



## Marketing Madness Seminar Set for May 20!

Carve the date in a convenient nearby stone

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



After taking a breather in 2009, we're excited to announce that we have scheduled our next seminar, Marketing Madness 2010, for May 20 at the Marriott at Metro Center, starting at 9:00 a.m. with breakfast before. We urge you to save the date, and make your plans to attend. Even without a big postal rate increase planned, there are enormous issues you will need to deal with in the coming year. This half day free seminar is certain to help you in your planning.

The more observant among you will also notice that we have stepped away for our revered "Postal Madness" title and moved to the more inclusive "Marketing Madness". Fear not, postal regulation lovers, we'll still have plenty of toe tapping postal news and strategies, but we're also proud to be joined by Real Magnet as our co-host this year. Real Magnet is the company responsible for Magnet Mail, an industry leading email marketing solution. They will be providing detailed insight on how to get started with, and expand, your use of email and other electronic technologies as a part of your communications efforts, as well as integrating these technologies with online registration services. There is a LOT more to email than you thought. You will not want to miss this one.

So keep an eye on your in-box, check your mail box, keep your phone available for texts, scan the horizon for smoke signals...we'll have details coming soon!

## The USPS in the News!

How come it's never happy news?

Quality Service Guaranteed!



It seems that whenever the Postal Service gets the attention of the press it's never to report an exciting new development. It's generally an end-of-the-world sounding article about the death of mail. The latest round of news is no exception. Best as we can determine, by the year 2020 the several dozen pieces of mail still delivered annually by the Postal Service will only be delivered on Wednesday afternoons. All actual commerce will be conducted solely among social media "friends" and text message. Well maybe it's not that dire, but this would probably not be a great time for the Postal Service to consider an IPO.

All that said, should you worry about the mail and your future using it? Emphatically, no! OK, we may be biased, but there are a lot of silver linings in the USPS bad news cloud. Let's cheer ourselves by looking at a few of them.

*Not all mail is in decline.*

Yes yes yes, we all pay our bills on line. Well, at least I do – you, too, I'm guessing. Remittance mail volume is dropping like a frozen carp, and this is bad news for the Postal Service. They make a lot of money on this kind of mail, or at least they used to. Still, the vast majority of bills continue to be mailed out – just the payments are done online. Nonetheless, most volume loss for the Postal Service is in First-Class Mail. Advertising mail volume is expected to stay roughly flat as far out as 2020, with annual volume actually projected to creep up by a couple of percentage points. No, flat volume is nothing to celebrate, particularly given a growing population, but still, 84 billion pieces of advertising mail delivered annually remains a viable medium.

*Less volume means less competition for your mail*

It's bittersweet for a mailing guy, but I have noticed less mail at my house. One result of that is that I am more likely to look at each piece more closely, and a compelling message has a better chance of catching my attention. I also see more personalization and, I think, better quality in the mail. With less competition for attention, I think it's reasonable to expect better response rates to good offers with a compelling presentation.

*There are some things that simply require postal mail*

The recent travails of Toyota created a need for extensive recall notices. It's not exaggerating to say that lives were at stake. When you have a message that MUST get through, there's still nothing quite like the U.S. Mail. You would not want to subject a life and death message to the vagaries of email.

Email marketing certainly has a valuable role, but it is not exactly a replacement for postal mail. Email works well for nurturing existing relationships, but it's not so good for acquisition or prospecting. Got an offer for all of the architects in Baltimore? Good luck getting an email list, and even if you can, good luck getting any response. For that kind of targeting there is no replacement for the mail.

A lot of organizations learned this lesson the hard way in the past year when they tried to cut costs by forgoing their holiday direct mail. They reduced costs but also slashed their revenue. If you make your money from direct mail, I suggest you don't abandon what made you. Mail smarter, sure, but mail.

*The sky may be falling, but there's still plenty of sky*

The moral of the story is that, yes, the landscape of marketing is changing, as it always does. Some new methods will prosper while others languish (counted the ads in a magazine lately?), and marketers will need to adjust their plans to use the media that works best for them.

If postal has been a successful part of your mix, it's likely that it will continue to be. Expect postage rates to increase and postal rules to become sillier, and compensate by mailing smarter with better designed mail pieces and cleaner lists. In the end a good offer paired with a good mail piece will prevail – no matter how unhappy the rest of the mailing news is.

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