



November 15, 2011

Exigency! Exigency! There's an Exigency at the Post Office!

Quick! Bring me a dictionary!

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

Uh oh...just when you thought it was safe to put the dictionary away, the Postal Service has re-emerged with its exigent rate case. They probably have a better chance this time around.

In 2010 the Postal Service tried to pass a rate increase that was greater than the rate of inflation as an "exigent" rate case, allowed when there are unique circumstances that cause undue financial stress on the Postal Service. The Postal Service essentially asserted that the 2009 economy "super-sucked" as opposed to its usual "sucked", and as such they would need 5.6% more postage. The Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) fundamentally agreed that the economy super-sucked, but that the Postal Service hadn't asked for the increase correctly, so...NO. "Oh yeah?!" the Postal Service said. "Then I'm going to sue you!" Which they did - along with many other people suing many other people.

The courts have finally ruled that the PRC has to give the Postal Service another chance to ask more nicely, which the Postal Service said on November 8 that it would. Of course it's no longer 2010, and things have been just great at the Post Office since then, so the whole calculation has to change. The USPS has agreed that it can accept the \$2.3 billion that the PRC agreed they had lost due to the recession, although the PRC hasn't necessarily said if *that offer* is still on the table. How that might split up into increased rates, or how long this process might take is anyone's guess. Of course a lot of this hinges on any action Congress may or may not take to rescue the Postal Service.

Quality Service Guaranteed!

Our expectation is that there will be some kind of additional increase in January; probably changing the 2% planned increase closer to 5%. This is an educated guess, at best. The PRC may also be named Prime Minister of Italy. Little surprises us anymore.

[Click here](#) for a more adult, but no more enlightening, explanation.

People Continue to Mail Stuff

...turns out they like eating...

I met with an organization last week that was in the business of education young adults. They have two primary lists. The first one is, naturally enough, young adults. About 50,000 of them. This list is almost all emails, gathered from events, web advertising, and social sites...the usual suspects in gathering emails. It's a good list – if they need to mobilize their folks, they can reach them quickly and inexpensively – at least those on the list who will open their emails.

The other list is much smaller – about 2,000 people. This list includes mailing addresses. Guess which list generates virtually all of their donations?

Of course there is more to life than fundraising...but for the fundraising part of your life it's all about the mail.

There are a lot of reasons why mail is the go-to channel for raising funds:

- Older people tend to be better donors, and they are more attuned to the mailbox;
- Mail has an inherently higher "open rate" than email. Pretty much 100% of your prospects are going to at least glance at your mail piece – you'll be lucky to get 10% to look at your email;
- Direct mail allows you to include premium items, such as address labels, and other proven response boosters;
- Most prospects still sense an inherent value in a piece of postal mail that is just not there for email.

The continued strength of direct mail does not, of course, mean that there is no value to email, social media, and other electronic alternative media. These are all essential segments of any organization's communication strategy. Just don't forget who puts food on the table, and keep the mail's place high in your efforts.

And, while traditional fundraising still continues to see success with direct mail, we are beginning to see impressive efforts at alternative methods such as SMS texting of donations and social media fundraising for political candidates. These methods are usually effective at raising funds in small increments from a very large universe.

At ProList we can support and coordinate all of your direct marketing and fundraising efforts, using our Snailworks multi-channel platform to create campaigns that reach out through direct mail, email, QR codes and more in a coordinated effort.

If, for example, you have an email list, we may be able to help you mine that list for your most promising new donors. We understand how all of these channels work, and are expert at using them together.

To learn more about ProList on our website visit: <http://www.prolist.com>
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