



January 5, 2012

Happy-ish New Year!

Track your mail, and a couple of other resolutions...

ProList, Inc. is an Industry Innovator in data management and direct mail services solutions.



We're not big on superstition at ProNews, but we worry that the Postal Service may be using a Mayan calendar to schedule operations, which would have the world ending on December 21st. Some days they certainly seem to run things that way. (Our understanding is that if the world should end, the Postal Service will not guarantee prompt delivery of address change information – our guess is that at least one person will survive the end to complain about his.)

Nonetheless...

We need to conduct operations as if the world will continue, and we suggest to our clients that they do the same, even on those days when delivery seems like the end of the world.

In that spirit, all we ask for New Years is that you do two things:

Track your mail, and pay attention to the tracking results. That's it.

As luck would have it, if ProList does your mail processing, you're already tracking it – it's included in every mailing we do for free! (As long as we do the data preparation). This has never been a bigger deal – delivery times are terrible, particularly for Standard Class Mail. Don't pay too much attention to the news you see about planned reductions or said reductions being postponed until May. We have seen an unprecedented decline in delivery speed – Standard mail inducted locally is typically taking 30 days and longer to deliver. This is likely to get worse after May when the Postal Service begins officially streamlining its transportation network. It's a daunting task, and we expect it to be ugly. If you use the mail to make your living, you need to track it and understand where and when it is being delivered. If you just send mail as a sad hobby, then don't worry about it so much.

Oh, one other thing:

Commingle your Standard Mail.

Commingling is not a new thing. Your letter size mail gets combined with the mail of other organizations and becomes part of a much larger mailing. The primary motivation for doing this has always been reduced postage, but now with the delivery issues we are seeing there is another more important benefit – faster, more consistent delivery. The commingler we use at ProList operates their own extensive transportation network, so they bypass most of the USPS transportation, taking mail directly to local processing centers. We typically see nationwide delivery in 7 – 10 days for Standard letters. A couple of downsides to commingling are that you will not get the same postal paperwork to which you may be accustomed, and induction into the mail stream may be delayed by a couple of days while your mail is combined with the mail from others. In our experience, the time saved in transportation more than makes up for delayed induction, and tracking the mail is better than postal paperwork for documenting that the mail has been, well, mailed.

Flat size mail is not generally eligible for commingling, so you may want to make yourself comfortable while it is being delivered – it could be a while. Local mail may not be ideal for commingling, although we've seen some surprisingly terrible local deliveries, too, with mail inducted locally.

So that's all we ask of you in 2012 – Track your mail (actually we'll do that for you), commingle your letter size standard mail (oh, we'll do that too), and pay attention (OK, that you really need to do yourself). Oh, and have a Happy New Year from all of us at ProList!

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