

State of Louisiana Government accelerates in-person mail delivery to contactless delivery with secure locker technology.

Client profile

The State of Louisiana Office of Technology Services (OTS)

The State of Louisiana Office of Technology Services (OTS) was created by Act 712 of the 2014 Regular Legislative Session. It's a new ancillary agency which functions as the centralized provider of IT support services for executive cabinet agencies of state government and is designated as the sole authority for information technology procurement.

Over the past several months, they've been able to significantly accelerate installations, helping to ensure employee safety and mail integrity.

Overview

In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, the State of Louisiana government offices recognized the need to take urgent action to ensure the safety of its employees who deliver and receive mail across the Capital area. The Office of Technology Services (OTS), which processes more than 2.5 million pieces of mail per month, was able to accelerate its transition from in-person mail delivery to contactless delivery with secure locker technology from Pitney Bowes.

OTS is tasked with the timely and accurate delivery of mail and parcels to 120 executive branch state agencies and quasi-agency locations across the Capital area. Prior to COVID-19, a team consisting of six drivers and five operators hand delivered mail to approximately 1800 delivery points across the state buildings complex.

OTS was rolling out the lockers in stages when the pandemic hit. With the exception of essential employees, much of the State's entire workforce was working remotely. Suddenly, the need to avoid direct contact and enabling employees to access their mail without entering the building became a priority. Over the past several months, they've been able to significantly accelerate installations, helping to ensure employee safety and mail integrity.

Early signs of an emerging need

OTS recognized the need for a more robust mail delivery solution long before new rules for social distancing were put in place. Their operation was expanding and resources were stretched thin. Questions were being raised about why it was taking so long to handle the mail. They started looking for creative solutions. Their overarching premise was to service even more locations in the same number of hours.

When searching for a solution, the department had multiple criteria to consider. Government documents can contain sensitive information with strict deadlines to respond, making the speed and security of mail delivery a top priority. Accurate and reliable mail delivery tracking, with an ability to easily integrate with existing systems, was also high on the list. Given the anticipated increase in demand, any proposed solution must also be flexible and scalable to a high degree. Finally, the solution must essentially pay for itself through a reduction in man-hours that could be reinvested.

Start with the toughest critics

After considering several options, such as mailboxes, the team began to take a harder look at locker systems that would allow drivers and couriers to deliver mail to individual lockers in a centralized location.

Mail recipients would then be notified and could retrieve its contents at their convenience.

OTS already had a relationship with Pitney Bowes, so it made sense to explore their locker solution and see whether it met their specific needs. They quickly realized that their Intelligent Lockers could help put them on the path to greater efficiency and savings.

The next and most vital step was to conduct a proof of concept. OTS selected the Iberville Building headquarters because of the superior service and rapid turnaround times the tenants required. Installed last year, the 56 Intelligent Lockers received high praise from building tenants.

Before they started, OTS was a little worried that the tenants wouldn't like the change. But they said tenants loved both the service and the convenience of the locker system.

Intelligent Lockers are flexible locker systems that feature chain of custody visibility to mail and packages, from the moment they come in the door until they are safely delivered to the recipient. The systems are run on SendSuite Tracking, Pitney Bowes' proprietary receiving and tracking software. Intelligent Lockers can also easily integrate with other tracking systems, which was the case with the State of Louisiana installation. Lockers are typically located in centralized, high traffic locations, either indoors or outdoors, and take a matter of hours

to install. Built with heavy duty U.S.-made steel, they can be easily configured to meet the various mail and package sizes.

According to OTS, what they have right now is security, accountability and tracking. They love the ease-of-use, generous screen size, quick configuration and installation, and how easy it is to customize the lockers to be consistent with their brand identity.

Staying ahead of COVID-19

In the first year since installation, OTS documented a 40% decrease in man hours per day. The pilot has 27 inside delivery points that they serviced twice a day. They went from spending up to three hours a day on this one location to just 20 minutes per day.

The plan was to install an additional 6 sets of lockers in 6 additional Capitol Park buildings by June 30th, 2020. But COVID-19 intervened. Now the team is on an accelerated schedule and has installed 28 locker towers across 8 sites as of June 9th.

OTS was working with a great sense of urgency to transform their mail delivery operations, literally overnight. Right now, they are well on their way to expanding services to hundreds of customer locations within the East Baton Rouge Parish. Eventually, they see the opportunity to service outside of the Capitol Park area and other State departments.



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