

## GOING 'GREEN' FOR EARTH DAY AND BEYOND

**EACH APRIL, MILLIONS OF PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD MARK APRIL 22ND AS EARTH DAY, PARTICIPATING IN ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT. WHAT BETTER TIME TO CONSIDER COMMITTING TO MORE ECO-FRIENDLY MARKETING?**

**RECOGNIZING THE PIVOTAL ROLE OF PRINT MATERIALS IN MOST MARKETING PROGRAMS, THIS WHITE PAPER FOCUSES ON ADOPTING ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY PRINT AND FULFILLMENT STRATEGIES AS THE LOGICAL FIRST STEP TOWARD MORE SUSTAINABLE – AND SUCCESSFUL – MARKETING.**

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, Americans receive over 4 million tons of unsolicited mail each year. Over 44% of it ends up in landfills, unopened and unread. How can you make sure your direct mail and other print materials aren't among them, instead of earning your company a good return on its marketing investments? Here are some tips on how your fulfillment company can help you make your communications more productive, profitable and earth-friendly.

### **OPTIMIZE YOUR COMMUNICATIONS**

Before you commit to developing a new print piece, take time to define – at minimum – its primary purpose and target audience(s), as well as the value of the sale or lead the piece is designed to create. You should also determine any corollary uses and markets, to determine its useful shelf life, the optimum quantity to print, and how best to produce and deliver it. You can extend this concept – and reap more benefits – by doing a comprehensive audit and evaluation to

optimize your company's existing inventory of communication materials and production and distribution options. Your fulfillment provider is ideally suited to help you with this endeavor because they already track your inventory, orders, reprint quantities, ideal reorder points, and other valuable data used in this analysis.

The first Earth Day was held April 22, 1970 and attracted more than 20 million Americans – the largest grass roots demonstration in U.S. history. The idea originated with Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin, whose goal was to create “a nationwide demonstration of concern for the environment so large that it would shake the political establishment out of its lethargy and, finally, force this issue permanently onto the national political agenda.” The event is credited with spurring eventual passage of such landmark legislation as the Environmental Protection Act, the Clean Air Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act.

**Optimization is potentially the most powerful technique available to marketers. It includes:**

- Using customer-centric marketing techniques to send only relevant information to targeted market segments, rather than mass-producing and distributing large volumes of generic materials to all prospects and customers. Optimization greatly reduces the volume of materials you print, store and distribute. As a result, you save money on paper, printing, storage, insurance and mailing/delivery.

Optimization also enhances the effectiveness of your communications. Studies show that increasing relevance through customized text and graphics, as well as personalization, boosts readership, response rates, size of sales and repeat sales.

Remember: it's only "junk mail" when it doesn't address your recipients' needs, interests or concerns. Your fulfillment company can help you target, personalize and customize your communications to match what your markets want. This saves you money in materials and delivery costs, and reduces the amount of unopened mail in landfills.

- Improving current production and delivery methods. High-value pieces may warrant full-color offset print – especially if you need a significant quantity of the same piece. However, if a particular piece is used in only limited circumstances, requires frequent updates, or is designed to be customized according to recipient demographics, it makes sense to store it electronically and digitally print it only when and in the quantities needed.

Digital printing is inherently more eco-friendly than offset because it enables cost-effective printing of small quantities, even in full color. That's critical when you want to personalize and/or customize text and graphics for specific audiences as small as one individual. Additionally, printing is done at the fulfillment company, eliminating the need for packing and shipping from a separate facility. It can also be done on a distributed basis. Producing only the materials you need, as needed, reduces printing volumes and costs; decreases (or even eliminates) storage and costs; cuts delivery costs; and shrinks or eradicates waste.

Depending on audience, value of sale, usage and other factors, you can also use a combination of black digital print on demand (POD) on plain paper; black digital POD on color offset shell; color digital POD on white paper; a combination of digital POD and offset; and dynamic digital POD.

Finally, consider incorporating more paper-free marketing media, such as email newsletters, PURL web pages, and text messaging promotions. Multi-media, multi-touch campaigns generally yield better results than one- or two-step print campaigns alone and save trees, printing and postage costs, as well. Better fulfillment companies can assist you with these electronic marketing channels, as well as with digital print projects and offset print management.

Optimization can reduce overall annual communication materials costs by 30% or more and increase response rates by more than 100%.

## **USE MORE RECYCLED MATERIALS**

Each printed page has an environmental impact, from its fiber content to its weight and the chemical processes used in its manufacture. Your fulfillment partner can be your ally in promoting greater use of recycled paper for print projects, especially since digital printing works extremely well on recycled stock. Better fulfillment companies also use environmentally friendly packing materials, including recycled paper, instead of polystyrene peanuts and other materials that aren't biodegradable.

## **MAKE SURE YOUR MATERIALS GET DELIVERED THE FIRST TIME**

Misdelivered or undeliverable mail generally ends up in a landfill. Your fulfillment partner can help you avoid this kind of waste by regularly updating and cleaning your mailing lists with routine zip code corrections, address standardization, checks against the National Change of Address Linkage System,

According to the Department of Energy, one ton of paper made from recycled fibers saves up to 31 trees, 7,000 gallons of water, 4,000 kilowatt hours of electricity and 60 pounds of air pollutants, not including carbon dioxide.

and DMA mail preference service. Your fulfillment house can also help with merge and purge, opt in / opt out, suppression files, test mailings and more.

### **ASK YOUR FULFILLMENT PARTNER TO USE EARTH-FRIENDLY PRACTICES**

Another way to make your own marketing more environmentally sound is to partner with companies that also think green. Make sure your fulfillment partner takes steps to reduce its own carbon footprint by using energy efficient lighting in warehouse facilities; keeps dock doors and bays closed at all times to better control climate and reduce energy use; recycles paper, cardboard and other materials in all facilities; avoids polystyrene in favor of packing paper; and recycles discarded office documents after securely shredding those with sensitive or personally identifiable customer data.

### **WHEN PLANNING YOUR NEXT OFFSET PRINT PROJECT, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:**

- Increasing your use of recycled papers – in particular, those that are high in post-consumer recycled content (paper, paperboard, old newspapers, junk mail and similar fibrous wastes from retail stores, office buildings, and homes that would otherwise end up in the waste stream). You and your printer may also be interested to know there are a number of alternative paper stocks manufactured from tree-free sources, like crushed chalk, plant waste and reclaimed blue jeans. Tree-free papers produced from plant sources – which include wild grasses, as well as agricultural residue from such crops as sugar cane, cereal grains and fiber crops like hemp – regrow rapidly; and their harvesting doesn't disrupt natural ecosystems. Additionally, processing tree-free fibers requires considerably less energy and fewer chemicals than processing wood-based fibers. You can find more information on both recycled and tree-free papers on the Internet at [www.conservatree.com](http://www.conservatree.com).
- Purchasing papers whitened with oxygen-based compounds because they create few toxins during manufacture. Look for papers that are processed chlorine free (PCF), which applies to recycled and de-inked papers; totally chlorine free (TCF), which applies only to virgin fiber; or enhanced elemental chlorine free bleaching (enhanced ECF).
- Avoiding coated papers. Coated papers complicate the recycling process. For example, clay coating may be applied to add gloss and improve opacity, so ink won't bleed through. Complete removal of the coating during the recycling process is difficult and energy-intensive, and failing to fully remove coatings results in a low grade recycled paper.
- Using vegetable-based inks. Inks made from soy, corn or linseed meet the same specifications as petroleum-based ink and release very few toxins as they dry. Soy ink is also more easily removed during the de-inking phase of paper recycling.
- Combining projects. Environmentally friendly papers and processes sometimes cost more. To help balance benefits with costs, combine projects whenever possible; for example, print a brochure and postcards from the same recycled paper.

## ABOUT IRON MOUNTAIN FULFILLMENT SERVICES

With almost 40 years of experience in the business, Iron Mountain Fulfillment Services, Inc. offers the most advanced combination of fulfillment and digital print communication solutions for targeted and personalized outreach. We partner with clients to increase customer response rates, expand marketing opportunities and reduce costs. All of our facilities nationwide fully comply with California environmental regulations and standards (the most stringent and comprehensive regulations in the country). To learn more about Iron Mountain Fulfillment Services and our green marketing solutions, please visit [www.ironmountain.com/fulfillment](http://www.ironmountain.com/fulfillment).



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