% 44.7%	36.1% 40.8%	8.5% 10.6%
Postal Wizard	2018 2017	2.3% 13.8%	59.1% 55.2%	29.5% 28.4%	9.1% 3.0%
Address Change Service (ACS)	2018 2017	2.1% 7.8%	48.9% 41.6%	34.0% 34.7%	15.0% 18.1%
Informed Visibility	2018 2017	2.1% 0.0%	60.4% 33.3%	29.2% 51.3%	8.3% 15.4%
Address Management Service (AMS)	2018 2017	0.0% 7.3%	70.8% 65.0%	16.7% 22.5%	12.5% 7.5%
Facility Access & Shipment Tracking (FAST)	2018 2017	0.0% 8.1%	55.3% 53.6%	36.2% 34.8%	8.5% 5.8%
Label Lists Including Mail Direction File	2018 2017	0.0% 2.5%	57.4% 39.7%	38.3% 47.1%	4.3% 10.3%
Move Update Assessment	2018 2017	0.0% 2.9%	47.6% 39.7%	35.7% 44.1%	16.7% 13.3%

Program System Ratings: Functionality, Data Report Quality, and Ease of Use

Full Service	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Functionality	2018 2017	25.4% 21.3%	60.6% 59.6%	12.7% 17.0%	1.3% 2.1%
Data Report Quality/Level of Information	2018 2017	18.8% 18.9%	65.2% 60.2%	14.5% 22.5%	1.5% 2.2%
Ease of Use/User Support Documentation	2018 2017	17.6% 15.7%	60.4% 58.7%	19.1% 20.7%	3.0% 4.3%
eInduction	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Functionality	2018 2017	16.7% 10.9%	66.7% 57.8%	14.6% 25.0%	2.0% 6.3%
Data Report Quality/Level of Information	2018 2017	17.0% 8.7%	61.7% 51.6%	19.1% 32.2%	2.2% 8.1%
Ease of Use/User Support Documentation	2018 2017	12.8% 10.4%	59.6% 54.8%	25.5% 25.8%	2.1% 11.3%
Mail Transport Equipment Ordering (MTEOR)	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Functionality	2018 2017	24.5% 18.9%	49.0% 58.1%	14.3% 20.3%	12.2% 2.7%
Data Report Quality/Level of Information	2018 2017	26.1% 14.6%	50.0% 62.5%	17.4% 18.1%	6.5% 5.6%
Ease of Use/User Support Documentation	2018 2017	21.3% 15.0%	51.1% 59.7%	19.1% 20.8%	8.5% 5.6%
Seamless Acceptance	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Functionality	2018 2017	32.4% 2.0%	41.2% 58.0%	20.6% 26.0%	5.8% 14.0%
Data Report Quality/Level of Information	2018 2017	18.8% 0.0%	50.0% 46.9%	28.1% 36.7%	3.1% 16.4%
Ease of Use/User Support Documentation	2018 2017	12.5% 1.4%	46.9% 46.0%	34.4% 36.0%	6.2% 18.0%
Seamless Acceptance Assessment	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Functionality	2018 2017	17.9% 0.0%	42.9% 47.6%	25.0% 31.0%	14.2% 21.4%
Data Report Quality/Level of Information	2018 2017	16.0% 0.0%	36.0% 41.5%	40.0% 31.7%	8.0% 26.8%
Ease of Use/User Support Documentation	2018 2017	16.0% 0.0%	36.0% 42.6%	36.0% 30.0%	12.0% 27.4%

Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) Tool	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Functionality	2018 2017	15.2% 14.8%	45.5% 42.6%	30.3% 29.6%	9.0% 13.0%
Data Report Quality/Level of Information	2018 2017	14.7% 21.3%	47.1% 43.1%	23.5% 29.4%	14.7% 11.8%
Ease of Use/User Support Documentation	2018 2017	17.6% 15.1%	41.2% 40.0%	26.5% 27.3%	14.7% 18.2%
Informed Delivery	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Functionality	2018 2017	16.1% 3.3%	50.0% 40.0%	25.8% 40.0%	8.1% 16.7%
Data Report Quality/Level of Information	2018 2017	15.3% 9.8%	42.4% 28.6%	25.4% 39.3%	16.9% 21.4%
Ease of Use/User Support Documentation	2018 2017	15.5% 0.0%	50.0% 40.7%	25.9% 29.7%	8.6% 29.6%
Centralized Account Processing System (CAPS)	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Functionality	2018 2017	16.1% 14.6%	53.6% 74.4%	26.8% 9.8%	3.5% 1.2%
Data Report Quality/Level of Information	2018 2017	17.9% 14.8%	46.4% 60.0%	32.1% 17.5%	3.6% 7.5%
Ease of Use/User Support Documentation	2018 2017	10.7% 11.2%	53.6% 61.3%	26.8% 22.4%	8.9% 5.0%
eInduction Assessment	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Functionality	2018 2017	5.9% 1.8%	52.9% 41.1%	29.4% 37.5%	11.8% 19.6%
Data Report Quality/Level of Information	2018 2017	8.6% 0.0%	54.3% 40.7%	25.7% 38.9%	11.4% 18.5%
Ease of Use/User Support Documentation	2018 2017	26.1% 1.9%	50.0% 40.7%	17.4% 38.9%	6.5% 18.5%
Enterprise Payment System	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Functionality	2018 2017	11.5% NA	50.0% NA	34.6% NA	3.9% NA
Data Report Quality/Level of Information	2018 2017	16.0% NA	52.0% NA	20.0% NA	12.0% NA
Ease of Use/User Support Documentation	2018 2017	12.0% NA	56.0% NA	32.0% NA	0.0% NA
Full Service Assessment	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Functionality	2018 2017	11.5% 11.3%	55.8% 57.5%	25.0% 22.5%	7.7% 8.7%
Data Report Quality/Level of Information	2018 2017	8.2% 11.3%	53.1% 50.0%	32.7% 28.8%	6.0% 10.0%
Ease of Use/User Support Documentation	2018 2017	8.2% 10.7%	59.2% 49.4%	24.5% 32.1%	8.1% 8.6%

Program System Ratings: Functionality, Data Report Quality, and Ease of Use

IMb Tracing: Legacy Piece/Tray/Pallet	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Functionality	2018 2017	8.5% 6.3%	51.1% 57.8%	25.5% 28.1%	14.9% 7.8%
Data Report Quality/Level of Information	2018 2017	8.5% 8.3%	44.7% 46.9%	31.9% 34.4%	14.9% 10.9%
Ease of Use/User Support Documentation	2018 2017	6.5% 5.7%	39.1% 48.4%	39.1% 34.4%	15.3% 12.5%
Informed Visibility	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Functionality	2018 2017	8.0% 0.0%	60.0% 36.5%	26.0% 53.7%	6.0% 9.8%
Data Report Quality/Level of Information	2018 2017	12.2% 1.8%	53.1% 32.5%	28.6% 52.5%	6.1% 12.5%
Ease of Use/User Support Documentation	2018 2017	2.1% 0.0%	60.4% 33.3%	29.2% 51.3%	8.3% 15.4%
Electronic Verification System (eVS)	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Functionality	2018 2017	7.1% 4.2%	50.0% 64.5%	42.9% 25.0%	0.0% 6.3%
Data Report Quality/Level of Information	2018 2017	7.4% 3.8%	51.9% 59.6%	33.3% 25.5%	7.4% 10.6%
Ease of Use/User Support Documentation	2018 2017	7.1% 5.6%	46.4% 44.6%	32.1% 38.3%	14.4% 12.8%
Postal Wizard	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Functionality	2018 2017	9.1% 9.0%	59.1% 64.2%	22.7% 23.8%	9.1% 3.0%
Data Report Quality/Level of Information	2018 2017	7.0% 9.0%	62.8% 62.7%	23.2% 23.9%	7.0% 3.0%
Ease of Use/User Support Documentation	2018 2017	2.3% 13.8%	59.1% 55.2%	29.5% 28.4%	9.1% 3.0%
PostalPro	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Functionality	2018 2017	4.9% 8.7%	53.7% 59.1%	28.0% 30.5%	13.4% 1.7%
Data Report Quality/Level of Information	2018 2017	4.1% 10.9%	49.3% 50.9%	32.9% 36.1%	13.7% 1.9%
Ease of Use/User Support Documentation	2018 2017	4.0% 11.1%	36.0% 36.9%	40.0% 39.6%	20.0% 12.7%
PostalOne!	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Functionality	2018 2017	3.6% 3.8%	66.7% 61.3%	27.4% 32.1%	2.3% 2.8%
Data Report Quality/Level of Information	2018 2017	4.8% 2.0%	63.9% 65.0%	27.7% 29.2%	3.6% 2.9%
Ease of Use/User Support Documentation	2018 2017	2.4% 4.3%	53.0% 44.7%	36.1% 40.8%	8.5% 10.6%

Address Change Service (ACS)	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Functionality	2018 2017	2.1% 8.3%	66.7% 51.4%	29.2% 36.1%	2.0% 4.2%
Data Report Quality/Level of Information	2018 2017	6.5% 6.3%	54.3% 51.4%	34.8% 37.2%	4.4% 5.7%
Ease of Use/User Support Documentation	2018 2017	2.1% 7.8%	48.9% 41.6%	34.0% 34.7%	15.0% 18.1%
Label Lists Including Mail Direction File	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Functionality	2018 2017	4.2% 0.0%	58.3% 44.3%	33.3% 48.6%	4.2% 7.1%
Data Report Quality/Level of Information	2018 2017	4.2% 0.0%	47.9% 44.3%	39.6% 40.0%	8.3% 14.3%
Ease of Use/User Support Documentation	2018 2017	0.0% 2.5%	57.4% 39.7%	38.3% 47.1%	4.3% 10.3%
eVS/Product Tracking System (PTS)	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Functionality	2018 2017	0.0% 0.0%	42.3% 61.5%	46.2% 34.6%	11.5% 3.9%
Data Report Quality/Level of Information	2018 2017	4.0% 3.3%	44.0% 63.0%	32.0% 25.9%	20.0% 7.4%
Ease of Use/User Support Documentation	2018 2017	4.0% 3.7%	44.0% 48.1%	32.0% 33.3%	20.0% 14.9%
Move Update Assessment	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Functionality	2018 2017	4.7% 0.0%	41.9% 47.1%	34.9% 41.2%	18.5% 11.7%
Data Report Quality/Level of Information	2018 2017	2.4% 0.0%	38.1% 43.3%	45.2% 43.3%	14.3% 13.4%
Ease of Use/User Support Documentation	2018 2017	0.0% 2.9%	47.6% 39.7%	35.7% 44.1%	16.7% 13.3%
Facility Access & Shipment Tracking (FAST)	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Functionality	2018 2017	2.0% 8.3%	64.0% 66.7%	28.0% 20.8%	6.0% 4.2%
Data Report Quality/Level of Information	2018 2017	0.0% 4.2%	51.1% 54.9%	40.4% 33.8%	8.5% 5.7%
Ease of Use/User Support Documentation	2018 2017	0.0% 8.1%	55.3% 53.6%	36.2% 34.8%	8.5% 5.8%
Address Management Service (AMS)	Year	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Functionality	2018 2017	0.0% 9.8%	70.8% 63.4%	20.8% 24.4%	8.4% 2.4%
Data Report Quality/Level of Information	2018 2017	0.0% 8.3%	75.0% 61.0%	16.7% 26.8%	8.3% 4.9%
Ease of Use/User Support Documentation	2018 2017	0.0% 7.3%	70.8% 65.0%	16.7% 22.5%	12.5% 7.5%

Measuring Convenience, Accessibility, and Support

Our final measure of mail supply chain performance listed 10 statements related to convenience, accessibility, and support, and asked our research group to score the USPS on each from 7, for “strongly agree,” to 1, for “strongly disagree.”

HIGHLIGHTS

1. As in 2017, “is open the hours that I need” is the only statement with which a majority (56.5%) of our survey group agrees.
2. Between 46.0% and 41.8% agree with six other statements, considerably greater in each case than the percent who disagree but less than the combined “disagree/ neither agree nor disagree” percentages. The percent agreeing increased for four of the statements, decreased for one, and was essentially unchanged for one.
 - “Is always available to answer my questions or concerns”: 46.0% agree, up from 43.2%, and 31.0% disagree.
 - “Provides easy access to a dedicated representative”: 46.0% agree, essentially unchanged from 46.4%, and 34.0% disagree.
 - “Keeps me up-to-date on changes to existing USPS program systems”: 45.0% agree, up from 41.1%, and 32.0% disagree.
 - “Communicates with me any way that I need”: 44.5% agree, down from 48.0%, and 32.4% disagree.
 - “Integrates technology into my business”: 42.8% agree, up from 41.1%, and 25.6% disagree.
 - “Offers convenient mail entry options”: 41.8% agree, up from 39.8%, and 28.6% disagree.
3. Fewer agree that the USPS “wants to help me grow my business”—35.0%, down from 41.2% last year—and more disagree—46.0%, up from 37.1%.
4. As in 2017, the fewest agree and the most disagree that the USPS “solves problems quickly” and “offers easy to use/supportable software.” For both statements the percent agreeing fell and the percent disagreeing rose:
 - “Solves problems quickly”: 29.3% agree, down from 32.8%, and 47.5% disagree, up from 46.4%.
 - “Offers easy to use/supportable software”: 22.5% agree, down from 25.4%, and 44.8% disagree, up from 40.9%.

Please rate the USPS on each statement from 1 to 7, where 1 means you “strongly disagree” and 7 means you “strongly agree.”

Step	Year	Strongly Agree						Strongly Disagree
		7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Provides easy access to a dedicated representative	2018 2017	15.0% 15.2%	18.0% 18.4%	13.0% 12.8%	20.0% 16.8%	11.0% 14.4%	13.0% 12.8%	10.0% 9.6%
Is open the hours that I need	2018 2017	13.1% 14.4%	24.2% 24.8%	19.2% 23.2%	21.2% 17.6%	11.1% 12.0%	5.1% 4.0%	6.1% 4.0%
Keeps me up-to-date on changes to existing USPS program systems	2018 2017	8.0% 8.9%	12.0% 13.7%	25.0% 18.5%	23.0% 24.2%	16.0% 14.5%	7.0% 12.9%	9.0% 7.3%
Is always available to answer my questions or concerns	2018 2017	6.0% 11.2%	19.0% 14.4%	21.0% 17.6%	23.0% 21.6%	12.0% 17.6%	9.0% 12.0%	10.0% 5.6%
Wants to help me grow my business	2018 2017	6.0% 9.7%	11.0% 12.1%	18.0% 19.4%	19.0% 21.7%	20.0% 13.7%	15.0% 13.7%	11.0% 9.7%
Offers convenient mail entry options	2018 2017	5.1% 7.3%	10.2% 17.9%	26.5% 14.6%	29.6% 29.3%	15.3% 17.1%	8.2% 8.1%	5.1% 5.7%
Communicates with me any way that I need	2018 2017	5.1% 4.8%	13.1% 20.0%	26.3% 23.2%	23.2% 16.8%	15.2% 16.8%	11.1% 12.8%	6.1% 5.6%
Solves problems quickly	2018 2017	4.0% 5.6%	6.1% 9.6%	19.2% 17.6%	23.2% 20.8%	21.2% 16.0%	11.1% 20.0%	15.2% 10.4%
Offers easy to use/supportable mailing software	2018 2017	3.1% 2.5%	3.1% 9.8%	16.3% 13.1%	32.7% 33.7%	27.6% 22.1%	10.2% 13.1%	7.0% 5.7%
Integrates technology into my business	2018 2017	2.0% 4.0%	14.3% 12.1%	26.5% 25.0%	31.6% 25.0%	14.3% 17.7%	7.1% 9.7%	4.2% 6.5%

Improving the Relationship Even Further

Having measured the current performance of the mail supply chain, we next explored how performance can be improved. We listed 23 suggestions made by participants in our previous surveys and asked our research group to select up to five.

How can the USPS become an even better business partner? The suggestions below were made by participants in our previous surveys. Please select up to five.

Response		Percent
1.	Keep postal rates predictable	60.4%
2.	Listen to us. Better understand our businesses and the mail supply chain. Treat us as partners.	44.3%
3.	Improve mail delivery predictability and reliability	41.5%
4.	Communicate more effectively on changes to processes and regulations	35.8%
5.	Increase knowledge of USPS personnel to improve accuracy and consistency	33.0%
6.	Collaborate early with the industry on system and software design	28.3%
7.	Apply rules and regulations consistently	26.4%
8.	Develop appropriate application of pricing structure and workshare	26.4%
9.	Make it easier to find information on USPS websites	25.5%
10.	Promote the value of mail	21.7%
11.	Increase responsiveness of USPS personnel	19.8%
12.	Improve system stability and performance to reduce downtime and interruptions	15.1%
13.	Use easy-to-understand language in communications	11.3%
14.	Understand business impact of new or revised addressing programs	10.4%
15.	Set realistic dates and deadlines for software releases	9.4%
16.	Monitor mail processing to ensure accuracy and consistency across all operations	7.5%
17.	Improve the FAST Appointment process	6.6%
18.	Improve rigorous testing of software before releasing	5.7%
19.	Improve accuracy of data and reports	4.7%
20.	Better integrate systems to share data	3.8%
21.	Improve timeliness of data and reports	1.9%
22.	Increase reliability of addressing and label list data	1.9%
23.	Release more robust payment system	0.9%
24.	Other	10.4%

We also invited our research group to comment on their selections and to share anything else they'd like to concerning how the USPS could further increase its value to the mail supply chain. Representative remarks follow.

Additional comments on how the USPS could become an even better business partner:

1. "I have seen USPS improve over time. While the promises and intentions of headquarters take some time to flow down the ranks, I can see the improvement—particularly in customer service as the local teams truly want to ensure a positive experience for us as mailers. Thanks for continuing to be intentional."
2. "Focus on important strategic initiatives to sustain or grow mail usage wherever possible (Informed Delivery, Informed Visibility, etc.), but keep away from initiatives that drain business and postal resources with little to no improvement to either party (Marketing Mail idea, COA error Assessments, etc.)."
3. "Treat us as a partner! Be more user friendly. Make mail transport supplies and postage stamps available in a timely and consistent manner. (Our customers expect quick turnaround times. I can't always wait a week or two for supplies or stamps.) Be consistent with regulation enforcement. If a rule hasn't been enforced in a long time, give us a heads up and a timeline when we need to be compliant instead of rejecting a mailing that was otherwise perfectly acceptable the day before!"
4. "There's no accountability when the Postal Service does not follow its own regulations or makes a serious error—NONE, ZERO, ZILCH. We have had absolutely no one within the USPS apologize, work to fix the error so it does not occur again, or even admit that they made a mistake. How are we supposed to give our customers the confidence to continue targeted mailings when the USPS does not provide a way to more easily resolve an issue? No conformity between each individual post office's interpretation of its own regulations. Would be wonderful if each office would follow the same rules, rather than each having its own definitions and systems in how they do their business—what works at one post office won't work at another. Easier access to postal supplies such as stamps in large quantities is desperately needed."
5. "We need to see more accountability and resolve/ follow-through for mail delivery problems. We've had many issues turn up that we report and try to get questions answered...someone says 'Oh, that shouldn't happen. I'll definitely look into that'...then we hear absolutely nothing. Meanwhile, our clients are pressing us for answers and are reluctant to do more mailings. Unfortunately, we've had many clients that are thinking about other forms of marketing than direct mail (which hurts the USPS)."
6. "Simplify rules and make them consistent rather than 'if this, then that...'"
7. "In our business it is important that USPS understands that not all clients speak DMM, and when a simple yes or no answer is required sending a two-page DMM reference does not work. On top of that, if they really want to encourage more mail, maybe USPS should look at being more user friendly for publishers and consider the impact of raising rates more and more each year and all while sticking with a machine such as FSS that has been proven to be a waste of money and time."
8. "Communication needs to be done to the mail owner—not relying on the MSP to pass along communications."
9. "Better understand the metrics of utilizing mail as a method of acquiring customers. It does not look like they understand that they are pricing themselves out of business."
10. "PLEASE don't price both of us out of the business. Many times the postage costs more than the actual producing of a job. I understand the bottom line issues for the Postal Service. But if GM can't get a car to sell

continued

"Treat us as a partner. Be more user friendly."

they don't raise prices! The increases being proposed by the PRC will definitely reduce the volume of mail processing through the post office and will NOT improve the financial situation."

"Recognize that Canadian mailers can be partners."

11. "Listen to us when we identify volume mail declines and forecast appropriately to right size the USPS."
12. "Promote the value of mail by discounting by 30% the rates in calendar Q2 (April, May, June). Create the opportunity for the users of mail to actually use the mails much more during this slowest period for the entire \$1.2 trillion industry around the mail supply chain."
13. "Understand that I am the customer, not my customer. Work with me to help my customer feel good about mail."
14. "Innovate and engage differently with the industry supply chain quickly to address initiatives that will retain and grow mail volume from your current customers."
15. "Either embrace us as partners that have a role in early decision making, or lose us to competitors."
16. "Recognize that Canadian mailers can be partners."
17. "They are not a business partner. They are a monopoly we are forced to use. They make business changes that directly affect me doing business."
18. "Provide higher-end educational seminars. All seminars are geared to first-time mailers."
19. "Offer classes to people who have not been long time industry users for mail tracking/tracing in easy to understand language."
20. "Train employees better. I shouldn't have to tell them how to accept a PMOD, EDDM or any other service."
21. "Stop shutting down route drop-offs based on the size of the post office. When someone has received delivery for years and suddenly the local post office won't deliver there because it's no longer on their route, it shows lack of customer respect on the post office side."
22. "Be more realistic in setting benchmarks/tolerances for Full Service and Seamless by listening to industry equipment vendors and mailers."
23. "Provide scorecard visibility to multiple businesses in the supply chain. Today only the mail owner, Edoc submitter, and one mail preparer have visibility. This is not realistic for comminglers."
24. "Visit industry MSP facilities."
25. "Scrap Postal Pro. It's not the appropriate design for the information that it manages or presents for reference. OK design if geared toward a marketing initiative, but fails when information is needed quickly."

The Assessment Process

We asked the three questions below about the new assessment programs for Full-Service, eInduction, Move Update, and Seamless. Note that, like last year, less than one-fifth have changed staff size in response to the assessment programs and less than one-third have gone through the assessment appeal process.

Given the launch of new assessment programs for Full-Service, eInduction, Move Update, and Seamless, is your company increasing, reducing, or maintaining staff?

Response	2018	2017
Increasing	17.3%	19.8%
Reducing	1.0%	4.0%
Maintaining	81.7%	76.2%

Have you gone through the assessment appeal process for Full-Service, eInduction, Move Update, and Seamless?

Response	2018	2017
Yes	31.6%	24.2%
No	68.4%	75.8%

If you have gone through the assessment appeal process, what was your experience?

- Experiences range from “positive” and “excellent” to “poor” and “terrible.” One member of our research group explains the disparity this way: “I believe it comes down to who you work with. Our BMSA is excellent so any issues we have had have been resolved quickly.” Many made similar comments:
 - “It has been simple to appeal and my BMS analyst has been responsive during the appeal process.”
 - “Lengthy and difficult as USPS employees aren’t really up to speed on the processes.”
 - “It is frustrating. Nobody on the USPS end seems to know the proper way to handle it.”
- Another participant offers that who you are also matters: “Seems the system went down when I appealed in February although I was completely unaware. Luckily I’m a large mailer so my BMS representative reached out to me and asked why I had not appealed. I told her I had and sent her the confirmation email. My assessment was cleared. However, if I was a much smaller mailer the outcome might have been different.”
- Finally, there is broad agreement that the process is too slow:
 - “The process is pretty straightforward. The only complaint I have is the USPS response time after the appeal is filed.”
 - “While I would say that Postal has been fair in the decisions, the ‘process’ is very time consuming and slow.”

What Else Should We Know?

The Idealliance Annual Mail Industry Survey concluded by asking participants to expand on previous answers and raise issues not addressed by the survey. Representative responses follow.

Is there anything else you would like to share about the mail supply chain?

1. "Direct mail needs to become more competitive. If we don't maintain healthy and competitive supply chain partner businesses to produce the mail, then mail owners will exit the mail channel for digital alternatives and migrate to 100% digital solutions. If lower ROI due to higher production and postage costs becomes a reality, how much volume will the USPS have to deliver without a healthy supply chain means of producing it? We don't ever want to know the answer to that question and must prevent it from happening."
2. "Technology enhancements and generational differences will continue to decrease customer interest in non-personalized mail. What is the industry doing to help the USPS improve on their operational costs and efficiency to keep prices reasonable?"
3. "If mail is going to survive as an effective communication and shipping channel we need to integrate, innovate, and initiate change more rapidly."
4. "It's getting more difficult each year to convince our customers of the reliability of the USPS's delivery service time range."
5. "We often get returned pieces that are clearly and correctly addressed, but just get returned. There is no recourse for this and it is our fault in our customers' eyes. More consistent delivery is needed."
6. "It's a lengthy supply chain that is greatly affected by the actions of the Postal Service. How do you get them to understand this?"
7. "Needs to prove its efficacy every hour of every day."
8. "The USPS needs to make an effort to understand what we do and how to be a better partner."
9. "The USPS needs to work with industry partners towards lowest combined cost, rather than jettisoning its costs on the mail providers supply chain."
10. "The USPS needs to measure and assess proper parties. Move Update is looking at the wrong party but the USPS is deaf on the issue."
11. "Be extremely careful with standard letter drop-ship discounts."

What's Next

In 2018 we developed a survey that supports year-to-year comparisons and began to develop a panel of regular participants in the survey, two critical steps toward identifying trends in mail supply chain performance.

We will expand the panel in size and diversity, increasing both our ability to detect trends and to break results out for key links in the mail supply chain, such as service providers, mail owners, and software providers.

**Suggestions on how to improve this vital research are always welcome.
So are new participants.**

Contact David Steinhardt, Idealliance President Emeritus, at (703) 887-7680 or dsteinhardt@idealliance.org.

Appendix 1: 2018-2020 Idealliance Mail Supply Chain Strategic Plan

PURPOSE

The purpose of undertaking the development and publication of the *2018-2020 Mail Supply Chain Strategic Plan* was to:

1. Acknowledge significant challenges, changes, and trends impacting the mail supply chain.
2. Provide a vision for a more cohesive and competitive mail supply chain network.
3. Establish goals and objectives to enable solution innovations and implementations in the dynamic and rapidly evolving communications and mail delivery networks.

OVERVIEW

Today, the mailing industry is a vast and complex *supply chain* contributing \$1.4 trillion in annual GDP, 7.5 million jobs, and 149.5 billion in mail volume to the U.S. economy. (Institute of Postal Studies, EMA Foundation for Paper-based Communication and U.S. Postal Service *Fiscal Year 2017 Annual Compliance Report*) The concept of “mail,” though it existed long before, took shape within the United States in 1792 to “...facilitate the sending and receiving of a letter or packet between the sender and the receiver...” and it remains the same today. As commerce flourished in our nation, facilitation of that “concept” created a mailing industry that is composed of a host of mail services suppliers collectively identified as the “mail supply chain.”

Each link in the mail supply chain—mailpiece owners, marketing firms, data and list management services, mailing service providers, fulfillment companies, logistics and transportation providers, printers, service measurement providers, software developers, hardware providers, and the U.S. Postal Service—shares a common, critical interest in ensuring that mail remains a valued, reliable, and viable mode of communication and commerce.

The Postal Service, which is empowered by the Constitution to provide a “universal delivery service” that binds our

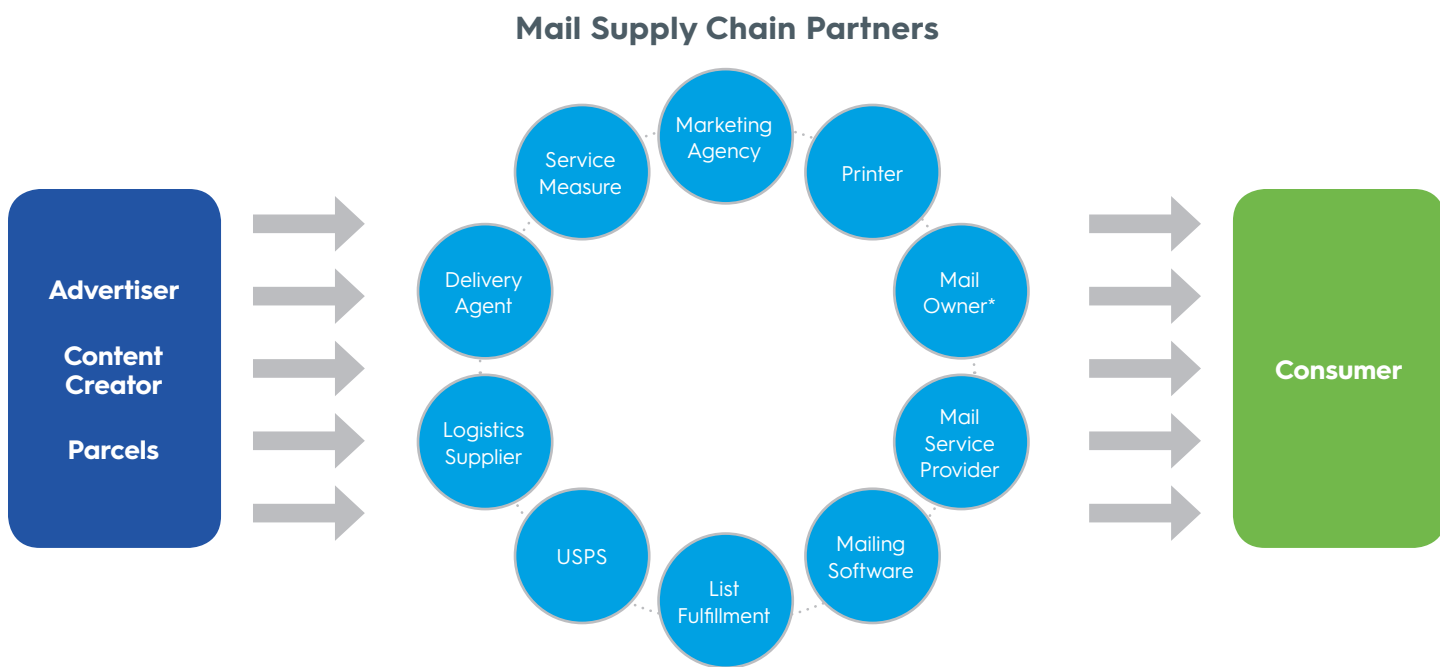
nation together, is central to the mail supply chain. Over the years the evolving mail supply chain has worked closely with the Postal Service to develop the mail delivery system, enabling the growth of commerce and serving the needs of our country’s citizens and businesses. As the Postal Service faced increased pressures toward the end of the 20th century, when mail growth exceeded the Postal Service’s capacity to process and deliver it in a timely manner, the concept of work sharing was developed to encourage mailers to prepare mail for more efficient handling by the Postal Service, facilitating speedier delivery and ensuring that work was performed at the lowest possible cost. The Postal Service and this new mail supply chain continued working together to “automate” the processing of mail by developing and implementing technologies (barcoding and scanning, information management systems, sorting, transporting, electronic data exchange, etc.) that enabled high-speed sorting and delivery of mail and creating visibility for mail throughout the chain. These collaborative efforts enabled the Postal Service and the mail supply chain to develop the business processes, technologies, and capabilities that, at the industry’s peak in 2007, led to the delivery of over 212 billion pieces of mail.

Once again, the mail supply chain is facing extreme pressures, requiring us to work more closely together than ever before. Since the peak Postal Service mail volume in 2007, more than 59 billion pieces of mail have left the system as a result of changing consumer needs and market demands, new media channels and technologies, and increasing cost dynamics. Consequently, the mail supply chain must change! We believe mail is evolving and requires improved and expanded capabilities to respond to market changes and satisfy consumer and business demands.

A review of the Postal Service’s 2016 publication, *Future Ready: Postal Service® Five-Year Strategic Plan—Fiscal Years 2017 to 2021* (<http://about.usps.com/strategic-planning/five-year-strategic-plan-2017-2021.pdf>), spurred leading mail industry associations (Association of Postal Commerce, Idealliance, and National Association of Presort Mailers—a

Developed by Association for Postal Commerce (PostCom), Idealliance, and National Association of Presort Mailers (NAPM)





**Chain for mail creation, production, and delivery
varies by partners and workflow.**

* catalogue, publisher, direct mailer, non-profit, etc.

coalition representing a significant number of industry mail supply chain suppliers and mailers who effectively produce over 100 billion pieces of mail that annually enter the U.S. mailstream) to evaluate the challenges identified by the Postal Service. We recognize that while every business within the mail supply chain has unique challenges—as does the Postal Service—many of those challenges are shared by all.

After an examination of the shared challenges and the readiness of the industry's mail supply chain to address them in the future, our collective industry associations believe it is not only timely and prudent, but absolutely necessary to develop the *2018-2020 Mail Supply Chain Strategic Plan*. The resulting plan was developed to complement the Postal Services' strategic plan, as we all face similar challenges for our collective industry. It has been developed to provide the perspectives and strategic direction of a key group of industry stakeholders that, like the Postal Service, stake their futures on the mail.

MISSION

Our mission is to strengthen the end-to-end mail supply chain by improving its efficacy and ability to address the challenge of keeping mail a valued, reliable, and predictively cost-effective mode of communication and commerce.

VISION

Our vision is to provide a more competitive and integrated mail supply chain that:

1. Not only coexists with, but effectively competes against digital channels;
2. Is tightly integrated, aligned, and collaborative;
3. Is highly adaptable and responsive to changing consumer demands and market dynamics; and
4. Enables the "three rights" of supply chain design that decision makers must manage to remain highly competitive: right players, right roles, and right relationships.

The mailing industry faces enormous challenges:

1. Mail volume has significantly declined but the Postal Service’s universal service obligation requires delivery to an ever-expanding network—causing costs to increase, as volumes decline and delivery points grow;
2. Changes in rapidly evolving media channels and delivery networks using innovative technologies to meet consumer demands—affordable, easy, how I want it, and when I want it; and
3. An expanding digital economy impacting consumer behaviors.

Because of these trends and challenges, the mailing industry is undergoing structural change resulting in consolidations, retraining and reducing staffing levels, diluting competitive advantage to seek additional revenue streams, and, in some cases, shuttering companies. We recognize that our varied but interdependent businesses have one thing in common: our prosperity depends on a vibrant postal system that benefits every stakeholder, including the consumer of mail.

The desired outcome for this strategic plan is a framework that emphasizes the interdependencies within the mail supply chain and the recognition that only by collaboration can we achieve the best long-term results for all stakeholders. The Postal Service has shown its commitment to developing solutions to implement innovative capabilities to remain the premier postal delivery network in the world while fulfilling its mission to bind the nation together. As supply chain solution partners of the Postal Service, we, too, are committed to working with the Postal Service, as we always have, to fulfill that mission.

The *2018–2020 Mail Supply Chain Strategic Plan* is a starting point, intended to establish overarching goals with a few underlying specifics to provide clarity. This plan is a living document and, over time, will be updated to address our evolving industry and marketplace needs. We are committed to pursuing these objectives to ensure the mail industry remains at the very center of communication and commerce in the United States.

STRATEGIC GOALS

1. **Remain a trusted and valued supplier of communication and commerce.**

- a. Provide the transparency necessary to maintain the customer’s confidence that the mail and postal delivery network can meet his or her communication and commerce needs with low risk to the consumer.
- b. Use collaborative market research to anticipate changes in the demand for products and delivery services. Develop an industry supply chain “think tank” that looks at research and continues to think about direction changes, market impacts, disruptive implementations, and strategies.
- c. Enable a “culture” and facilitate provisioning of education and information that promotes awareness about the value of mail, encourages understanding of supplier roles in the supply chain, and facilitates the development of a highly skilled, trusted workforce.
- d. Promote the technology and data-driven innovations of the mail supply chain to overcome the negative stigmas of mail and encourage omnichannel integration.

2. **Foster a competitive supply chain that ensures the most efficient and effective utilization of supply chain resources at every stage of creation, production, implementation, and distribution to improve mail’s results, affordability, and customer experience.**

- a. Ensure that information and data management systems maintain the data integrity and system reliability necessary to facilitate the customer’s business needs. Use data and process improvements to ensure the delivery of all mail products is consistent and on-time, because reliability and consistency are the bedrocks of quality service.
- b. Maintain a cost-centric approach throughout the mail supply chain, as affordability is essential to maintaining and growing market share in commerce and communication. Drive out costs through process improvements, data intelligence and analytics, data exchange with the supply chain, and leveraging cost-effective workshare partnerships.

- c. Employ a “spend-to-value” mail supply chain business model. Currently, the mail channel is the fifth highest cost communication medium. To maintain and grow the value and positive response rate of physical mail, all capital investment decisions should be based upon keeping prices affordable and predictable while delivering significant value to the mail owner, mail recipient, and supply chain partners.

3. Increase mail’s competitive advantage through technology and innovation.

- a. Facilitate responsive innovation and communication development, necessary to integrate mail into multimedia channels, by protecting open standards throughout the industry.
- b. Enable a platform, across the supply chain, for innovations necessary to facilitate experimentation and accelerate testing of new approaches to better serve mail users’ changing needs and integration of mail into individuals’ digital lives.
- c. Establish cross-organizational engagement processes to enable a more tightly integrated mail supply chain platform that eliminates duplication and siloed decision-making, and increases shared knowledge and responsiveness to market shifts and customer demands.

4. Establish a responsive, integrated, and sustainable supply chain for the future.

- a. Establish the foundation that enables the supply chain to become a leader in providing multimedia channel solutions that produce the value that customers expect in the digital economy.
- b. Create a culture of constant assessing, rethinking, and re-engineering initiatives or programs, mailing requirements, or business processes to replace outdated requirements, processes, and procedures by leveraging technology to innovate, simplify, automate, and facilitate mail flowing through the delivery network.
- c. Promote a collaborative approach for “cost management” that continuously re-evaluates unsuccessful products, services, and business practices

and develops solutions to eliminate, redesign, or innovate new, more cost-effective, higher-value solutions.

- d. Facilitate an information exchange process where collaborative solution partners can better understand each other’s businesses, their respective challenges, impacts of change, and common interests in developing and implementing both technical and business solutions within the supply chain.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

The mailing industry is at a crossroads. Given growing cost pressures, increasing competition, and changing consumer habits, “business as usual” is not the path forward for a sustainable mail industry. We believe that the first and most important step toward long-term viability is to reorient our perspective to focus on the mail supply chain—as a whole. We must focus on strategies that encourage collaboration across the entire supply chain, including the Postal Service delivery system. This tenet of greater collaboration across the industry and its mail supply chain is central to the four strategic goals outlined in this document.

It is our hope that this strategic plan will spur tactical decisions about new and better ways to work, create innovative products and services, and develop process improvements to ensure the mailing industry continues to be a valued and essential source of commerce and communication. While the use of mail will change, the value of mail and a postal delivery network will always remain critical to binding our nation together and facilitating the economic growth of our country. In order to ensure this critical resource will be around for generations to come we—the entire mail supply chain and Postal Service—must work ever more closely together to deliver the best possible service at the most affordable cost.

2018–2020 Mail Supply Chain Strategic Plan released on January 22, 2018.

To obtain additional copies, go to www.idealiance.org/mail-supply-strategic-plan. For more information, contact Idealiance at (703) 837-1070 or www.idealiance.org; NAPM at (800) 500-6276 or www.presortmailer.org; or PostCom at (703) 524-0096 or www.postcom.org.



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