



Maximizing the benefits of USPS® Full-Service Intelligent Mail®

It improves the value of client communications and helps you control costs and streamline operations. However, realizing the true potential of Full-Service Intelligent Mail may require outside expertise.



Multiple paths lead to Full-Service success.

USPS Full-Service Intelligent Mail has ushered in a new, data-driven era for mailers. Its potential to better control costs, provide clear visibility into mailings, improve delivery precision and enhance productivity has changed the competitive landscape.

Full-Service also significantly changes many mail preparation and induction processes. Plus, it's still evolving, with the USPS introducing new services and requirements for Full-Service discounts.

Mailers who want to maximize the benefits of Full-Service are exploring two primary options:

- **Do it yourself.** Invest in software and handle all the USPS' data management and reporting requirements in-house: barcode application, eDoc generation, data analysis, presorting, transportation, induction, tracking and reporting, and regulatory compliance.
- **Outsource part or all of your mail.** Let a third party be accountable for just applying barcodes, or handling everything from presort services to the entire Full-Service Intelligent Mail management process.

When is partial outsourcing the right choice? And when does it make sense to outsource Full-Service Intelligent Mail management from end to end?

Checklist: Should you outsource Full-Service Intelligent Mail management?

Do you need to:	Yes	No
Implement Full-Service Intelligent Mail?		
Ensure that your Mailer Scorecard stays below USPS thresholds?		
Invest in new hardware and software to comply?		
Add or reconfigure staff to understand or help implement USPS requirements?		
Train staff on Full-Service data and reporting and how to respond to issues?		
Mitigate risk and control postage costs by quickly finding and fixing costly errors?		
Revamp out-of-date mailing processes?		

If you answer YES to most of these questions, outsourcing may be your best choice to implement Full-Service.

Mailers need to master the management of Full-Service Intelligent Mail for automation discounts and operational efficiency.

The promise: peace of mind, predictability, productivity... and cost savings.

The goal of the USPS Intelligent Mail initiative is to protect and strengthen business mail as a superior communication and transactional platform. Utilizing Full-Service is a major step forward in making that goal a reality.

Full-Service builds on the foundation set by the adoption of Intelligent Mail barcodes. It further fulfills the initiative's overall mission to give new visibility, verifiability, traceability, predictability, cost-effectiveness and control to the mailing process.

Full-Service Intelligent Mail can give you:

- **Peace of mind**, because it helps you know more about your mail—the who, what, when, where and how of each piece.
- **Predictability and higher performance**, because it can tell you when the USPS took custody of your mail and how long it took to be delivered, and help you improve the timing and response of your marketing campaigns.
- **Streamlined internal processes** based on data-driven insights that help you make staffing decisions, improve lead conversion and customer service activities, better manage cash flow and plan mail inventory.
- **New cost savings** from additional Full-Service discounts (as well as automation discounts), qualification for USPS promotional activities, co-palletization, free address change services, permit fee waiver and Mail Anywhere services.

Just getting started with Full-Service? Here's a brief glossary.

- **USPS® Full-Service Intelligent Mail®.** Full-Service streamlines operations by gathering data through use of electronic mailing documentation (eDoc) and Intelligent Mail barcodes (IMb) on mail pieces, tray labels on handling units, and container labels on container placards. It helps you save money for Standard Mail®, First-Class Mail®, Periodicals, and Bound Printed Matter services, and letters, cards and flats, through automation and Full-Service discounts. It also lets you know when and where the USPS has inducted your mail and helps improve delivery precision and accuracy using address correction services.
- **Intelligent Mail barcodes.** Full-Service requires application of Intelligent Mail barcodes (IMb) for each piece, tray (IMtb) or container (IMcb). Each barcode must be unique for a 45-day period beginning with the postage statement mailing date.
- **eDoc (Electronic documentation).** Full-Service also requires the digital communication of data from qualification reports and postage statements; data is uploaded directly to the USPS PostalOne!® website through Mail.dat® or Mail.xml® files, or by using the Postage Statement Wizard.
- **eInduction (Electronic induction).** eInduction simplifies and improves mail preparation and streamlines mail acceptance. It leverages eDoc, Intelligent Mail container barcodes and handheld scanner technologies to verify payment and preparation of commercial mail containers.
- **Seamless Acceptance.** Streamlining acceptance, verification, payment, and induction through the automation of both postage statement processing and manual verifications, Seamless Acceptance automatically compares information within postage statements (eDoc) to data obtained during USPS processing. It determines whether pieces have been paid for and addressed accurately, and whether your mailing has been prepared correctly.

For a full glossary of terms, visit this link on the USPS' Rapid Information Bulletin Board System:
https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_guides/documents/tech_guides/guidetointelligentmaillettersandflats.pdf

Early experiences: dealing with evolutionary challenges.

Full-Service Intelligent Mail represents the mail industry's leading-edge present and future, but it's still evolving. Successful compliance efforts are being affected by many challenges.

The USPS has continuously worked to simplify, refine and evolve Full-Service Intelligent Mail. It has adjusted deadlines, time lines and postage rates and modified regulations and technology requirements to address issues as they're identified. Mailers therefore need to monitor and respond to a constantly changing landscape.


Full-Service initiatives like Seamless Acceptance and eInduction are also exponentially increasing the volume of data that mailers must manage, analyze and act upon. The Full-Service IMb alone requires managing and controlling 31 digits of data per piece, with each barcode remaining unique for 45 days from shipment. The data management and storage needed to handle such volumes can outstrip the capabilities of your existing servers and IT infrastructure.

Daily performance monitoring is another emerging concern. The monthly USPS Mailer Scorecard gives you a dashboard view of the results of letter and flat mailing activity. It presents the results of mail quality verifications across Full-Service as well as eInduction and Seamless Acceptance. But its monthly nature means that errors that occur early in the cycle can, if undetected, be repeated throughout the month. The result could cost thousands in postal assessments.

In early 2014, the USPS attempted to require adherence to Full-Service for automation discounts for letters and flats, but the Postal Regulatory Commission rejected the proposal, noting that mailers were still grappling with compliance. While some large mailers were prepared, many others weren't. Some mailers have been slow to adopt Full-Service because of its cost and seeming complexity. However, the USPS may eventually require Full-Service for automation discounts.

But through its ability to understand the status and deliverability of every mail piece, Full-Service can benefit mailers and the USPS. Mailers who optimally manage the processes involved in Full-Service, on their own or through a partner, can use its rich data environment to improve the speed and performance of every mailing.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Barcode ID (2N)		Service Type ID (3N)			Mailer ID (6N)						Serial Number (9N)									Routing Code (0, 5, 9, or 11N)										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Barcode ID (2N)		Service Type ID (3N)			Mailer ID (9N)						Serial Number (6N)						Routing Code (0, 5, 9, or 11N)													



Intelligent Mail® Barcode — Letters & Flats

- 65 bars reflecting 31 digits of tracking and routing codes
- Barcode Indicator: 2-digits to define presort level with an optional endorsement line (OEL)

- Services: 3-digit field to identify IMb Tracing™, ACS™ services
- Mailer ID (MID): 6 or 9-digit unique mailer identifier
- Unique Serial Number: 6 or 9-digit field used to uniquely identify mailpieces
- Routing Code: 11-digit Delivery Point ZIP Code™

Full-Service compliance can demand better data management and analysis, and day-to-day monitoring of regulatory change.

Four ways to overcome Full-Service complexity

Optimizing your deployment and day-to-day use of Full-Service Intelligent Mail involves managing change and complexity. Common issues are:

Maintaining eDoc data quality. The mandate to switch all documentation from hardcopy to digital form is a fundamental part of Full-Service. eDoc data must be a complete and accurate digital representation of the physical mailing. The data includes service type and mailer identification numbers, maintenance of unique Intelligent Mail barcodes of each piece, tray and container for the required 45-days, accurate entry facility and by/for data, and if used separate accurate co-palletization documented.

Making the transition to “total quality management” and post-induction verification. Intelligent Mail puts the onus on mailers to be more precise and accountable. Mail quality is no longer determined by sample inspections; now, the USPS evaluates every mail piece, handling unit and container to determine eligibility for discounts, or threshold violations that result in assessments. Validation now happens after induction: you can no longer take a mailing back and make it compliant. Instead, you must identify potential causes of non-compliance and fix issues before induction to avoid major assessments.

Staying out in front of problems using data analysis. Full-Service’s Mailer Scorecard and trend-based quality measurement reports offer insights that identify process and technology problems that pose compliance threats. But keeping up with this data in time for it to make an impact demands ongoing data management and analysis and dedicated resources.

Staying on top of regulations and requirements.

Full-Service Intelligent Mail requirements are still evolving. Compliance demands a consistent and on-going understanding of complex USPS rules, processes and changes in implementation and technology requirements.

Mailers are taking action to overcome these challenges, however. Two major strategies—Do-It-Yourself (DIY) through revamping in-house facilities, processes, human and IT assets, and Outsourcing all or part of their mail—have gained a foothold.

Do-It-Yourself: greater control, but it comes at a cost

Most mailers who prefer the in-house, DIY route seek the maximum control over mailing processing and performance. Designing, implementing and managing Full-Service Intelligent Mail from end to end demands such extensive planning (and significant expense) that it may be impractical for all but the largest mailers, or some mailers in stringently regulated industries (like financial services). Many of these mailers traditionally kept their operations in-house before the advent of Intelligent Mail.

The major challenges of DIY Full-Service Intelligent Mail management include:

It has a longer time-to-value. Designing the right environment demands detailed, time-consuming strategic planning. A superior design and implementation plan begins with a thorough needs analysis that encompasses other departments as well as mailing operations. The plan weighs budgetary considerations (and trade-offs), operational and process changes, ongoing personnel training and education and impact on IT staff and systems.

Software can quickly address a fundamental need, the application of Intelligent Mail barcodes. Implementation of Full-Service with USPS-approved eDocs can occur within six weeks. But qualifying for a Full-Service discount demands that you pass a USPS-monitored testing process. And “time to implement” and “time to manage once implemented” are two different issues to be overcome.

It’s a major investment. In-house implementation and management is expensive on multiple fronts, even beyond hardware, software and capital costs. The technology infrastructure must be integrated with the USPS’ systems and data, then updated regularly when the Postal Service issues software upgrades and new technologies. The USPS feeds back massive amounts of raw data about your mailings to integrate into your IT infrastructure, and that often demands software customization.

You also may need to hire new people or retrain your existing staff and reconfigure your physical plant to accommodate new people and processes. Finally, implementation flaws that result in poor-quality mailings will cost money in assessments for noncompliance.

It’s a potential disruption or distraction. You’ll need to redesign your business workflow to accommodate Full-Service Intelligent Mail. Changing or adding quality assurance processes is critical to avoiding errors and realizing discounts and postage savings. Likewise, you have to make superior data management a priority. And another imperative, understanding and complying with USPS updates and evolving rules, is an ongoing task that can take resources and focus away from your core business.

Outsourcing some or all Full-Service Intelligent Mail management can accelerate adoption, control costs and keep you productive.

Outsourcing: worth the exploration

The alternative to in-house is to engage a third party to handle all or part of your mail processing. Outsourcing relationships come in several forms, from purely consultative to end-to-end Full-Service Intelligent Mail management. With this complete solution, the outside vendor applies your Intelligent Mail barcodes and handles your presorting, commingling, mail induction and logistics.

Outsourcing is designed to deliver the benefits of Full-Service Intelligent Mail while:

- Enabling you to focus on your core business and operations
- Controlling costs and mitigating risk
- Giving you access to subject matter experts who monitor changes in the Postal Service’s regulations and requirements and implement strategies to maintain compliance
- Helping you streamline internal processes and reduce complexity
- Offering a path to a swifter time-to-implementation, and time-to-value

Choosing the right outsourcing partner—and determining how much of your Full-Service Intelligent Mail management you want to delegate, and how much you want to keep in-house—demands careful consideration. Mailers often base their decisions on a number of common criteria.

Control enables you to continue to “own” your mail and data, just as if you’re managing the entire process internally. Business performance and velocity executes mailings dependably and within specified campaign windows. Security and privacy protects your proprietary data.

Accurate reporting lets you quickly analyze and take action from USPS data and Mailer Scorecards. Billing accuracy ensures that the bill back of all charges are correct. Agility and responsiveness, and a sound business continuance capability, enable an outsourcer to identify and fix issues as they arise, ensure that mailings are inducted on schedule, and optimize deliverability.

Outsourcing tailored to your requirements represents a creative way to comply with Full-Service Intelligent Mail requirements, control costs, reduce risk and manage change and complexity.

The unique advantages of Pitney Bowes

Mailers who want to accelerate their adoption of Full-Service Intelligent Mail, ensure the highest degree of compliance, or simplify its ongoing management can call upon the company that’s synonymous with powering billions of transactions across the world of commerce: Pitney Bowes.

Pitney Bowes focuses on reducing complexity and serves the needs of each individual mailer. Our services range from consulting with our subject matter experts to cooperative partial outsourcing relationships to full outsourcing.

Pitney Bowes handles over 14 billion pieces of mail every year, and has the breadth of facilities, geographic footprint and drop-ship schedule to serve mailers across the United States.

We’ve invested tens of millions of dollars in technology that supports Full-Service Intelligent Mail management. Pitney Bowes offers our own supporting capabilities for address hygiene and management, mailstream visibility and mail tracking, presort decision support, co-palletization, and transportation management.

Through our use of Full-Service Intelligent Mail and ongoing dialogue and cooperation with the USPS, Pitney Bowes has earned a deep understanding of best practices in implementation and compliance. We’re experienced in Seamless Acceptance and eInduction. And we work with both the Postal Service and mailers to develop innovative processes that both support Full-Service Intelligent Mail and relieve costly or unnecessary burdens.

Let us help you

With its combination of people and expertise, and facilities, processes and technologies already in place, Pitney Bowes is positioned to help you find your ideal path to Full-Service Intelligent Mail compliance.

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