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USPS Adds Partner Services to Direct Mail Web Site

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The U.S. Postal Service yesterday added services to its direct mail Web site that will make it easier for small and midsize businesses to use direct mail advertising to acquire and retain new customers.

The postal service's direct mail Web site, which can be reached at www.uspsdirectmail.com or www.usps.com/directmail, was formally introduced at the fall 2000 National Postal Forum.

The site is designed to help small and midsize businesses create effective direct mailings. Mailers who log on can request a tutorial that walks them through the basic considerations and elements of a direct mail campaign; receive step-by-step instruction in the form of an online consultant, or a wizard-like process by which they can develop their own campaigns. Mailers also can use the site as a reference tool.

The newest enhancement provides links to service providers that offer complete online solutions for direct mail campaigns, from list services to creative, print, production and mail entry.

The USPS chose several partners after a request-for-proposal process that lasted 90 days. The companies were selected after a technical and financial review process.

"Since 5 million people visit our Web site on a monthly basis, we wanted to make sure the folks we were partnering with were, in fact, very capable of delivering the services that we are going to market," said John Ward, vice president of core business marketing for the USPS.

The Web site also features the USPS' Netpost.MailingOnline service, which lets mailers submit their creative copy online for printing and mailing.

The vendors selected were:

- DirectMailQuotes.com, which provides free competitive quotes on direct mail services.
- ListBazaar.com, which provides mailing list services.
- ThinkDirectMarketing.com, which provides mailing list services.



New small business services are available on the USPS direct mail site.

- Zairmail, which provides creative, print and production services.
- ZIPM, which provides creative, print and production services.

The partners paid an undisclosed sum to be placed on the site, Ward said, and more partners eventually might be added.

"Advertisers know that direct mail gives the biggest bang for the buck, but small- and medium-size businesses and nonprofits often feel they can't get in the game," he said. "These businesspeople are savvy enough to understand the power of direct marketing, but they often have to wear many hats and don't always have the time to learn how direct mail can work for them."

Ward also said the program would bring revenue to the USPS. All of the agency's marketing initiatives to reach this market are expected to bring \$4.8 billion over two to three years.

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