

Why Most Teams Don't Reach Their Lowest Postage

A Diagnostic That Reveals What Most Programs Overlook

Postage outcomes are rarely driven by a single tactic.

In large mail programs, postage reflects many decisions across formats, data, logistics, and timing. Teams rarely view those decisions together, which obscures their impact on cost, delivery, and predictability.

When choices around format, entry strategy, commingling, promotions, data discipline, and logistics are evaluated in isolation or too late, opportunities for control, predictability, and lower total cost are easy to miss.

This diagnostic provides a single, system level view to help you assess whether your program is operating as an integrated whole, or whether savings and stability are being left unrealized.

Marketers who consistently reach the lowest possible postage do not manage every lever themselves. They work with partners who:

- can see the full picture,
- coordinate the details, and
- are transparent about how each decision affects the outcome.

If your postage is operating at that level, you should be able to confidently answer yes to most of the questions that follow.

EARLY-DECISION CONTROL

- Are postage implications considered **before** formats, volumes, and versions are finalized?
- Can class or format decisions be adjusted without disrupting delivery windows? See #3 below. Format changes need deep evaluation to preserve performance, so this is a change you must consider early.
- Are cost and delivery timing modeled together—rather than separately?

If these decisions happen late, control is already limited.

COMMINGLING REALITY

- Do you know your actual **five digit and SCF percentages** today?
- Is commingling applied **only** to the pieces that benefit?
- Is your commingling under the same roof as your printer?
- Are delivery windows tighter as a result—or just cheaper?

Commingling solutions should stabilize both cost and delivery timing matched to your needs.

If they don't, something is off.

CONVERSION & FORMAT FLEXIBILITY

- Have format conversions been tested in the past 12 months? There are significant cost differences among:
 - First Class Letter versus Marketing Mail Letter
 - First Class Letter versus First Class Card
 - Marketing Mail Flat versus Marketing Mail Letter
- Have class conversions been tested in the past 12 months? Here's an example of how this can result in significant savings.
- Do you collapse production versions in ways that preserve full 1:1 personalization while improving presort efficiency?
- Are conversion decisions evaluated alongside response—rather than in isolation?

Well planned conversions reduce cost without sacrificing performance. Outdated conclusions can inhibit new testing opportunities.

PROMOTIONS AS A SYSTEM

- Are USPS promotions planned into the calendar—rather than applied opportunistically?
- Are add on promotions layered intentionally to extend savings?
- Are promotions treated as part of campaign planning—rather than last minute discounts?

Promotions provide the most value when they're planned early and used repeatedly.

DATA & LIST DISCIPLINE

- Is address hygiene run immediately before presort?
- Is suppression applied consistently to remove low likelihood responders?
- Are small data losses treated as real cost and revenue risk?

Even 1% inaccurate data compounds quickly at scale, as this can result in Undeliverable As Addressed (UAA) mail. The USPS disposes of UAA Marketing Mail to reduce its own cost burden.

LOGISTICS & ENTRY STRATEGY

- Are logistics decisions audited **lane by lane**, rather than assumed?
- Are freight and fuel charges weighed against savings each time—rather than reused by habit?
- Are induction strategies flexible when timing matters more than pennies saved?

Drop shipping, commingling, and alternate entry work best when applied deliberately.

What Your Answers Tell You

If you answered **yes** across most sections, your program likely has more control and predictability than average.

If several questions raised uncertainty, there may be **more flexibility in your postage than you've been told**—without sacrificing performance or delivery expectations.

Best-in-class postage comes from managing cost drivers together, not in isolation.

This assessment gives you a clear, coordinated view of how those drivers work as a system.



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