Getting the **Most** out of Your Mailing Lists

Whether your mailing list was built in-house or acquired through a list service, as a rule, all of your lists should go through a rigorous data scrubbing and standardization process. **Great data hygiene ensures deliverability and the best postage rates.** So, bear in mind that skipping this step is quite literally throwing money away.

The Silent Enemy

Undeliverable as Addressed (UAA) mail is the silent enemy of a mailing list. Mail is deemed undeliverable as addressed due to incorrect formatting, misspellings, transposed numbers, or any other inconsistency with the address that would prevent the mail from getting to its destination. The other major cause of undeliverable mail is people moving without filing a change of address with the USPS.

UAA mail is a problem not only because it's wasteful, but because it is generally not returned (having it returned is costly). You may not even realize these mail pieces never actually got delivered (and you'll likely send to that bad address again and again).

Standardize and Verify

There are three services that are recommended for mailing lists. The first service is called CASS™ certification. The Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS) is used to format addresses to meet standard postal addressing requirements, and to flag addresses that will be undeliverable. CASS certification will determine the validity of an address and standardize it, but it does not determine whether the occupant is still living there—and that's what the next two address services we recommend are all about.

The USPS National Change of Address (NCOA Link®) database is a secure dataset of approximately 160 million permanent change-of-address records consisting of the names and addresses of individuals, families and businesses. Since only 65% of all moves are registered, the last recommended step is to run the list through the

AccuZIP Change of Address (ACOA) service. It's an enhanced service that can provide 20–40% more matches than using NCOA Link® alone. ACOA checks the list against a compiled list of 30 million records from retailers, telecom, utility and credit card companies, etc. and matches them up where possible.

In short, for best results, run the CASS processing first. Then, have the clean list run against the NCOA Link® and ACOA databases. These three steps combined should get your list in great shape, and you will also be able to qualify for automation rate postal discounts.

Process is Key

Remember: Data maintenance is a lifestyle, not an event. Establish good list maintenance procedures and make a date with CASS, NCOA Link® and ACOA every 90 days. Many print service providers offer help in this area, often calling it "List Services." There are also some great software products on the market, like those from AccuZIP, that will help you manage your own lists with ease.

Did You Know?

- There are 80+ address changes every minute of every day throughout the year. That's **over 40 million moves per year,** and roughly 14% of the U.S. population.

- Only about **60% of businesses and individuals** register their change of address through the USPS.

- On average, 6 billion pieces of mail per year are identified as UAA (undeliverable as addressed), by the USPS. That means **about 4% of total mail volume is UAA,** costing marketers, and the USPS, over $20 billion in losses.

Videos: **Quick Data Tips** with Trish Witkowski

Watch: Duplicates and Near-Duplicates see the difference between the two, and gain solutions and strategies for eliminating them.

Watch: Undeliverable Mail (UAA) smart solutions and technologies that will help avoid this common and costly data problem.

Watch: Greening-Up Your Mailing Lists Learn powerful data tips and strategies that support green mailing initiatives.

"Must-Know" Data Terms

List-related Data Terms:

Bubbling-Up – a method of combining additional data fields from duplicate and near duplicate entries, to create one complete entry. If there are two entries for the same person but one entry includes the email, and the other includes the phone number, the "bubbling-up" technique combines both pieces of data into one complete entry.

Data Hygiene – the process of finding and removing ("scrubbing") bad information from a database so that it can be verified and standardized to qualify for the best postage rates, to achieve faster delivery and to reduce/eliminate undeliverable mail.

Drop-Shipping – in mail, a strategic method of going directly from the printer/mail house to the USPS processing facility (SCF or NDC) that is closest to the mail's destination. This saves the USPS handling steps and saves YOU time and money.

Duplicate – a duplicate indicates two identical entries in a database.

Near-Duplicate – a near-duplicate involves two entries that are for the same person, however the entries are slightly different. For example, entries that share the same address and last name, but one is for Patricia Brown, and one is for Patti Brown.

Householding – a process that involves grouping the members of one household together under one name (ex: The Wilson Family), so that you can send one piece of mail per mailing address.

List Density – to assess the density of a mailing list, you must focus on where the mail pieces are destined for. This approach is utilized for mail logistics strategy.

Merge/Purge – the process of merging two or more lists together, and then purging the list of all duplicates.

Zone-Skipping – see "Drop-Shipping"

Data Acronyms:

ACOA – AccuZIP Change of Address service is an enhanced service that can provide 20–40% more matches than using NCOA Link® alone.

ACS™ – Address Correction Service

CASS™ – the Coding Accuracy Support System is a certification system that will standardize your mailing list, update addresses, and verify that all addresses are valid and complete.

DSF²® – Delivery Sequence File (second generation) is an approved method for sorting mail in "walk sequence" (delivery route) order.

NDC – USPS Network Distribution Center

NCOA Link® – the National Change of Address database is a secure dataset of approximately 160 million change-of-address records of individuals, families and businesses who have filed a change-of-address with the USPS.

RDI™ – Residential Delivery Indicator identifies whether a delivery type is classified as residential or business.

SCF – USPS Sectional Center Facility routes mail between local post offices and to and from Network Distribution Centers (NDC).

UAA – Undeliverable as Addressed mail is any piece of mail that is returned (a.k.a. a "nixie") or destroyed due to an error in the addressing of the mailpiece.

Addressing Your Mail (the right way)   TIP: Search "USPS Publication 28" to view the Postal Addressing Standards document.

Jane Doe
321 Main Street, Apt. #4
Anytown, New York 12345

MRS JANE DOE
321 MAIN ST APT 4
ANYTOWN NY 12345

MRS JANE DOE
321 MAIN ST APT 4
ANYTOWN NY 12345-6789

The Non-Standard Address
A non-standard address is in most cases deliverable, however it does not comply with USPS specifications for abbreviation and format.

The Standardized Address
This format includes all required address components as specified by the USPS and uses the proper USPS standardized abbreviations.

The Complete Address
This is a standardized address with the most current USPS ZIP+4® file plus the IMb™ to obtain the finest level of detail for the delivery address.