

It Ain't Over Till It's Over

BY STEPHEN KEARNEY



The entire mailing world is in a state of shock over the Dec. 1, 2017 proposal rolled out by Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) Chairman Robert Taub. The PRC idea is to bust the Consumer Price Index (CPI) cap on postage increases and allow hikes of 5 to 7 percent per year that would cumulate to 30 to 40 percent over the next five years.

It seems like complete capitulation by the very agency whose mission is to protect captive customers from abuses by the USPS monopoly that the PRC regulates. But it is important to know that the great Yogi Berra's statement is right on point in this terrible situation.

Here are three reasons to hold out hope:

1. It won't work.
2. Weak consensus on the PRC.
3. Likely to go to court.

A very unfortunate reality is the uncertainty for the very mailers needed to keep USPS thriving will continue indefinitely, as will postal service litigation against its customers.



1. The proposal just won't work!

The idea of raising rates 30 to 40 percent over the next five years, or almost four times the rate of inflation, does not work on its face. This much is clear to all involved in mailing on behalf of organizations and businesses. That dog won't hunt.

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2018: A Year of Change for the USPS

BY DAVE LEWIS



It can be tough to get excited about "change" at USPS. For many years, the changes we're looking at are arguments over a

couple of tenths of a percent on the next rate case: Will the rates be going up 1.7 or 1.9 percent? Important? Perhaps. Scintillating? Not so much.

2018 is shaping up to be a year of much bigger changes. Sure, the rate increase is in place, and we are operating under new rates (was that 1.7 percent or 1.9 percent—I don't remember now.) But we are likely to see much bigger changes

take shape this year. From my perspective, these are the big three:

- **Ratemaking** process review.
- **Informed Visibility** becomes a thing.
- **Informed Delivery** either becomes a big deal or fails to do so.

Ratemaking

Creating postal rates is a complex process. The USPS cannot raise overall rates by more than the growth in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). That rule was created by Congress in 2006 in the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA). So the USPS juggles rates between different

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PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

BY MIKAELA KING

Postal and Legal Issues Rules, Regulations



My father introduced me to Beethoven's ninth Symphony as "the one that sounds like they're tuning the instruments at the beginning." It always impressed me that, for the opening 30 seconds of the first movement, the score sounds exactly like that—a bit of a cacophony without seeming direction—until resolving into Beethoven's powerful, recognizable, musical story.

I often think of marketing following the same arc. We composers assemble all the parts to a successful campaign, but the start can seem a bit cacophonous until the pieces start to fall into place. What is the story? Who is the audience? What is the timing? Does this move our strategy forward? Yes, I'm saying that marketers are composers and conductors, and what we do is create our own kind of music. When done right, we create a moving experience for our constituents.

Two "instruments" in the marketing symphony that often don't get top billing are ones we cover in this issue of AdVents: postal and regulatory issues. Like the bass drums of music, they're integral parts of the orchestra, forming the structure of campaigns. What are the cost and spec limitations for our target audience? What is required for legal compliance? It's not the glamour of the violin section (social media) or the soprano solo (user experience), but they are key components of our creation.

Our instruments and compositions look different around the world. In France, La Poste has built a more societally resonant drum: For 20 euros a month, postal carriers delivering mail will stop in for a weekly visit with elderly people on their route, update their adult children with how they're doing and inform them whether they need anything. The program, Veiller sur mes parents (Watch over my parents), is one of the ways La Poste is staying relevant as mail volumes decrease. In the U.K., GDPR passed last year and goes into effect this May, establishing some of the strictest legal requirements on email permission in the world.

In the U.S., the USPS is busy offering more—and more relevant—products for its customers. Informed Delivery gives consumers a daily digital preview of the mailings they have yet to receive, and mailers can customize the customer experience of their mailpieces in this service. Every Door Direct Mail means you don't even need postal addresses to mail acquisition—you can target your prospects with zip codes and key demographics.

It's easy to get lost in the minutiae of our day-to-day. The challenges of building a meaningful and effective campaign can feel endless, and the smallest details can seem inconsequential. But what we create brings us all together and empowers our mission and purpose. Take a moment to appreciate the symphony you've created—and to learn from each other's music.

Regards,

Mikaela
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CALENDAR

Wednesday, February 28

WEBINAR

Topic: MAXI (How to Complete Submission)

1-2 PM

Via Webinar

Thursday, March 22

DIGITAL DAY FORUM

Topic: Digital

8:30 AM-4:30 PM

District Architecture Center,
Washington, DC

Thursday, March 8

DM 101

Topic: Entry Direct Marketing/
Direct Mail

8:30 AM-4:30 PM

AARP Foundation, Washington, DC

Thursday, March 22

SPRING HAPPY HOUR

Topic: Social/Networking Event

4:30 PM-6:30 PM

Fado Irish Bar, Washington, DC

Thursday, March 15

LUNCH & LEARN #1

Topic: Rapid Response

12 Noon-2 PM

SEIU, Washington, DC

Wednesday, April 25

DM 101

Topic: Entry Direct Marketing/
Direct Mail

8:30 AM-4:30 PM

NAPCO, Philadelphia, PA

Deadline for registration is 24 hours before the event, space permitting. Cancellations must be received 48 hours in advance. No-shows will be billed. Register at dmaw.org or call 703-689-3629.

Cover Story — It Ain't Over Till It's Over
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In a world where most business and nonprofit costs and revenues are limited to less than the CPI, the concept that they will stay in the U.S. mail with these kinds of increases to any degree close to current volumes is a non-starter. It just ain't going to happen. It is obvious to all involved in the mailing world. The proposal must change drastically to have any chance of working.

2. There is not a strong consensus on the PRC for this thing.

In a surreal "press conference" on Dec. 1, 2017, the PRC proposal was announced by only one of the four sitting Commissioners. Chairman Robert Taub read a written statement and walked out without taking questions, as the audience sat in stunned silence with only a smattering of applause. The other three commissioners were nowhere to be seen.

It became clearer when everyone started reading the nearly 200-page "Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for the System for Regulating Rates and Classes for Market

Dominant Products."

Each of the other three commissioners issued their own statements that indicated varying degrees of discomfort, opposition and hopes that the comment process will make the proposal at all workable. Their comments are very much worth reading by anyone affected by the PRC proposal.

• **Vice Chairman Mark Acton** expressed the point that, while the USPS needs many reforms, the PRC has only one tool at its disposal: pricing. He held out hope that the "mailing community" will provide factual evidence to support changes and improvements in the PRC proposal.

• **Commissioner Nanci Langley** similarly said that the proposal is but one approach, and she hopes the comment process will yield "a ratemaking system that provides the necessary balance to ensure the financial viability of the postal service with affordable and predictable rates for ratepayers."

• **Commissioner Tony Hammond** expressed his firm opposition to the proposal, and the wish that the comment process will yield something workable and fair. Hammond correctly pointed out that "the proposed changes elevate the financial stability objective above the others." He also expressed that the proposal gives USPS the benefits of both the old 1970 through 2006 system and the current 2006 through 2017 process without any of the sacrifices or controls.

3. US Court of Appeals ruling likely

Finally, everyone involved seems to agree that one or more parties is likely to appeal any PRC decision in federal court. So, the process of deciding the future pricing regulation of USPS is likely to stretch on and on.

A very unfortunate reality for all USPS customers is that uncertainty will continue indefinitely, and the USPS will litigate and advocate against its customers as far as the eye can see. In case you're not already aware, the USPS, as a government monopoly with declining volume, does not treat its major customers any way like their other suppliers do.

Another USPS lump of coal: Final Rule on Customized Postage

As the holiday season got in full-on mode, we at the Alliance wished all of our members, sponsors, and supporters all the best. Unfortunately, however, we needed to continue delivering bad news from our USPS. They issued their final rule on the allowable content for custom postage issued by companies like Stamps.com and Zazzle.

In January, the USPS had proposed the new standards that limit subject matter to "commercial" and "social" images or text. While many nonprofit subjects could possibly qualify as "social" because they are for the social good of America, the Alliance requested clarification from the USPS that nonprofit subjects would be eligible. The answer came down as "no."

Apparently, its attorneys are worried that some nonprofit subjects could be "threats to the postal service brand," and it would be "impermissible viewpoint dis-

A very unfortunate reality for all USPS customers is that uncertainty will continue indefinitely, and the USPS will litigate and advocate against its customers as far as the eye can see. In case you're not already aware, the USPS, as a government monopoly with declining volume, does not treat its major customers any way like their other suppliers do.

crimination, which would endanger the whole program."

So, while the USPS deems some nonprofit subjects or images as too risky, commercial advertising is OK as long as it does not include content "prohibited" by the employees of the postal service. And it looks like "commercial" will allow advertising by companies that outsource jobs, pollute the earth, charge excessive prices for medications, produce weapons of mass destruction, and shelter their taxes overseas.

All commercial images and subjects would be acceptable as long as they meet the definition: "Commercial means intended for no purpose other than the sale of goods or services in commerce." And they must not have "content that is unsuitable for all-ages audiences, including but not limited to:

- Any non-incident depiction of alcohol, tobacco, gambling, or firearms or

other weapons.

- Any depiction of controlled substances, including, but not limited to, marijuana.

- Any depiction of political, religious, violent or sexual content; or

- Any depiction of subject matter prohibited for display under U.S. law.

- Acceptable commercial or social images or text must not contain content that the customer or provider does not have the right to use either directly or under license, including, but not limited to, images or text that may be the subject of third party rights, such as copyright, trademarks or rights of publicity or privacy.

- The postal service reserves the right to determine independently whether any image, text or category of images or text meets any of its eligibility criteria.

Nonprofits might be eligible to show

their logo or other related image or words under the "social" category:

"Social means promoting or depicting people, animals, items or events commonly associated with community relations or companionship and likely to generate invitations, announcements, notices, thank-you notes, RSVPs or similar correspondence."

Time and practice will tell. It is unfortunate, though, that USPS, motivated by "threats to the postal service brand," considers nonprofits more of a risk than commercial advertisers.

The Alliance of Nonprofit Mailers has, for over 37 years, worked full time to ensure that nonprofits continue to have access to affordable, reliable postal mail. Never before has the challenge been greater, as two recent actions indicate. We will never give up and plan to continue our successful track record with the support of many nonprofits and commercial sponsors.

Stephen Kearney has been a fierce advocate for the rights of nonprofits to affordable, reliable postal mail as the executive director of the Alliance of Nonprofit Mailers since January 2014. He is a chartered financial analyst and holds an MBA from The George Washington University and a BA in Economics from McGill University. He has served in a number of senior management positions at the USPS, including treasurer, pricing, customer relations and business development. He also was a financial economist at the U.S. Treasury.



Cover Story — 2018: A Year of Change for the USPS
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service levels and classes of mail, and turns the whole mess over to the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) for review and approval. In most cases, they get a few minor adjustments, and they go into effect largely as proposed. You may get the occasional dustup—think exigent rate surcharge—but the process is pretty well defined.

In 2017, the PRC reviewed that rate-making process on its 10th anniversary, in accordance with PAEA. The USPS has been struggling to perform financially, so the PRC has proposed a new process that

still has limits, but much looser. Under the PRC proposal, postage increases would be limited to CPI plus 2 percent. If the USPS meets certain performance standards, they get another 1 percent. For certain categories of mail—think periodicals, flats—that are “underwater,” they could get still another 2 percent.

So we could easily be looking at annual increases of 5 percent to 7 percent for the next five years if inflation holds around 2 percent. This could result in rates 30 percent to 40 percent higher by 2023. That 4.3 percent exigent surcharge doesn't look

so bad now, does it?

This is what has been proposed—the PRC is taking comments. This is a possible big deal.

Informed Visibility

Mail tracking is getting a major redo in 2018, as the USPS transitions to its latest version, Informed Visibility (IV). As in the past, IV tracks individual pieces of mail as they travel through sorting equipment at the USPS. But IV also tracks pallets of mail, trays, sacks and bundles. Using this data, you will be able to get a better view



“Informed Delivery lets consumers get a view of their mail before they receive it. As mail is scanned in USPS facilities, an image is lifted. This image, a black-and-white picture of the mail piece, is emailed to consumers on the day the USPS expects to deliver it. It really is a pretty valuable service, particularly if you are traveling.”

of where your mail is as it travels from the mail house to the consumer.

In the past, USPS tracking data included only actual scans that occurred when mail was seen. IV creates a whole new world of assumed and logical scan events based on those scans, predicting when mail will be delivered. There is even a scan event created when a letter carrier crosses the ZIP+4 boundary of an address, letting you know the approximate time of delivery. Processing this data, however, will not be simple. IV continues to provide raw data that needs to be massaged into reports to have value, and the additional scan events created in IV mean a lot more data to be managed.

Informed Delivery

Informed Delivery, the worst named product the USPS has released in a while, lets consumers get a view of their mail before they receive it. As mail is scanned in USPS facilities, an image is lifted. This image, a black-and-white picture of the mail piece, is emailed to consumers on the day the USPS expects to deliver it. It really is a pretty valuable service, particularly if you are traveling.

Mailers can also create digital ads that appear in the Informed Delivery email in lieu of, or with, the black-and-white image. This provides another touch with your prospects, as well as an opportunity for them to respond directly. These campaigns are not difficult to execute, and there is currently no charge by the USPS to add them. In an upcoming version of the service, you will be able to append unique URLs to each piece in a mailing through your electronic documentation that will allow consumers to click to a customized web landing page. This turns these ad

links essentially into personalized URLs.

Very cool technology indeed, but the challenge is getting enough of the public to care. Currently about 2.5 million households receive an Informed Delivery emails every day, less than 2 percent of consumer households.

The USPS touts more than 7 million subscribers, but many of those are simply people who signed up for USPS.com to buy stamps or shipping services. The critical number is the number of email subscribers. The USPS needs to invest more—a lot more—in marketing this service to consumers. If you haven't signed up yet, you can at InformedDelivery.usps.com.

So it still may be tough to get excited about the latest developments at the USPS, but there are certainly some things worth watching. Where needed, I'll get excited for you.

Dave Lewis is vice president of ProList, Inc., a Frederick, Md., marketing services provider. He is also president of SnailWorks, which provides coordinated direct marketing services. Dave has been active in the direct mail industry for more than 30 years and is currently industry co-chair of the USPS MTAC User Group on Mail Visibility. You can reach via email at dlewis@prolist.com or on the phone at 301-924-4545.

advantage

[ədˈvɑntɪj]

NOUN

noun: **advantage** · plural noun: **advantages**
a condition or circumstance that puts one in a favorable or superior position:
“working with The Production Advantage will give you an advantage in the marketplace”

synonyms: upper hand · edge · lead · trump card · superiority · dominance · ascendancy · supremacy · power · mastery · inside track · catbird seat

More

the opportunity to gain something; benefit or profit:

“you could achieve something to your advantage”
synonyms: benefit · profit · gain · good · mileage

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CASE STUDY

A closer look at direct marketing campaigns in action.

BY POLLY PAPSAORE

Informed Delivery Campaign Tests: The Findings May Surprise You



A few forward-thinking commercial and nonprofit mailers are testing Informed Delivery campaigns with interesting results.

Here's what we're finding so far:

- **Informed Delivery is an innovative new multichannel platform** that truly fuses direct mail and online campaign touch points with reporting capabilities that let you track impressions, email interaction and direct revenue.
- **Informed Delivery subscribers see grayscale scans of your mail piece in their daily emails or dashboards**, providing an added impression with no extra effort required on your part.
- **An Informed Delivery Campaign enhances your scanned image with a full color "ride along image" and/or a full color "replacement image,"**



which replaces the grayscale scan of the actual direct mail piece, combined with a landing page link. These digital ad-like elements give your donors and customers another opportunity to engage with you directly. Your call-to-action in the images and links can be a donation, an advocacy action or product offer.



Initial results are promising

The added online impressions are valuable, whether or not revenue can be directly attributed to the campaign. Nonprofits with large volume prospect and house file mailings are seeing a critical mass of extra impressions within their audiences.

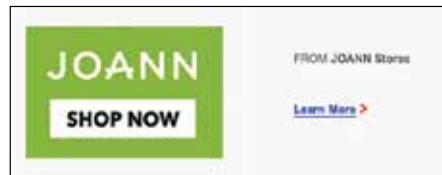
• For example, one national nonprofit ran a test campaign with 32 percent of their physical direct mail pieces featured in the Informed Delivery subscriber emails—healthy quantities at their large mail volumes. That's a critical mass of multiple impressions from one mail piece.

- These emails had a 70 percent open rate, more than twice the industry average according to the USPS.
- Direct online revenue attributed to Informed Delivery campaigns had higher average gifts,

leading to better long term value.

Implementing a campaign is getting easier

Working with the USPS team on Informed Delivery campaigns gets easier every day as the USPS fixes technical glitches and streamlines the steps involved. Eventually, the USPS will offer a self-service plat-



form for mailers, simplifying the entire process even more.

If you're a nonprofit or agency, your production partner can handle the technical details around your data, your mailing logistics, uploading and testing your digital assets and serving as the primary point of contact with the USPS. This lets you focus on the fun stuff—creating the digital strategy, creative elements and offers that integrate with your direct mail piece.

Brand marketers are embracing Informed Delivery

On the commercial side, we're seeing campaigns from consumer brands like Hayneedle, the online home goods retailer, Progressive Insurance and Joann Fabrics. Several large national nonprofits are testing the program as well.

We've talked with a national retailer, one of the program's original beta testers. They're very pleased with how their results are trending over the past year.

- Initially, their match rate (the percentage of Informed Delivery subscribers that match to the retailer's combined prospect



and house file names) was 3 to 4 percent.

- Now, a year later, their match rate has increased to 10 percent or more. This retailer's marketing team is fully committed to the Informed Delivery program.
- They're excited about its potential as more and more individuals nationwide sign up to receive the daily emails. Although direct revenue has been minimal thus far, they're very happy with the



extra impressions the digital images provide.

Another benefit during this testing phase: The number of Informed Delivery

Campaigns is still limited. When a full color digital campaign does show up in a subscriber's USPS "Informed Delivery Daily Digest" email, it really stands out and gets noticed in the sea of grayscale direct mail piece scans. It's a great way to surprise and delight your customers, donors and prospects.

The key takeaways

- We recommend nonprofits try Informed Delivery during the USPS' free operational test period happening now for a limited time.
- Learn about the process, analyze your results and monitor the Informed Delivery subscriber growth nationwide.
- Focus on the value of the extra impressions this platform provides.

When this program rolls out and hits a tipping point, you'll be ready to make a smart decision about how it fits into your overall marketing strategy and budget.

Polly Papsadore is the director of marketing and business development at PMG. Polly can be reached at polly@pmgdirect.net



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OUT OF THE TRENCHES

Your direct marketing colleagues take a big-picture look at things.

Postal and Legal Issues: Not Much Happening in 2018



Happy Valentines Day! It's February already, and I'm pretty sure my wife is going to keep me another year (based

on my great gift... of course). If I don't get it right, I risk getting fired, so I make sure I get it right every year.

This is the polar opposite of the USPS board of governors. Their performance must have been pretty lousy, because as of the writing of this article, there were

nine vacancies on an 11-member board.

Normally, we would use this space to talk about postal incentives for 2018, but there is one small reason we can't...the lack of Presidentially-appointed governors on the USPS board of governors.

There is no clear date as to when someone will be appointed, so all of the 2018 promotions are in jeopardy of being severely delayed for 2019.

There was a time when us sales guys could present information regarding the year's hottest promotion to our clients, offering discounts to use specialty papers, new technologies or whatever the incentive was at the time.

This year, we haven't heard anything. I wish this were not the case, but sadly, we have no incentives to pass along to encourage or enhance your participation.

No board of governors means no promotions in 2018. While the USPS can't cre-

ate new incentives without a board, there are plenty of things they can do without a board. Unfortunately many of these are unfavorable to us in direct response.

For example, the USPS can raise postal rates without the board of governors. As of Jan. 21, the following rate hikes went into effect: letters up \$0.01 to \$0.50, metered letters up \$0.01 to \$0.47, First-Class automated mail went from .423 to .424, marketing mail went from .288 to .287 and the traditional rate went from .271 to .274. In addition, domestic postcards increased \$0.01 to \$0.35, and new shipping services product prices increased Priority Mail 3.9 percent and Priority Mail Retail an average of 0.8 percent.

As if that is not enough rate speak, the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) recently posted the results of their Rate and Regulatory Review*.

The 2006 Postal Accountability and En-

BY KYLE MARTIN

"As of Jan. 21, the following rate hikes went into effect: letters up \$0.01 to \$0.50, metered letters up \$0.01 to \$0.47, First-Class automated mail went from .423 to .424, marketing mail went from .288 to .287 and the traditional rate went from .271 to .274. In addition, domestic postcards increased \$0.01 to \$0.35, and new shipping services product prices increased Priority Mail 3.9 percent and Priority Mail Retail an average of 0.8 percent."

hancement Act (PAEA) requires a review of the past 10 years of the existing market dominant rate and classification system to determine if the USPS achieved the nine objectives, considering 14 factors established by Congress. Are you confused yet?

The goal: to create a flexible, stable, predictable and streamlined ratemaking system that ensures USPS financial health and maintains high quality standards and performance. (And if you believe that, I have an igloo I'd like to sell you!).

Overall, some objectives were achieved, but mostly not.

Findings, in a nutshell:

- Pricing has not been increased efficiently by the ratemaking system.
- Financial health is not being maintained by the PAEA, although things look better in the short term than they do mid-to long term.
- High-quality service standards have not been achieved.

Highlights of the ensuing proposed rules, the intent of which are to promote Efficient Component Pricing and help the ratemaking system maximize incentives to increase efficiency, are below:

- Compliment (not replace) the CPI-U price cap. This would be achieved by providing discrete, clearly defined amounts of additional authority. Uh oh.
- Two percentage points of rate authority per class of mail per calendar year for each of the first five full calendar years following the effective date of proposed rules.
- Up to 1 percentage point of rate authority per class of mail per calendar year, contingent on USPS meeting or exceeding an operational efficiency-based standard and adhering to service stan-

dard quality criteria.

- A required rate increase for any non-compensatory product of a minimum of 2 percentage points above the percentage increase per class. A percentage increase over a percentage increase? (Will someone pass me a calculator?)

- Establishment of two band ranges with upper and lower limits for work-share discount passthrough. Including a band range of plus or minus 25 percent for periodicals and a band range of

plus or minus 15 percent for all other classes.

- Non-compliant pass-through would be subject to a three-year grace period.

Direct mail still has an affordable and effective place in the marketing mix, and with all the digital fatigue, folks still like getting personalized letters in the mail. We may not have all the answers but are happy to help walk you through this as changes occurs.

This review, findings and proposals can be found on the homepage of the Commission's website, www.prc.gov (all information above regarding review, findings and proposals gathered from EMA Dec monthly newsletter).*

Kyle Martin is vice president of sales at Colortree Group, where he has worked for 29 years. He is active in the Envelope Manufacturers Association and the Envelope Institute of America. If you would like to contact Kyle, please do so at 804-545-2573 or kmartin@colortree.com. Colortree Group is a 24/7 operation where one call prints it all.



MAXI AWARDS

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What you need to know to win...

Deadline for submissions is Friday, March 9th. Entry forms will be available in early January. For details visit www.dmao.org. Don't forget to join us for the MAXI webinar to learn tips and tricks that could land you a coveted MAXI Award on Tuesday, July 31st.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT ANN WALSH AT ANN@DMAW.ORG

Wednesday, Feb 28

Webinar: How to Submit a MAXI Form

Friday, March 9

Deadline for submissions

Tuesday, July 31

MAXI Awards Ceremony

COPYWRITING

Exploring the nature and nuances of effective copywriting for direct marketing

BY BARRY COX

Repeat After Me



After staring at a blinking cursor, at the ceiling and out the window trying to come up with a copywriting angle on postal regulations and legal

issues, I just admitted defeat and sought escape in a meditation app.

But there was no escape from the need to provide you, dear reader, with some insight on writing. So even as I became mindful and reflective for a rare few minutes, the app's soothing disembodied voice's suggestion for a mantra that could foster self-contentment struck me as also being good guidance for creating effective fundraising copy.

The meditation mantra: "Let me be happy. Let me be compassionate. Let me be healthy. Let me be at peace." Paraphrasing for fundraising purposes:

Help your donors be happy.

"It's better to give than receive" isn't just an adage. It's a scientifically proven fact. Giving, to individuals or charities, makes donors happier than before their philanthropic acts. So you're not "bothering" folks when you seek contributions—you're providing them with opportunities to experience joy.

That fact should get you past any initial hesitation to write your donors or soon-to-be donors with a request for funding. But don't let it be only a launching pad. Make it a touchstone you return to again and again by telling donors about the happy-ending stories they've made possible. A sick child cured, a homeless dog adopted, a law passed (or blocked), a candidate elected (or defeated)—whatever causes for celebration you have should be shared early and often in your fundraising communications, regardless of channel.

And don't just share the stories in

hopes of making donors happy through altruistic-released endorphins. Come right out and tell them how happy and proud they should be for being such wonderful people. Lay it on thick; not as a tactic but because they truly deserve it.

Help your donors be compassionate.

This isn't quite the same as being happy due to being a donor. After all, it's quite possible for someone to be happy without showing any concern for others. But people with deep wells of compassion don't do anyone much good unless that have a way to act on it. It's up to you provide that way.

The act of making a donation is the clearest, easiest way. Usually the way we most desire as well. But volunteering time, social media mentions about a nonprofit's work and political activism are others. You should offer them all—along with others unique to your organization or mission—as options for your donors to show they truly care.

Once again, praise them for their compassion. Note it being an admirable personality trait, something you wish other people possessed in such abundance. Don't worry about it coming across as pandering—the fact is flattery will get you everywhere. Doubtful about that point? Think of your reaction the last time someone commented on your compassion or complimented anything about you, both of which no doubt occurred within the past hour. (See what I did there?)

Help your donors be safe.

Not safe from physical harm—that would be quite a trick for even the most successful fundraising communication. But given media attention to fundraising scandals, real or imagined, and human nature's ingrained skepticism, you cannot assume to be deemed a safe place for a donor's generosity just because you know you are.

Putting aside differing opinions within our industry on the validity or value of different watchdog rating systems, be aware they many donors consider such ratings

as shorthand for which nonprofits can be trusted to use their dollars wisely. So if you have laudable ratings, spotlight them as evidence that donor dollars are safe in your hands.

And if you don't, find another way to demonstrate you can be trusted to use donations wisely—positive outcomes (which should be touted regardless of fundraising ratios or ratings), money-back guarantees, endorsements (from celebrities and/or regular folks), reliance on volunteers, etc.

Let your donors be at peace.

The "Peaceful Easy Feeling" song, sung about by the Eagles, isn't easy to experience these days. Terrorism, famine, war, disease, climate change and extreme partisanship are just some of the barriers to feeling a sense of peace. Then again, they are also some of the prime motivators of donors when properly presented.

By properly presented, I mean not in an overwhelming "the end is near" fashion. Rather as serious problems that can be solved—most notably by donations, of course. Reassuring donors that they are part of the solution to all that ails our world can bring a measure of peace their minds and daily lives. The trick, for lack of a better word, is to convey progress without claiming total victory—the latter of which should always be tantalizingly close, but not quite within reach.

Much if not all of this may strike you as elementary. No argument here—I don't purport to be providing revolutionary information. But review your last appeal to current donors or attempt to acquire new ones.

I suspect it's a safe bet you didn't cover all of these bases, or perhaps none at all. That's not an indictment. It's a fact that someone as smart, motivated and compassionate as you are can certainly change for the better ... regardless of any postal regs or legal issues that might come into play.

Barry Cox is a freelance copywriter with 28 years of experience and the warm glow of inner peace. BCoxWriter@aol.com. 703-892-2577.

MARKETING *AdVents*

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Deadline for Articles and News Notes: 15th of the second month preceding issue date (e.g., deadline for May issue is March 15).

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NEWS NOTES

Catherine Cook LaCour has been appointed chief marketing officer of the Blackbaud Institute for Philanthropic Impact, where she will oversee the company's global marketing initiatives. She has been on the Blackbaud team since 2010 and recently served as the company's senior vice president, where she "re-engineered Blackbaud's corporate marketing function from the ground up and led the company to re-imagine its brand to better align with its purpose-driven mission and values," according to a company press release. Additionally, LaCour is co-chair of Blackbaud's women executive networking community and is active in Fortune's Most Powerful Women network.

Craig DePole has been named president of Newport ONE, a direct-response fundraising agency that serves over 50 nonprofit clients. DePole has been with the company for eight years and, under his new role, he will remain involved in his clients' programs, as well as lead the company's marketing efforts and "direct the company to meet the ever-changing opportunities that lie ahead," according to a press release.

Dieneea, a digital direct marketing technology company, has launched EmailSuccess. This new technology platform aims to be a high-performance, on-premises MTA server solution that will simplify sending high-volume emails and managing deliverability. As reported in a press release by BusinessWire, the company's chief technology Officer, Fabio Masini, said that this platform was developed "with the aim of providing an intelligent and scalable server solution, which guarantees full control over the configuration of each individual parameter." EmailSuccess has the ability to be installed quickly and easily, with integrated systems already in place. And its auto-tuning technology decreases the need to handle low-level technical aspects to a minimum, the release said.



Is something exciting happening in your company or organization?

Tell us about it!

Email the editor, Nhu Te,
at dmawadvents@dmaw.org





DMAW Educational Foundation Builds 'Pipeline' of New Direct Marketing Talent



PMG, QuadGraphics, Beaconfire RED and

Examples of companies that have already benefitted from the fresh talent recruitment efforts of the DMAW Educational Foundation include



Marketing General. You can take advantage of this program, too. To really grow your direct-marketing shop, you need the very best people on your team. And the best talent in the direct marketing business is developed two ways: (1) by many years of experience or "learning on the job"; and (2) by a solid education in direct-marketing fundamentals at the undergraduate level.

If you already have one or more seasoned pros on your team, you know how much you've invested in their professional development—with your time, by sharing your own expertise, and with money. And you know it's a big investment. You work hard to keep that talent happy and on board. But where do you find new talent? As recently as a few decades ago, the only answer was either to "poach" it from your colleagues and competitors, or else spend even more time, talent and treasure to develop promising, but inexperienced people at the start of their careers. Both approaches are costly.

Fortunately, in 1986, a dedicated group of DMAW leaders founded the DMAW Educational Foundation (DMAW/EF) to address this specific issue. Thirty-one years later, direct marketers all over the Mid-Atlantic region have been reaping the harvest.

As a DMAW member, you are an important part of this, because the DMAW supports the work of the DMAW/EF, a totally separate nonprofit organization with its own board of directors and unique set of programs focused on regional professors and undergraduate students.

DMAW/EF provides intensive support to marketing professors at colleges and universities in the Mid-Atlantic region, to help them develop curricula that are specifically focused on direct marketing. Those professors teach their students about the fundamental principles, channels, tools and metrics of direct marketing. Then the DMAW/EF "closes the loop" by connecting well qualified direct-marketing students who have been recommended by their professors with DMAW members and other local direct-market users and suppliers who are looking for bright, new talent.

The DMAW/EF's career placement network is open to all DMAW members. Please visit our website at dmawef.org to learn more about our programs and make a donation today.

When you consider the cost to develop new talent to take your shop to the next level, you can see what a great investment the DMAW/EF is!

Scott E. Huch has been a member of the DMAW Educational Foundation, Inc., board of directors since 2003 and its secretary since 2009. He is also president and sole owner of Direct Creative, Inc.. You can contact Scott at scott@directcreative.info or (703) 933-3845. For more information, visit www.dmawef.org

Did You Know?

The DMAW/EF, a separate nonprofit organization from DMAW, relies heavily on contributions from DMAW members to fund its work. Please donate today!

BY SCOTT HUCH

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Ben Kuniholm

Account Executive
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Ben Kuniholm lives in Georgetown, a historic neighborhood in northwest Washington, D.C., with his wife and soon-to-be rescue pup. He first immersed himself in the direct-marketing world when he worked as an intern through high school and college at SMS Direct. And after taking a multitude of business and marketing classes in college, he continued to work at SMS Direct.

What drove him to stay in the nonprofit sector is that he loved the sense of community in the industry and the opportunity it provided to do something meaningful.

Location: Washington, D.C

Education: Grove City College, B.A. in Business Management

DMAW Member Since: 2012

Who do you consider your mentors?

My boss and father. They are actually the same person. My dad became a second-generation direct mailer in 1984 when his father, 1970 DMAW Hall of Leaders inductee Roland Kuniholm, advised him to start a mail shop. So, it is true when I say that no one has given me more advice, both personally and professionally, than my boss.

What advice would you offer a novice who wants to move up in direct marketing?

First, I would say to make absolutely certain that you find the work rewarding and enjoyable. Doing it for any other reason, ultimately, won't be satisfying. Second, it is well worth your time to invest in others. Look for opportunities both to learn from and lend a hand to co-workers, clients and competitors alike!

What is the most helpful step you took to advance your direct marketing career?

Making the decision to be fully invested in my job and seeing it as a career. That has opened all kinds of doors and opportunities to meet new people.

Tell us about your volunteer experiences with DMAW.

I've written for the DMAW Marketing AdVents and hope to get involved to a greater capacity moving forward.

Describe yourself in three words.

Focused, organized, empathetic.

Describe your life in six words.

Grow through what you go through.

Ben's Favorites

Restaurant

The Dabney, located in northwest Washington, D.C

Films

"Goodwill Hunting" and "A Beautiful Mind."

Books

"Cathedral: A Collection by Raymond Carver."

Music

Arcade Fire and The National.

Websites

TheRinger.com

Leisure Interests

Sailing, running, rooting for all D.C. sports teams and coffee.

Quote

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

— Theodore Roosevelt

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