

Transactional Print Case Study

Outstanding Collections – A Debt Collection Company

Customer Background

Outstanding Collections (*) offer a debt collection service to numerous companies that outsource their debt collection requirements. The service includes outward bound and inbound calls from a call centre acting on behalf of its clients supported by the printing and mailing of personalised collection letters to debtors.

As Outstanding Collections expanded, the task of producing these personalised letters became more onerous and time consuming, yet efficiency was critical to the speed at which they were able to collect outstanding debt. To maintain the production of letters in-house would have meant an increasing investment in both employee time and capital equipment.

Service Required

To receive data on a daily basis for the production, personalisation, fulfilment and mailing of 1,000 to 10,000 letters per day. This requirement includes:

1. Data to be supplied from two different computer systems in different formats
2. Up to three different base stock types – letterheads and Bank Giro Credits on CBS2 paper
3. Two differently printed OS DL envelopes
4. Up to 80 different letter types
5. Multiple page letters depending on type of debt collection and data
6. BRE (business reply envelope) for certain letters only
7. Selective inserting of leaflets
8. Mailing on customers Royal Mail account
9. Provide full reports on stock and envelope usage
10. Provide reports on “Gone Away’s” (as up to 800 letters per day are returned by Royal Mail as undeliverable).



Datagraphic Solution

A Data Preparation programme was written to receive data from the two different computer systems in different formats which is then combined and converted into one data file. Flags were contained in the data supplied to identify letter texts, stationery, envelopes, and which inserts or BRE's were required.

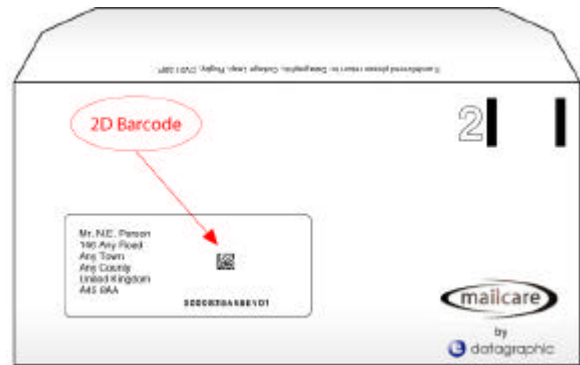
The data prep programme prepared the file for printing so that the fulfilment department could identify stock types, envelopes, inserts and BRE's. The PReS Print Script (*) was prepared so that each of the splits was separated by a pink dividing sheet. Each dividing sheet was printed with all the relevant information to inform the mailroom what was required of the particular batch – e.g. inserts or BRE's, type of outer envelope etc.

Printing is undertaken using high speed Xerox 4635 cut-sheet printers with 4 in feed trays for different stationery types and divider sheets. To identify multiple page documents OMR marks (*) are printed that are read by the readers on the Kern inserters

(*) see note at end

Datagraphic's unique Mailcare system using 2D barcode technology is used to ensure that the correct job is printed on the right stationery. This is achieved by pre-printing the stock with a PDF417 barcode containing the stock number and printing a 2D barcode in the address area of the letter during laser personalisation.

The Mailcare system fitted at the delivery end of the Kern inserters is used to read both barcodes through the window envelope. The system automatically verifies that the correct programme has been used and that the job is printed on the correct stationery. As the system is linked to the original run file it also compares and checks that there are no duplicates or missing documents.



Mailing details are recorded via the Internet using Royal Mail's EPRO system. The client can log on the Royal Mail EPRO system at any time to check the status of the mailings.

At the end of the process reports are automatically generated for the client from the PRES programme providing a daily report that is sent off to the client and the distributor providing full details of the day's mailing.

"Gone away" Service

The outer envelopes used are pre-printed with a unique address using a PO Box number directed back to Datagraphic. The returned mail is sorted into reason for being returned. The sealed envelopes are then scanned via the Mailcare system that reads the 2D barcode through the window of the envelope.

The Mailcare system links to the original database of letters mailed and creates a file containing details of all letters returned and the reason they were returned by Royal Mail.

This file is emailed to Outstanding Collections for action.

The Customer's Overview

This unique business relationship that exists between Outstanding Collections, Datagraphic and (the Print Management Company) means that the customer's only in-house requirement is to keep the data up-to-date and transmit it to Datagraphic on time – everything else is taken care of. The Service Level Agreement in place means that Outstanding Collections can rely on data sent by 10.00am being sent out in that night's post, which means that the debtors dealt with on the telephone receive a written letter within 48 hours of the phone call. This happens every working day for up to 10,000 letters.

Datagraphic's technology has allowed Outstanding Collections to streamline their activities and concentrate on what they do best – which is speaking to customers to clear outstanding debt.

(*) Notes

- Outstanding Collections – This case study has been based on a real customer, however the name of the customer has been changed for confidentiality purposes.
- PRoS Print Script – PRoS is the programming software which is used internationally by direct mail and transactional print companies. All programming is undertaken by an in-house team of programmers in the technical services department
- OMR marks – Optical Mark Recognition. Refers to a technique that uses register marks and light sensors to "read" the pages through a feeder machine. OMR is used to ensure the right pages go through a feeder in the right order.