

The Power of Getting Connected

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Like nearly every industry, the mailing and parcel shipping industry is being profoundly impacted by digital transformation. The global adoption of digital communications and technologies is changing the way businesses and consumers interact. This fundamental shift is reinventing mail and driving an explosion in parcel shipping. Successful businesses of all sizes are embracing new digital technologies

to bring new innovation and value to mail and enhance its overall effectiveness.

There are three key changes driving the digital transformation of mail and parcels:

- Connected hardware is unlocking a wealth of data in real time and historical-based information that was not previously available;
- SaaS software is bringing enterprise capabilities into small and midsize businesses;
- The cloud, mobile and IoT (Internet of things) are enabling new capabilities and services anywhere anytime.

Connected Hardware and Analytics

There is a massive migration to digital connectivity underway globally driven by the decertification of analog phone support by the telecommunications companies. One of the largest providers is decertifying support in 2017 outside of the US and in 2018 for the US market. The digital connectivity mandate has unlocked opportunities to rethink the value that can be provided by constant two way digital connections. This is the world of the Industrial Internet or IoT solutions. IoT connects smart equipment to a cloud infrastructure to deliver new and better services, enhance the customer experience, improve equipment reliability and enhance ROI.

These smart connected devices allow mailers to access updated services and new capabilities from any location worldwide. IoT also provides faster resolution of issues with software updates, preventative maintenance or just in time service. Smarter IoT connected systems are always up to date, easily enhanced and scalable to your changing business needs. A recent Pitney Bowes study found that customers produced 5% more mail when their systems were connected using the latest IoT technology called SmartLink. It's no wonder that as systems get easier to use through advanced digital technologies that customers use them more often.

With remote digital connectivity, life becomes much more convenient in the mail center. For example, services, such as



monitoring ink levels, can be automated so fresh supplies can be sent to users before they run out. Reliability issues are quickly resolved through self-help videos, pop up messages or web chat. New features and applications can be downloaded or activated through the product user interface much like your cell phone or tablet. In fact, tablets and smart phones are becoming a common next generation UI for most modern office products.

In the production mail space, IoT solutions collate, integrate and organize data collected from sensors on high-volume mail machines. Mailers are then able to use this data and real-time insights to drive predictive analytics and prescriptive maintenance, optimize operational performance and improve outcomes. This intelligent insight identifies issues and answers questions including those relating to production downtime, resource allocation, investment, productivity, service levels, capacity management, job scheduling and forecasting.

This gives mailers a view of their operations and the industry on a micro- and global-level that was never before visible – from the performance of a specific motor on a single machine, to the productivity benchmarks of leading print and mail operations around the world. These insights enable mailers to identify strengths and opportunities in their print and mail operations and take steps to improve both productivity and efficiency.

Another key value of connected devices and automating with IoT services is the mountain of rich data that can be converted to insights on how to better run your business. Common uses of the data in the mailing and shipping arena include suggestions on how to better manage costs by switching carriers or optimizing services within the same carrier. Mailers and shippers are finding that the insights provided by the analytics can identify lower cost services within the same carrier that can generate significant savings while meeting client delivery and tracking expectations.

The Cloud, SaaS and Mobile

As businesses look for more cost effective ways to operate, they're attracted to Software as a Service (SaaS) solutions. In this approach, all applications and databases reside in the cloud. As a result, businesses don't need additional IT assets on premises—the SaaS solution provider takes care of it all, running it in the cloud. So mailers and shippers do not need large IT budgets and staff to install and service systems. A SaaS-based mailing and shipping solution is always up-to-date, providing its users with all the latest features.

Another big advantage of SaaS is that applications and data can be accessed from anywhere in the world. Users can run these solutions from their desktops, access them from the next generation modern connected mailing and shipping systems or access them remotely on a smartphone.

SaaS-based solutions also make it simple to extend capabilities across mailing and shipping, especially important as package sending volumes rise. SaaS makes it easy for solution providers to innovate around integrating multicarrier mailing and shipping processes, including receiving and sending. This allows more and more functions to be made available to users in a single sign on dashboard like approach, making it easier for businesses to train employees. Unifying mailing and shipping processes means there isn't a need for specialized people in each separate function, which reduces labor costs and simplifies processes.

Physical Plus Digital

Enhancing physical mail with digital experiences is another cutting edge example of digital transformation. Cloud based technologies such as Personalized Interactive Video, Mail + Mobile and USPS Informed Delivery are three leading edge examples of how to augment physical mail with digital experiences. The early results are promising. A better return on mail and an enhanced user experience.

Digital Services Deliver

The digital transformation of mailing and shipping reflects the borderless and connected world at large. Nearly every organization is seeking more efficient and effective ways to better meet their customers' changing communications preferences. As leaders in our industry we need to leverage digital transformation to:

- communicate better with customers
 - drive organizational productivity and uptime
 - implement new services faster
 - save money by optimizing carriers, services and contract pricing
 - better compliance with internal policies
- all at a faster rate and lower cost.

Getting connected is no longer an option for the modern enterprise; it is necessary to survive and thrive. Every organization needs partners and suppliers that drive the digital transformation agenda.

The power of getting connected is right in front of us.

We are in this together.

Let's not miss this important moment.

(Patrick Brand is a 33-year veteran of Pitney Bowes and previously led Pitney Bowes Document Management Technologies. For more information go to www.pitneybowes.com)

The Staying Power Of The Postal Inspection Service

A Collaborative Report Coordinated By
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The power of mail is enhanced by the law enforcement capabilities of the Postal Inspection Service. Postal Inspectors enforce over 200 federal laws. Inspectors respond to incidents and violations every day, totaling more than 2,500 responses in the past fiscal year, and nearly 6,000 criminal investigations. The mission of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service is to maintain public confidence in the security and reliability of the U.S. Mail. Postal Inspectors:

- * PROTECT the U.S. Postal Service and its employees, infrastructure, and customers
- * PREVENT incidents and infractions through education of the workforce and general public
- * ENFORCE the law, working closely with prosecutors and other law enforcement agencies
- * PREPARE to react decisively to threats against the mail and the American public

Education is key to protection and prevention. For the past four years (since September 2012), Postal Inspectors have been providing video segments to the news departments of over 120 television stations for our Consumer Alert News Network (CANN) program. These segments feature Inspectors describing recent scams and how consumers can protect themselves from being victimized.

More recently, the Postal Inspection Service has partnered with CBS to produce "The Inspectors." This Saturday morning TV series has been an award-winning platform for educating the public about fraud prevention, through dramatic presentations inspired by actual Inspection Service investigations.

The U.S. Postal Service delivers nearly 150 billion pieces of mail a year to 155 million customers. Postal Inspectors are mandated to safeguard all of it, including the people who move it and the customers who use it.

We've been on the job since August 7, 1775, when the first Postal Inspector was appointed by Benjamin Franklin, over 240 years ago. Postal Inspectors wear a badge and carry a gun. With Postal Police Officers, the armed, uniformed law enforcement presence at critical postal facilities, we are a powerful force protecting the U.S. Mail and the American public.

To learn more about the U.S. Postal Inspection Service visit www.postalinspectors.uspis.gov.