



GrayHair Software™ Case Study

Maximizing Postal Data to Increase Donor Response Rates for a Large University Foundation

GrayHair Background

As the leading postal data provider in the United States, GrayHair Software processes over 150 billion data points every year. We make it possible for some of the nation's largest enterprise mailers to enhance mailing operations, elevate customer experience, mitigate mail fraud, and optimize marketing campaigns. GrayHair's Business-Ready Intelligence solutions leverage a combination of mail tracking and address quality services to prevent unsuccessful client communications and support informed decision-making. With a highly experienced and knowledgeable team, we take pride in offering a tailored customer engagement approach to ensure that our clients attain unparalleled value and satisfaction with GrayHair.

Overview

Like many organizations reliant on donor contributions, this large midwestern university foundation faced challenges in maintaining accurate donor address information. Inefficiencies in address management not only hindered fundraising efforts but also resulted in unnecessary costs associated with postage and undeliverable mail. Another challenge that the foundation faced was understanding all of the USPS® processes, regulations, and data elements to determine the best way to improve current systems and operations.

The Problem

This university foundation aimed to optimize its fundraising efforts by ensuring accurate, deliverable donor addresses. A significant challenge to obtaining this objective was that their system and processes were designed many years ago. With all the changes in requirements, tools, and data, they needed help identifying what applied to their operations and could be utilized to continue to strive for Best Practices in an ever-changing landscape. This resulted in unnecessary costs, more undeliverable and returned mail, and most importantly, lost opportunities. To tackle these issues the foundation recognized the importance of establishing the right processes related to the data and output of address quality tools like CASS™, NCOA^{Link®}, and ACS.™

The Goal

The primary goal of the foundation was to reduce mailing costs as well as the waste and lost opportunities from undeliverable mail by ensuring the best possible addresses of its donors, while simultaneously increasing fundraising response rates.



Approach

Grayhair, a leader in postal data solutions, partnered with this university foundation to tackle their challenges. The partnership started with a comprehensive review of the foundation's current address quality processes and data, along with an education on the current capabilities of address quality tools to identify both address quality issues and the types of addresses that require special consideration. This led to the identification of some quick wins as well as a robust plan to move forward. The approach involved implementing a comprehensive address quality process, which included interpreting USPS data, creating customized business rules, and integrating solutions into the foundation's existing technology stack. Grayhair provided expert guidance on optimizing address data quality, complying with USPS regulations to maximize postage savings, and leveraging advanced tools for enhanced efficiency.

The Solution

Grayhair's solution began with expert consulting, during which key issues in the foundation's address management processes were identified. Through a thorough discovery process, it was revealed that the foundation was not fully utilizing USPS-supplied data, leading to inefficiencies, unnecessary costs and lost opportunities. Grayhair implemented a tailored solution that included:

1. **Intelligent Mail Barcode:** Implemented to provide mail tracking and delivery performance visibility, as well as the ability create consistency and measurability across the many suppliers UMF uses for the creation of their mailing campaigns
2. **Just-in-Time CASS/NCOA^{Link}® Processing:** Ensured up-to-date address information by processing addresses before each mailing.
3. **Automated ACS™ Information Capture:** Enabled the foundation to efficiently manage address changes and delivery issues while avoiding overpaying for ACS services.
4. **Database Maintenance:** Implemented processes and GrayHair's proprietary address change and deliverability data to update the foundation's database with accurate address information, reducing the likelihood of sending mail to incorrect addresses. Additionally, identifying addresses with deficiencies or special characteristics that would negatively impact deliverability and/or the ability to maintain contact with the recipient in the future.
5. **Datafeeds:** Provided specific datafeeds to automate the ingestion of address change and undeliverable mail information, facilitating proactive address management.

By partnering with Grayhair and implementing these solutions, this university foundation institution now has the foundation to achieve its goal of optimizing donor communication, reducing undeliverable mail, and ensuring the best possible address quality for its donors.