

PressLines

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Are You Wondering If Your Mailing Hit Yet?

That's an often asked question by marketers. A lot depends on timing when you're trying to staff call centers for an anticipated business surge or respond with other fulfillment activities. Inaccurate mail tracking can cause any number of unintended results from a personal panic attack to costing your company serious money.

It's why Ripon Printers is now offering a mail tracking service that lets you follow your catalogs,

direct mail and periodicals through the postal system. It gives you the ability to more accurately predict

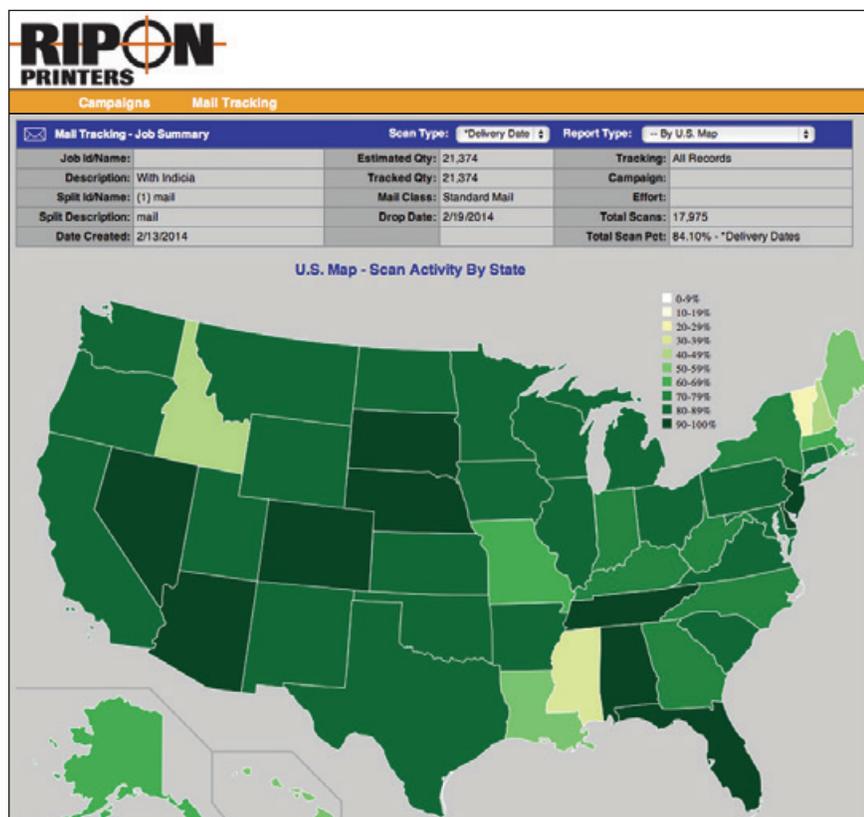
in-home delivery dates, effectively manage follow-up efforts and intelligently staff call centers.

How It Works

The tracking system builds on the full service intelligent mail barcode (IMb) for each record in your mailing. One element of the IMb is a unique serial number. As mail travels through sorting equipment at USPS processing facilities, the mail pieces are scanned, capturing all the IMb data as well as processing facility, operation number and processing date and time. This is data returned to us by the USPS, and our system matches it to the mail list and converts it into meaningful and usable reports.

The tracking system puts you in control by allowing you to select the type of scan you want to view. There are three major scan categories:

- **First Scan.** This is the initial scan reported by the USPS for an individual piece of mail. It usually occurs at the destination Network Distribution Center (NDC) or Sectional Center Facility (SCF).
- **Last Scan.** As the category title implies, this is the last scan



reported for an individual piece of mail.

- **Delivery Date.** When the system receives a USPS operations code classified as “stop the clock,” then a projected delivery date is calculated through an algorithm that weighs the time of day the scan occurs as well as other elements. Dates are adjusted as required when additional scans arrive.

Generally, all mail tracking reports are updated by 9:30 a.m. EST. Participating companies will receive a log-in for Ripon Printers’ tracking site where they can view the latest information.

There is also an option to furnish a unique email address or customer number for each mail recipient, and we will then send daily updates of those addresses scanned. This option further enables users to send follow-up emails that coincide with projected in-home dates.

Nothing Is Perfect

While the mail tracking service will greatly enhance delivery predictability, most mailings have a small percentage of pieces that go unscanned. USPS scan rates are approximately 90 percent for letter-sized mail and 70 percent for flat mail. The reason for the

discrepancy is that not all USPS facilities have flat mail sorting equipment.

Sort level and density of the mailing can also affect the scanning percentage. For example, some facilities may choose to skip machine sorting if an entire tray is going to one location or mail carrier.

Be Proactive

One of the mail tracking’s important benefits is information provided regarding the length of time it takes for the USPS to reach your customers’ and prospects’ locations. Use this information to plan future mailings, evaluate response models or just to know where your mail is. If you discover that some SCFs or Zip Codes are taking longer to deliver than expected, you have the hard data to present to the USPS’ customer service.

Get Started

For more information about mail tracking including pricing, please contact your representative or send an email inquiry to sales@riponprinters.com. We offer a full range of mailing and distribution services designed to lower your costs while ensuring fast and accurate delivery. **RIPON**

Discover How to Achieve 8% Response Rates and 19% Conversion Rates – or More!

No, that’s not promotional hype. It’s actually a statistic from a major study conducted by InfoTrends among 1,000 large businesses across 10 different vertical markets. So, if your direct mail campaigns are stuck in low gear, then you’ll want to attend our next **Lunch & Learn** program.

We’ve been doing our target marketing homework, and we’re eager to share our knowledge. You’ll discover how:

- More effective use of variable data will make you the boss’ pet.

- New methodologies, tools and workflows will take your target marketing campaigns to the head of the class.

Lunch & Learn is scheduled for June 4 from 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM at Ripon Printers Milwaukee, 16000 West Rogers Drive, New Berlin, WI 53151.

Please contact your representative, or send an email request to sales@riponprinters.com for more information or to register. **RIPON**

See you on June 4!



Margin Analysis... and Free Throws?

I'm a huge fan of the Notre Dame Women's Fighting Irish Basketball team. After losing their best player, Skylar Diggins, last year, the team came back stronger than ever (By the way, how cool is the name Skylar Diggins?). The Irish had won all of their games and were ranked #2 team in the country all season.

With about four minutes left to play in the final game before the Final Four, one of their leading players, Natalie Achonwa, tore her ACL when scrambling for a loose ball. While I feel bad for Natalie, my concern was the impact this would have on the rest of the team. How well would Natalie's replacement(s) do compared to what she has done all season? As we know, it wasn't very long before Notre Dame would face the University of Connecticut (UConn), a very talented group of women who had been ranked #1 the entire season.

To help answer the above question, I turned to my friend, margin analysis. Margin analysis works by comparing the incremental gain or loss when a change is made in a situation.



Andy Lyke

Sports teams use margin analysis all the time. What's the effect of not re-signing that first baseman – would the replacement hit just about as well and be as good defensively? If the replacement's contract is for significantly less dollars, yet he hits almost as well as the starter, perhaps it's worth it to let the first baseman go, thus freeing up money for improved pitching, for example.

When creating and costing a printed piece, margin analysis often plays in as well. What is the added cost to add a fifth color to the cover or all the text pages – what is the payback, for example? Some questions are easier to quantify, such as if it's worth it to spend the

money to do a merge/purge on two address files before mailing the next catalog. In this case, if we suspect there are more than a few duplicates in the file, it's worth it to cull out those names to reduce printing and mailing costs (and look more professional by not sending out multiple catalogs to the same person). While we may not know about margin analysis, I suspect many of us make decisions based on this type of thinking on a daily basis.

Getting back to the Fighting Irish... In the next game after Natalie's torn ACL, her replacements (and there were three women who alternated in and out of the game) actually scored more points and rebounds than Natalie had been averaging during the season. In this case, the marginal difference was actually positive.

And then the clash between two undefeated teams. As most basketball – and sports fans know, Notre Dame fell to UConn 58 to 79 in the championship game. No marginal analysis number can overshadow Natalie's leadership or spirit.

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Ripon Printers Posts 24 Winning Entries in the 2014 Graphic Arts Excellence Awards

The 2014 Graphic Excellence Awards included more than 1,000 entries from printing and finishing companies throughout Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin. This competition, sponsored by the Great Lakes Graphics Association, recognizes the combination of craftsmanship and technology in producing out-

standing print materials.

We used our full arsenal of printing and binding platforms – along with some great customer designs – to create 24 award-winning pieces. The honors included three first-place, 10 second-place and 11 third-place awards across 11 different categories with multiple winners in Web Press Printing, Uncoated Paper Heatset (4 or more colors),

Booklet or Brochure Series and Web Press Printing Coated Paper (4 or more colors).

First-place winners are automatically entered into the Premier Print/Benny

competition. This year also marks the fourteenth consecutive year that Ripon Printers has won at least one first-place award.

We invite you to visit <http://www.riponprinters.com/corporate/awards.jsp> for a complete list of the winners. For help with your next award-winning print project, please contact your representative or send an email inquiry to sales@riponprinters.com. **RIPON**



Best of Category Magazine Series



Best of Category Product/Service Catalog (1, 2 or 3 colors)

Best of Category Magazines (cover: sheetfed, interior: web)