Advantages of Informed Delivery
## for Mail Owners and Mail Service Providers

What Is Informed Delivery?

Informed Delivery lets eligible residential consumers digitally preview mailpieces before they arrive and manage scheduled packages.

The U.S. Postal Service® created the Informed Delivery program as a way to stay relevant in the digital age and improve the value of mail. Mailers have the opportunity to place targeted offers and ads inside of Informed Delivery emails, which creates new opportunities for mailers to engage with potential customers, generating multiple touchpoints.

Letters, postcards, and flat-sized pieces are all eligible for Informed Delivery. A majority of letters and postcards are eligible because they are automation compatible and will get an image once scanned through the USPS® equipment. For flats, most USPS processing equipment does not store images. If you want an image to be shown, you will have to provide the representative image to the Postal Service™ as well as a link if you want to drive the customer to your website.

As you'll see in the image below, different industries can benefit from using Informed Delivery.
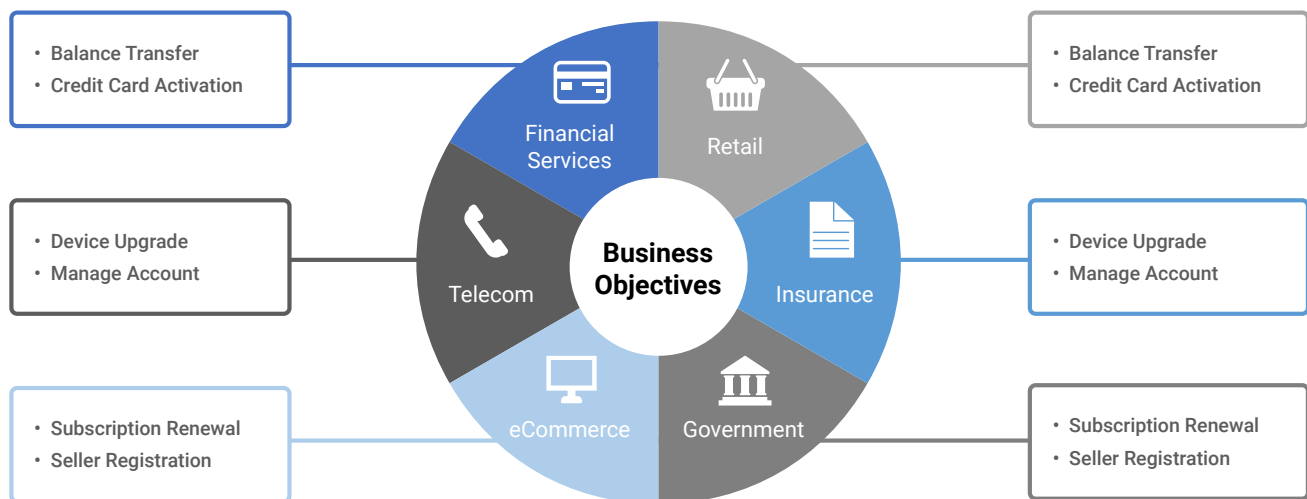
The Postal Service has been dedicating a lot of time and effort into getting the retail industry to take advantage of this program. For example, coupon functionality has been added. Consumers are able to use coupons in the Informed Delivery program simply by walking into a store and showing the coupon from a phone. Another industry that the Postal Service believes can benefit from this program is government entities, specifically when it comes to voting by mail.

Getting Started

When you go to set up a campaign, you have to go through a number of different steps. First, you have to go in and set up the campaign. Choose the dates that you want images to be used and provide the mailpiece information and supplemental content. With the supplemental content, you can also provide a replacement image. Additionally, you can provide a ride-along image, also known as a call-to-action, and a targeted URL. The URL will allow the person viewing it to click on it and be redirected to your website.

The Benefits and Qualifications

Beginning September 1, 2020, and ending November 30, 2020, any mailings that qualify for participation in the Informed Delivery promotion can receive a 2% discount on postage. That is a significant opportunity, especially when sending high volumes of mail. First-Class Mail®, Marketing Mail™, and non-profit mail are all eligible for the promotion.

So, what is required for participation? Registration is the first step. This can be done on the USPS Business Customer Gateway; alternatively, you can auto-enroll through the use of the e-Documentation submitted for postage payment. Typically, mail service providers can assist with the auto-enroll process. One thing to know is that only mailings submitted electronically qualify for the discounts. The campaign must be created prior to induction. The timing is critical. For instance, if you are using the portal, campaigns must be submitted no later than noon, Eastern time, the day prior to the campaign start day. Postal campaigns must be submitted and campaign files must be fully processed by midnight the day prior to the campaign start date. If these timeline requirements aren't met, the campaign submission will fail, resulting in issues getting the discounts and in getting your Informed Delivery images and links delivered.

The other big part of qualifying is that the marketing content to be used in the Informed Delivery campaign needs to be approved by the Postal Service before submitting any mailings intended to be included in the promotion. To get this approval, you have to submit an image file of your proposed content to the promotion office. They're going to be looking for a strong call-to-action within the images you're submitting. If you're using a representative image, they're going to be looking to ensure that there's a strong resemblance between that image and the physical mailpiece that you're using. They are also looking to make sure you are not encouraging a switch to receive future correspondence electronically.

Considerations

There's a lot to consider when putting campaigns together and applying for the promotion. First, Informed Delivery only supports creating campaigns at the MailerID-level or using IMb serial ranges. If you're creating a multi-version job, you'll need to make sure that the IMb ranges are sequential and contiguous for each of the versions. At this point in time, the Postal Service doesn't support individual IMb-level image replacements or PURLs.

Also, the campaign window is limited to a maximum of 45 days. The promotion needs to be consumer-focused, as Informed Delivery is not available yet for business addresses. The Postal Service will be monitoring all the mailings where the promotion was applied, ensuring that all qualifications were met successfully. They may remove discounts if any of the requirements are not met; for example, not enough consumer addresses in the file, there were no hits to Informed Delivery participants or failure to get exact images pre-approved.

How GrayHair Can Help

GrayHair's team of postal experts are here to support you in your efforts to leverage Informed Delivery and assist you in your participation in the promotion. We have developed software that gives you the opportunity to import your Informed Delivery data into our systems and view it through our user-friendly dashboards. This helps you understand the scope and reach of your mailing campaigns and discover behavior patterns such as email opens, click-throughs, and the timing of those behaviors. For more information on how to leverage Informed Delivery and get the most out of your data, contact a GrayHair expert today.

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