

SIGNATURE

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A NEW YEAR SAFETY ROADMAP CHECK

By Stephen Stankavage, PGCA Director of Environmental, Safety & Health

With a new year upon us, it's always a good time to give your Safety Management system a "once over" to ensure you are still on the path that best leads your organization to a zero-incident culture. There are ten areas you should address and although every safety program is unique to the company instituting it, these ten areas rarely change even in the most unique industries.



- 1. Management Support and Supervision.** This is vital to the success of any safety program. If safety is to become part of the corporate culture, it must begin with management. No plan can be properly implemented if managers do not support it. They must agree on all aspects of the plan and convey high safety expectations to employees. To help keep your leadership team focused on the tasks at hand, review any safety commitment documentation they may have agreed to, including goals and objectives for the past year and the upcoming year. Assess the team's successes and shortcomings and determine a new set of goals and objectives. Remember all goals and objectives for safety should lead to building a zero-incident workplace.
- 2. Responsibility.** Communicate the level of responsibility to each employee and commit any resources needed. There should be no ambiguity. Employees' written job descriptions need to include safety responsibilities. Supervisors should discuss performance-oriented safety measures with each employee; and the facility leadership should discuss safety performance measures with the supervisors.
- 3. Inspections.** Train employees to do self-inspections of their work environment directed toward specific items and exposures common to the position. Periodic checks by management as well as other employees should also be established. Inspections should be fact-finding, not fault-finding. This is a great function to institute with your Safety Committee. A member of Management and two members of your safety committee should inspect your facility at least once a month.
- 4. Incident Analysis.** When an incident does occur, supervisors should thoroughly investigate to identify the root cause and causational factors and correct any exposures to prevent reoccurrence. Management should discuss the findings with employees.
- 5. Safety Rules.** Work with key employees to develop concise safety performance expectations that can be measured against specific company goals. Then, communicate safety expectations and goals to all employees. Be sure to update these expectations and goals periodically. Again, it is critical that these goals be measurable.



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COVER CONTINUED

6. Safety Meetings. Supervisors should hold safety meetings on a regular basis with employees, discussing safety performance expectations and goals that were developed. These meetings should be performance oriented.

7. Training. Establish a formal program for training new and existing employees. Also, train supervisors and managers in conducting safety meetings and inspections. Update and change any training materials to reflect changes in operation or personnel.

8. Recordkeeping. Keep records of all safety events, training courses, inspections and accident investigations. OSHA 300 logs are required for any employer who has more than 10 employees, unless your industry is classified as a low hazard work field. OSHA 300 logs and OSHA 300A logs must be signed by January 31st of the new year by the senior officer of your organization or the highest-ranking person at that location if the CEO is not available. The OSHA 300A summary must be posted in a common area of your facility from February 1st until April 30th.

9. First Aid. Make sure you have an employee trained in first aid available on every job site and shift. Training is determined by the type of injuries likely to occur. Inspect your First Aid supplies to ensure no materials are damaged or out of date.

10. Emergency Preparedness. Management should develop an emergency preparedness plan to ensure the safety of all employees and visitors in the event of an emergency. This plan must be communicated to employees. Ensure critical employees on your emergency response teams, fire brigades and spill response teams are re-trained in areas that have changed over the course of the year. You must also train employees on emergency and evacuation techniques yearly. Employers should update their safety programs yearly to reflect any changes in operations as well as changes regarding standards and codes.

That's it, your organization is set for another safe and productive year. Now let's keep the new year a happy one!

Steve Stankavage has 25 years' experience in Environmental, Safety and Health with 16 years' experience in the printing industry. Steve came to GAA, now PGCA, from the defense contracting industry, but also has EHS experience in heavy construction, wind energy, waste management and academia. Contact Steve with your safety questions and concerns at ssankavage@printcommunications.org or call (570) 579-6497.



- *Lead your organization to a zero-incident culture.*
- *If safety is to become part of the corporate culture, it must begin with management.*
- *Inspections should be fact-finding, not fault-finding.*
- *OSHA 300 summary must be posted February 1st until April 30th.*
- *Update safety programs yearly to reflect any changes in operations, standards and codes.*

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PGCA's Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) Department is ready to assist your company in navigating through the regulations, interpretations and guidance documents that make up the realm of environmental and safety compliance. We can provide you with realistic, practical, and economical solutions to your issues.

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- **Training Programs**
- **Environmental & Safety Reporting**

Contact Steve Stankavage at (570) 579-6497 or ssankavage@printcommunications.org for assistance.

PGCA also offers OSHA compliance webinars on demand and at no cost to members. See page 15 for details.

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IN LOVING MEMORY

IN MEMORIAM, JERRY BANKS

All of us at PGCA are saddened to report the passing of Jerry Banks in December 2023. Jerry retired from full time service as PIA's Manager of Membership Services in 2020. Over his nearly 20 years with PIA, Jerry logged thousands of miles driving to all points of PGCA's membership footprint, servicing nearly every member with outreach or on-site safety training, and leaving his imprint on the industry.



Jerry attended Burgard Vocational High School in Buffalo, NY, after a grammar school guidance counselor told him, "Jerry, you have good reading comprehension and big hands. I think you should apply to the printing program at Burgard". He started working part time for a printer in high school and eventually served in every capacity, from production to supervision to general manager.

Jerry's Army service taught him the willingness to go the extra mile. We fondly remember Jerry's stories of his service in the Vietnam War; about the heat and humidity, the grasshoppers as big as small dogs and meeting Bob Hope after returning from R & R.

Jerry became a part owner of the printing company when it was bought by a team of employees, and he served as president for 15 years.

During that time, Jerry became active as a volunteer with PIA, serving on the board of directors and various committees and receiving the Printer of the Year award for his service. A true Renaissance man, one would think Jerry's schedule would have been full managing a good-sized printing operation and raising a young family, but somehow, he found the time to join the PIA Board, learn to play the clarinet, and attend Buffalo State College in pursuit of teaching credentials.

Jerry always said he would not have been able to operate his printing business successfully without the friendships, teachings, and peer guidance provided by the Association.

Jerry joined the PIA staff in 2003 and his many responsibilities included marketing, business consulting and member outreach. When a significant member need was identified, Jerry took on the task of delivering safety training for PIA members, taking the necessary training, and developing presentations and training materials.

Jerry began traveling across PIA's territory providing in-plant training on a variety of OSHA standards. He eventually developed the training programs in webinar format, so the training could be conducted via conference call, while still offering the option of on-site training. He also took on the project of having five of the webinars translated and recorded in Spanish to allow training to be conducted for members with Spanish speaking employees.

Finally, recognizing the limits of providing live training, Jerry undertook the task of setting up the webinars to be available on demand via the Association's website; writing dialogue, recording the webinars, assembling handouts, and required materials. Today, Print & Graphic Communications Association members have access to 17 pre-recorded OSHA Compliance training programs, available 24/7 and on demand to their employees.

Jerry conducted over 1,500 live training programs to over 16,500 trainees. His efforts to deliver industry specific safety training, at no cost, on demand, 24/7, still benefits all members today. Jerry was proud to say that through his effort, many workers went home safely to their families because of the teaching and guidance he provided.

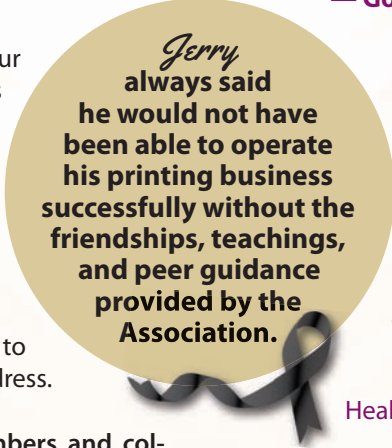
We miss you Jerry. Your sense of humor, your natural curiosity (constantly posing questions such as "did you know stop signs used to be yellow?"), the Kringle's you would bring us, your dedication, and your friendship. We are grateful for your lifetime of service to PIA and the industry and your safety training legacy!

Any members wishing to offer condolences to Jerry's family can contact the office for their address.

At the time of Jerry Banks' retirement, members and colleagues provided testimonials about Jerry Banks. Here is a sampling of their thoughts:

"It goes without saying that Jerry has left his safety footprint in the hallways of American Packaging. Without question, Jerry has contributed immensely to our various safety programs throughout the years with his insight and safety suggestions."

— **Terry Burns**, American Packaging, Rochester, NY



"Jerry has always been the consummate professional in his efforts to provide accurate, timely and comprehensive workplace safety and health information to printing and allied workplaces across New York State."

— **Gordon Deleys**, Compliance Assistance Specialist (retired), U.S. Department of Labor – OSHA, Buffalo Area Office

"Jerry was dedicated to making sure the members were well serviced and coupled with his great personality, he was able to communicate the requirements in a way that was understood. Jerry was a great asset to the printing industry, and I will miss working with him."

— **Gary Jones**, Director, Environmental, Health and Safety Affairs, PRINTING United Alliance, Fairfax, VA

"We will all miss Jerry's sense of humor and his great patience in training people ... even if it's road testing a newbie to operate a powered lift jack and the new employee rams the wall a couple of times in the process."

— **Phil Jordan**, Safety Officer, Cambridge Pacific, Cambridge, NY

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→ **Women In Print Luncheon**
 April 11, 2024
 The 1912 Club, Plymouth Meeting, PA

April 18, 2024
 Park Country Club, Buffalo, NY

→ **PGCA HR Conference**
 May 2 & 3, 2024
 Turning Stone, Verona, NY

→ **Americas Print Show**
 May 8 & 9, 2024
 Huntington Convention Center
 Cleveland, OH

→ **Raymond A. Bubar Golf Classic**
 July 26, 2024
 Terry Hills Golf Course
 Batavia, NY

WEBINARS

→ **HR Academy:
 Essential Training for
 Managers & Supervisors**
 Series of Monthly Webinars
 February 15, 2024 – April 25, 2024

Visit printcommunications.org to access:

PGCA Online Safety Webinars:
 17 webinars on mandatory and recommended safety training topics

Print University Webinars:
 60+ webinars on print industry fundamentals



HR Academy: Essential Training for Managers & Supervisors

Six Monthly, 60 to 90-minute webinars

The HR Academy series continues in February with **Session 3, Employment Documentation (Finally) Done Right!** scheduled for February 15th at 10:30 am.

Forms and templates simply don't work. For years supervisors have heard HR managers' – and lawyers – mantra of "document, document, document." Yet, many times, a supervisor's documentation in an employment dispute does more harm than good. Understandably preoccupied with getting their jobs "out the door", few know how to do it right. This session will offer your supervisors powerful techniques to capture the essence of employee performance and conduct issues so often lost on even the best supervisors.



Trainees will learn:

- All communication – writing, text, video and more – formal and informal is "documentation," whether we want it to be or not;
- How to create documentation that will justify employment actions when reviewed by auditors, investigators, or judges; and ...
- How to avoid creating negative documentation, i.e., documentation that can be used against you in a court of law.

The HR Academy's objectives are to teach managers and supervisors effective HR management skills to improve their day-to-day interaction with employees and minimize the risk of employment-related litigation.

Sign up for one webinar or the remaining four. Visit printcommunications.org/events/ or contact us at info@printcommunications.org for more detail on the series.

Session 3	FEBRUARY 15, 2024 — 10:30 am Employment Documentation (Finally) Done Right!	
Session 4	MARCH 7, 2024 — 10:30 am What You Need to Know about Managing Disability Related Absences	
Session 5	APRIL 11, 2024 — 10:30 am Eliminating the Root Causes of Employment Discrimination and Harassment	
Session 6	APRIL 25, 2024 — 10:30 am Turning Around the Non-Performing Employee (or Turning Them Loose)	

Save the Date



PGCA'S ANNUAL HR CONFERENCE

May 2 & 3, 2024

Turning Stone Resort, Verona, NY

Registration is now open for the 2024 PGCA HR Conference, presented annually for over two decades.

Topics on the agenda include:

- Essential Employment Law Update
- Creating a Staff that Makes You Want to Stand Up and Cheer
- The Challenge of the Problem Employee
- Why a Workplace Advancing Inclusion for the Disabled Worker Benefits Everyone
- Health & Safety Excellence

Visit printcommunications.org/events for the conference agenda and registration information.

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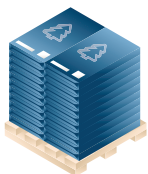
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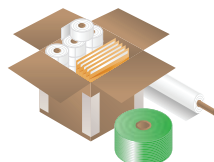
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BRANDS LEAN ON CATALOGS, DIRECT MAIL TO BUILD AWARENESS AND DRIVE SALES

A resurgence in direct mail is offering companies a costlier, but arguably more impactful, alternative to digital advertising.

By Alex Vuocolo, RetailBrew.com

When Kate Spade died in 2018, fashion brand Frances Valentine faced a decision: either shut down or keep going “without one of the founders and core creative minds behind the company,” its director of marketing Florencia Gilardoni told Retail Brew.

Frances Valentine chose the latter, and one way it bolstered its brand presence during that difficult first year without Spade at the helm was a seemingly retrograde form of marketing: catalogs and direct mail.

“When we went into catalogs, customers’ mailboxes were still pretty slim and nobody was doing direct mail,” Gilardoni said. “So, we were able to get a huge share of the mailbox at that time, which was great for us.”

But the fashion brand isn’t alone in reappraising the value of catalogs. The age-old marketing technique is seeing a comeback, as retailers seek a more direct route to their customers due to increased competition and higher costs in digital marketing.

Polly Wong, president of Belardi Wong, a marketing agency that specializes in DTC brands and counts Frances Valentine among its customers, said she’s seen a “resurgence” in the practice. Her firm launched direct mail campaigns for at least 75 retailers per year for the last five years.

“The No. 1 reason is that most of our clients are very sophisticated marketers who realize that you can’t put all your eggs in one basket,” she said. “You can’t just rely on Google and Meta, right?”

Mixing it up: Why not? Cost is one reason. Wong said digital advertising has become more expensive over the past five years. “If you look at CPMs and CPCs, they’re up double digits,” she said. “And with the increase in the cost of digital marketing, somehow we landed where you can send four direct mail pieces to a targeted audience for the cost of one click.”

Gilardoni agreed that it’s “much easier” to target customers through direct mail right now, noting that the digital space is “much more regulated.”

She added that while costs are comparable, “on digital, you have to touch them many, many, many more times to be able to convert a customer,” while catalogs cost more per impression, but recipients tend to convert more quickly and reliably.

Curating your brand: Putting the economics aside, some companies like catalogs for their ability to curate their brand awareness in a high-quality marketing product with plenty of real estate for shaping consumers’ perceptions of their products.

“We didn’t see catalogs as being performance marketing,” Tom Nowak, chief marketing officer of Evereve, an online retailer that recently increased its tempo of direct mail catalogs, said. “I mean, there’s a performance to it, but it’s brand building and performance together.”

He noted that Evereve relies on there being a kind of “coffee-table effect,” in which the catalog sits in customers’ homes for long periods of time and increases the possibility of a conversion.

Wong agreed that catalogs offer brands more “real estate to tell [their] story,” which is especially important when you’re trying to sell big-ticket items. One client with a lot of name recognition was determined not to be a great candidate for catalogs earlier on because it was mostly seeking volume sales on cheaper items such as socks. Now that it’s expanded its offerings, a catalog makes sense.

Less mail, smarter marketing: But is there enough real estate in customers’ mailboxes? As Gilardoni noted, the relative lack of competition was one advantage for Frances Valentine early on. If more brands return to direct mail, will the market become oversaturated?

Wong explained that marketing mail is still down overall compared to 10–15 years ago. “Nobody’s putting 200 million pieces a year like Eddie Bauer or 400 million pieces a year like Victoria’s Secret into the mail anymore,” she said.

“I hate junk mail, too,” she added, but “nobody perceives something like a catalog from Design Within Reach or Anthropologie as junk mail. It’s not the same thing.”

Reprinted from BoSacks Media Intelligence Heard on the Web.

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NEW YEAR, NEW GOALS

What are your goals for this new year? Finding new customers, creating new partnerships, expanding your brand awareness? PGCA offers resources to help reach your goals, connect with your target audiences and highlight your commitment to the Association. Review all of our programs, then let's discuss how to maximize your PGCA partnership.

1 Event Sponsorships

Becoming an event sponsor gives you the opportunity to increase your business exposure, support the Association and gives you the chance to build relationships with potential customers, suppliers, or partners. Depending on the event, sponsors can set up a table, introduce a speaker, sponsor a cocktail hour or beverage cart, etc.

2 Add PGCA logo to your Website

Add the PGCA logo to your website to promote your support of the industry. Display your membership certificate in your lobby.

3 Newsletter Ads

PGCA offers economical advertising in our monthly newsletter, the *Signature*. Advertisers connect with 1,000+ print and graphic arts professionals in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware.

4 PGCA Platinum Sponsors

PGCA Platinum Sponsors gain visibility in PGCA's publications, website and social media accounts which raise our organization's visibility in the industry. PGCA looks to our partners to offer trusted access, resources, and information to members.

For more information on how PGCA can help you market your company, contact Melissa Jones at melissa@printcommunications.org

MEMBER NEWS

DIAMOND PACKAGING DEBUTS ITS 2024 CORPORATE CALENDAR

Diamond Packaging recently announced the debut of its 2024 "Suitable for Framing" corporate calendar, a popular promotional item given to customers and suppliers. The calendar features several decorative options, all designed to support the packaging design ideation process. It also showcases the type of decorative effects that can cost-effectively transform brands.

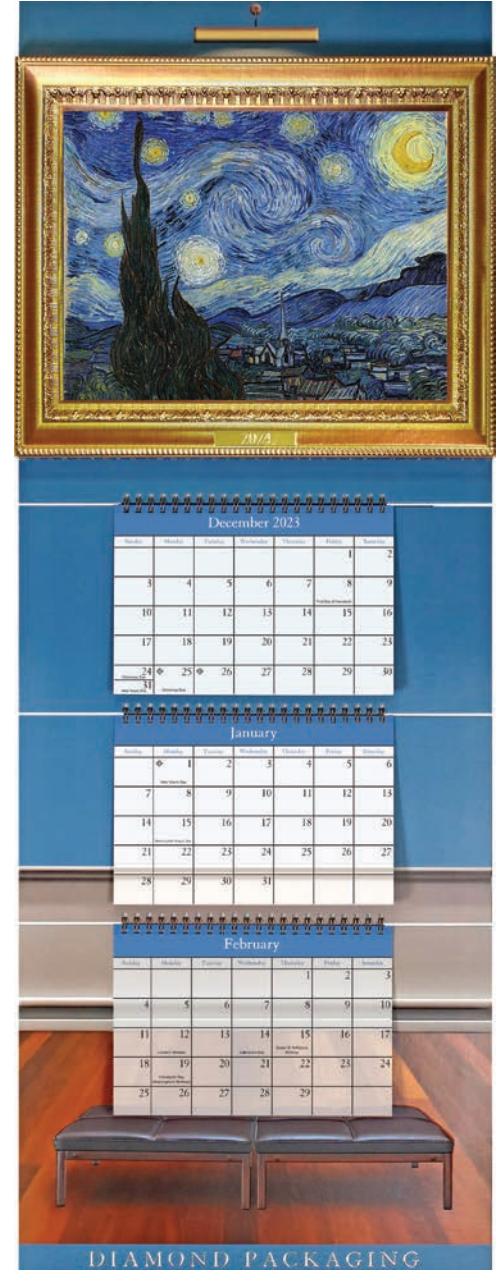
"We're proud to present our most priceless calendar yet," said Dennis Bacchetta, Diamond's director of marketing. "Our 2024 calendar celebrates famous works of art from the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art movements and is our first to enable recipients to change the artwork, depending on style or mood. It brings the museum gallery experience to a home or office setting."

The calendar reproduces beautiful and evocative Impressionist masterpieces in a gilded gold frame enclosing works of art from Vincent van Gogh, Édouard Manet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and Henri-Edmond Cross – perfect for a stylish home or office setting. The dimensional picture frame features side closures with locking tabs, allowing the recipient to change the artwork at any time.

The calendars were converted utilizing Clearwater ReImagine™ 30% PCW paper-board, cold foiled, and offset printed with four color process inks, supplied by Ink Systems, in-line with UV matte, UV gloss, and DiamondTexture specialty coatings.

Multi-level embossing lends distinction and depth to the design. Many of the calendar components were embossed, including the picture frame, wainscoting, molding, and leather benches. Multi-level embossing was tastefully applied to individual artwork pieces to add even more depth.

Founded in 1911, Diamond Packaging is a WBENC-certified, industry leader specializing in developing innovative and sustainable packaging solutions. Diamond differentiates itself through award-winning creative design, packaging innovation/technical expertise, and its greenbox sustainability initiative. Visit www.diamondpackaging.com/2024 for more about the calendar and the artists and masterpieces.



QUALITY BINDERY SERVICES REPAIRS BOOKS, ONE MEMORY AT A TIME

Kathie Hartmans at Quality Bindery Services, Buffalo, NY, recently shared a testimonial from a happy customer. Quality Bindery repaired an Atlas sent in by Mr. T. Frair. Here's what he had to say about the repair.

"I received my Atlas today. You folks did a wonderful job refurbishing a childhood memory, and I just wanted to say, Danke Schoen! Happy New Year to all of you there at QBS!" — T. Frair

The initial Atlas repair request came in as an email:

Can the original cover be copied and salvaged in any way? I want to preserve the pencil-written inscription on the first page of the Atlas that says it was a gift to me for my sixth birthday. Not to brag, but I could read maps before I started school and have loved them all my life.



The book was a gift from my father's employer, a wealthy gentleman named E. Kent Kane, the nephew of Civil War hero General Thomas Kane, for whom the borough of Kane, PA, is named and who was the builder of the Kinzua Bridge here in McKean County. It is a major tourist attraction in our rural county and is a PA State Park. The Bridge was partially destroyed by a tornado in

2003. I have attached a picture of when it was rebuilt in 1900 to carry coal and freight to the steel mills in Pittsburgh and other areas. It was initially a half mile long and 301' high, spanning the Kinzua Creek valley near the borough of Mt. Jewett, PA.

If you look at the picture closely, you'll see a person standing on top of the train car and others on the Bridge with no handrails.

If you'd like to see other precious memories that Quality Bindery has restored to their former beauty, visit their website at www.qualitybindery.com/gallery.



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If you want to be a high profit firm in this new year, here are the key steps to getting there:

- 1 Your goal should be full utilization of the plant, equipment, and front office which you are already committed to pay for. Since there are really 168 hours in every week, a single shift operation is wasting 75% of your opportunity for sales and profit.
- 2 “Margin,” because it is the product of BHRs and markups on materials and outside purchases, it is meaningless. It always leads to missed opportunities to build the sales volume you need. The real number is “contribution,” which is the difference between the actual amount spent to produce a job (factory wages to do the job, the cost of materials and outside purchases, and sales commissions) and the amount billed for it. Building contribution dollars is your path to success.
- 3 Realize that maximum pricing is determined by your customer’s budget and your competitors’ decisions, not the numbers in your estimating software. Your mission must be to get as much as your customers will pay—but also get the order.
- 4 Pay the sales reps based on value added (sales minus actual cost of materials and outside purchases) as the simple way of getting you and them on this quest for growth and profits.

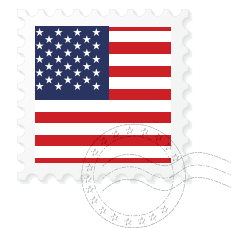
If you accomplish these things, you’ll maximize contribution dollars and thus profits!

About the authors: *quoins2pixels* is written by Bob Lindgren and Joe Polanco. As a value-added service of PGCA, they are available to expand on these articles or aid with projects. They can be reached via email at bob.lindgren815@gmail.com or jspolanco49@gmail.com.

DELIVERING FOR AMERICA

THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE IN 2023

By Jim Hamilton, Keypoint Intelligence



The United States Postal Service (USPS) wraps up its fiscal year at the end of September. Then, by the middle of November, it releases its annual report, a document that is chock full of assessments of its results and plans for the future. The USPS is now entering the third year of its 10-year plan called “Delivering for America,” first made public in March of 2021. The major takeaways are quite sobering. The top line is that the USPS reported a \$6.5 billion loss in the 2023 fiscal year. This part is not that surprising given the various economic factors that the USPS is saddled with. More concerning is the report of an 11.4% decline in volumes within the Marketing Mail category.

A USPS Assessment

United States Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, who was appointed by President Trump in June of 2020, spoke recently at the 2023 Concordia United States Summit. In his talk, “Delivering for America: Lessons of Leadership from the United States Postal Service,” De Joy was alternately optimistic and concerned about the future of the USPS. He started with numbers:

- 31,000 retail centers
- 19,000 delivery units
- 400 processing plants
- 250,000 vehicles
- 300,000 carrier routes
- 165 million delivery points
- 640,000 employees

(expect an announcement soon about an environmental plan)

He described the USPS as one of our country’s most trusted, most used, and most needed institutions. He asserted that the USPS was in catastrophic condition when he became Postmaster General in 2020 and he thought at the time that it was possible that it might fail. He is now more confident two years into his 10-year plan, but acknowledges the challenges that face the USPS. Key among those challenges is an ongoing drop in mail volume due to electronic delivery methods. He also cited “institutional memory” as an issue. It was difficult for an institution like the USPS—which was accustomed to growing print volumes through the 1970s and early 1990s—to figure out how to rethink its methods in an entirely changed competitive environment. He also cited what he called “deliberate destruction” through policies of Congress, Postal Regulators, and the mailing industry, which have been further exacerbated by political interference on funding regulation. His solution was the Delivery for America plan, which has three tenets:

1. Deliver to 165 million addresses, six days per week.
2. Cover the cost of performance, as a requirement to be able to compete effectively.
3. Believe and act as an institution.

De Joy’s 2023 report notes that just two years into this 10-year plan, USPS’s projected losses for the decade have been reduced by more than half, from \$160 billion to \$70 billion, and that significant progress has been made toward the goal of break-even in 2030, despite the impact of inflation.

Looking into the Numbers

A few things stand out when looking at the USPS’s 2023 revenue and volume numbers:

- Overall revenue is down somewhat despite regular postal rate increases.
- Only two service categories showed revenue increases between 2022 and 2023: First-Class Mail and Shipping and Packages.
- Volume dropped in every single category.

Service Category	2023 Rev.	2022 Rev.	2023 Vol.	2022 Vol.
First-Class Mail	\$24,505	\$23,990	45,979	48,960
Marketing Mail	\$15,076	\$15,996	59,410	67,092
Shipping and Packages	\$31,641	\$31,317	7,057	7,232
Informational	\$1,571	\$1,712	322	355
Periodicals	\$918	\$955	2,993	3,400
Other	\$4,475	\$4,537	385	405
Total operating revenue and volume	\$78,186	\$78,507	116,146	127,444



Note: Revenue figures are in millions of dollars; volume figures are in millions of pieces.
Source: United States Postal Service, November 2023

An Outside Perspective

A recent Printing Impressions webinar entitled “USPS 10-Year Plan: Three Years In” featured Leo Raymond, the Managing Director of Mailers Hub. This webinar was promoted as “an information resource for commercial mail producers and other companies in the commercial mailing community.” Raymond pointed out a number of concerning factors. Perhaps the biggest one moving forward is whether the USPS can find success given the impact of decreasing mail volume combined with frequent postal rate increases. Raymond points out the size of the USPS’s workforce as another challenge, with the associated costs of employee compensation and benefits. The USPS added close to 5,000 employees in 2023 and has been encouraging “pre-career” employees to shift to “career” positions. During 2023, 525,000 employees of the total 640,000 USPS workforce were career employees while 115,000 were pre-career. Pre-career USPS positions are temporary. These workers do not get the same benefits as career workers and are not guaranteed a regular work schedule. The move to increasing the number of career employees is intended to improve employee retention as well as to maintain strong service levels, but with it comes the financial challenge of achieving break-even with such a workforce, whose benefits include layoff protection and biannual increases.

Raymond notes that “The value of mail as a marketing tool remains unchanged.” He recommends that mailers have to aggregate volumes to gain cost benefits, but he is very concerned about what he sees as aggressive postal rate increases. He also believes that the USPS is not being as transparent as it should be about its moves to consolidate delivery operations.

The Bottom Line

Moving forward, the USPS hopes that an emphasis on packaging will offset the loss of hardcopy mail volume. This requires remaining competitive with other services like FedEx and UPS. This focus on packaging is not exactly reassuring to service providers handling marketing mail and transactional documents, particularly when they see ongoing rate increases in their segments. There is no question that Postmaster General De Joy has a significant challenge on his hands. And while there have been some positive takeaways in the early years of his Delivering for America plan, some significant challenges remain.

Article provided courtesy of Canon Solutions America.

About the Author: Jim Hamilton of Green Harbor Publications is an industry analyst, market researcher, writer, and public speaker.

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If you want your customers to look to you for guidance on postal issues, postal news and MTAC, postage rates or postal regulations changes, Print & Graphic Communications Association can help you be an industry expert.



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- **Mailers Hub Webinars** – held about every three weeks, free and archived at mailershub.com.
- **Mailers Hub Postal Hotline** – call or text, email or fill out the online form.
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- **Thirty minutes of complimentary consultant services monthly**
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Contact PGCA at info@printcommunications.org for more information and a Mailers Hub application.

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SIMPLE MIND-SHIFT

A DIFFERENT SALES APPROACH

By Bill Farquharson, Sales Vault

I don't think this is an original thought, but my friend Kelly Mallozzi often says, "if you keep doing what you're doing, you will keep getting what you're getting."

Entering a new year, we make pledges and promises. We set goals. The common denominator comes down to one word: Different. That is, what will you do this year that is different from what you did last year?

“
what will you
do this year that is
DIFFERENT from
what you did
last year?”

In answering this question, your mind might go to sales activities: more calls, more new business, etc. Or you might think of your target market differently and go after a different kind of account or a different sized company. What I am suggesting is you get more basic than that.

I want you to reframe WHAT you do and think of it in a completely different manner.

Start here...

Someone asks what you do for work. What is your answer? Is it, "I sell print/signage/labels/promo...?" Are you a bit more grandiose and say, "I am in the graphic arts"?

While that is your job, it's not what you actually do. What you do is to help your clients grow. You help customers find their customers. You help them differentiate. You solve problems. You find solutions. It just so happens that the tools used to solve these problems are print/signage/labels/promo.

Why is this even a thing? Why is it important?

Because people who sell print/signage/labels/promo quote numbers, sell on price, and have temporary client relationships. Those who see what they do in a different light sit at the Cool Table, consult with clients, and win their orders based on ideas. Their opinions are sought after. They form life-long bonds with customers.

You are one simple mind-shift away from joining them.

So, I will ask you again, what do you do?

Another different route to take involves joining Bill Farquharson's Sales Vault. Go to SalesVault.pro or call Bill at (781) 934-7036 for more information. PGCA members can watch Bill's Short Attention Span Webinars in the members only section at www.printcommunications.org.

Our monthly Short Attention Span Webinars featuring Bill Farquharson and Kelly Mallozzi are now pre-recorded and available on demand to PGCA members. Login to the members only section on printcommunications.org to watch this month's video, *The Bully Customer*. Contact us at info@printcommunications.org if you need login assistance.

OSHA is out there inspecting printing operations. If your compliance training isn't up to date, the citations are serious and expensive! A poor safety record will increase worker's compensation cost, lead to bad morale, impact productivity and potentially cause you to lose customers. And it's not easy finding a replacement for a hurt employee.

**That's
where
PGCA
can help!**



The PGCA's OSHA Compliance Webinars are available “On Demand” – 24/7, 365 days a year. All of the webinars are available at no cost to PGCA members.

Advantages of PGCA's OSHA Compliance Webinars:

- Training fits better into your work and production demands
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- No employee falls through the cracks due to illness or vacations or production demands
- Presents a convenient opportunity to address site-specific issues
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All PGCA OSHA Compliance webinars contain basic compliance instruction for each standard, background materials and instruction on tailoring the training to your particular facility. Also, five of the webinars are available in both English and Spanish versions.

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- Walking Working Surfaces
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- Ergonomics
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- Machine Guarding
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- Safety & Health Programs-They Make Good (Business) Sense!
- OSHA 300 Log Recordkeeping
- The OSHA Inspector: What Are They Thinking?



How to Access the PGCA OSHA Compliance Webinars

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- Members can login with their email address and the password print123.
- Click “Access Webinars” in the Safety Webinar box.
- Choose the webinar you wish to view.
- The webinar registration page includes any pertinent documentation and handouts needed for each webinar.
- All webinars include basic training components necessary to be in compliance. In most instances, companies will need to add training information about hazards and policies specific to your operation. PGCA provides guidance on company-specific elements where necessary.



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SALES COMPENSATION – VALUE ADDED

Value Added (VA) is a concept which is widely understood by many in the industry; so why shouldn't we compensate our sales representatives on this basis?

- 1 **It's a fair way to share the pie.** VA reflects what is left for the company once suppliers (paper, outside purchases/services) have been paid. These are the dollars which the company uses to operate and create profitability. Compensation on sales treats all dollars equally – and they're not.
- 2 **It reflects today's reality.** In past years, print providers didn't pursue sales unless they could produce it themselves. That is no longer a reality for successful firms as they provide a variety of services beyond print – many which are provided by vendors.

So, why don't more companies use this methodology? Probably the major reason is change. Methodologies of accounting must be modified, and the sales team must see this as a positive move to help them AND the company. It's not an easy task.

With the constant changes in the dynamic market of print – and the need for constant capital reinvestment – successful companies need to discover ways to ensure profitability; thus, a system in which everyone is on the same page is essential for sustainability. So, why not look at VA as an essential tool for compensation?

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