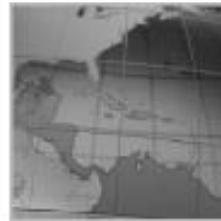


# Case Study



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## **Data-Mail, Inc.: Success = Full Service Plus Innovation**

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## Background

Data-Mail, Inc. is one of the nation's largest volume direct mail production companies. Founded in 1971 by Andy and Joyce Mandell, this firm has grown from modest beginnings to a full service print and mail processing company. Today, its facilities encompass more than 450,000 square feet located in the towns of Newington and Windsor, Connecticut. Data-Mail has a complete range of services in house which allows their clients to execute all aspects of the production of a direct marketing campaign at one location, coordinated through a single point of contact.



Data-Mail has a client base of Fortune 500 companies and major ad agencies based in New York and Boston. With an average daily production of over 5 million mail pieces, Data-Mail has consolidated high-quality offset printing, advanced computer personalization technology, and traditional lettershop capabilities to create a full service, state-of-the-art print and mail processing facility. Data-Mail employs over 850 people in a three-shift production environment.

Andy Mandell, the company's Chairman of the Board, and Joyce Mandell, the company's Executive Vice President, started Data-Mail forty years ago and are both still active in the daily management of the company. Andy Mandell began his career selling Addressograph-Multigraph equipment. When asked how Data-Mail was formed, he stated, "I saw a need to transform what I was selling into a service to help companies get direct mail out more efficiently and effectively. There was a customer need and I liked the concept of selling a service versus equipment." Today, the company has a strong leadership team, comprised of Bruce Mandell (President), Mark Mandell (Executive Vice President of Technology), and Scott Braunstein (Executive Vice President of Operations).

## Full Service: A Fundamental Principle

One of the key principles in the establishment of Data-Mail was full service from a single source. According to Andy Mandell, “This has substantial benefits to our client base. We provide complete coordination of complex projects. There is no trucking between vendors. We remove the risk of any material shortages and print issues that could impact the timeline. Basically, clients get support from one vendor that understands the complete scope and strategy of their programs.”

The desire to be a full service provider has resulted in a transformation to meet the rapidly changing dynamics in the direct marketing business. Andy Mandell explained, “Our customers have become more sophisticated. They are data-savvy and want to send the right message to the right person at the right time in the B2B and B2C market segments. This has helped our business because we have adjusted our offerings to cost-effectively meet the needs of marketers and deliver ROI.”

Data-Mail offers a robust range of capabilities designed to meet the needs of direct marketers in a challenging economy. These include:

1. **Best-in-class secure production facilities.** Technologies include offset and digital print capabilities for direct mail. In addition, the firm recently added envelope printing and converting in-house. Recent industry mergers and consolidation prompted Data-Mail to invest in envelope production, keeping with its mission of being a single-source provider. Facilities were constructed with internal data security controls to satisfy the standards of even the most stringent clients.
2. **The ability to optimize postal savings.** Data-Mail has advanced data analysis to achieve the best possible presort. These are then compared against projected commingle savings to find the lowest possible postage. In addition, Data-Mail has state-of-the-art finished mail material handling systems to facilitate the maximum entry point discount.
3. **Online tools for mail tracking and management.** intelisent is an online tool to give marketers complete visibility and control of mail streams from start to finish. Using Intelligent Mail Barcoding (IMB), intelisent enables the marketer to know where mail is, when it got there, and which pieces couldn't be delivered. It allows them to purge and update their mailing lists immediately, eliminate future UAA mail, and synchronize in-home dates with multi-channel campaigns.
4. **Multi-channel campaign management.** Data-Mail works with its clients to leverage creative assets and rules-based logic across all media channels. The company synchronizes direct mail, e-mail, and text campaigns. E-mail and text delivery can be triggered by USPS IMB scans. Data-Mail also works with clients to integrate personalized URLs (PURLs) and mobile barcodes such as Quick Response (QR) codes to connect direct mail with the Web. The company captures response information online and provides real-time campaign tracking.

## Innovation that Yields Results

Data-Mail President Bruce Mandell feels that it is essential to stay in front of the technology curve. He elaborated, “We’re committed to providing our clients a competitive edge with innovative solutions today and in the future. We’re continually looking ahead, researching, and investing in new technologies to ensure faster, more cost-effective methods to do our job and deliver for our clients.”

Data-Mail has made extensive technology and equipment investments in our state-of-the-art pre-press department and in our sheet fed and web offset printing equipment. The company is also a market leader in understanding the importance of variable data content and programming. It has a highly-skilled programming staff and advanced file and letter-processing software to produce highly-personalized direct mail pieces. Data-Mail has combined these data-driven skills with high-speed digital color and black & white technology, including six iGen cut sheet color presses and 23 continuous form laser printers.

Data-Mail was one of the early implementers of high-speed inkjet technology with its recent acquisition of the Océ JetStream 2200. The Océ JetStream 2200 is a full-color digital printing system capable of producing quality full-color output at a speed of 500 feet (150 meters) per minute. When asked why he invested in JetStream, Bruce Mandell said, “Print will continue to be a critical part of any marketing campaign. Our customers understand that, but they want to do more and more targeting. The Océ JetStream 2200 system will enable our clients to create targeted campaigns that yield improved response rates while significantly lowering total campaign costs, including postal and logistics expenses.”

Data-Mail has made the right investments in equipment and software technology, but there is more to the story. Bruce Mandell explained, “Our key differentiator is how we deploy our investment in technology to deliver results for our customers. One of the keys to success for our customers is effective follow-up for driving response rates across multiple media channels.” Data-Mail’s intelisent offering is designed to improve ROI for campaigns. Data-Mail simultaneously prepares a printed direct mail piece and the follow-up e-mail. The intelisent system sets up automatic notifications for the marketer on successfully delivered direct mail to trigger subsequent e-mail communication. This is a tool that transforms multi-channel demand generation from a “shotgun” approach to a system with metrics and measurement that allows for the optimization of direct mail marketing investments.

Loyalty and rewards programs are critical to marketers. Data-Mail has equipment that allows marketers to affix personalized cards onto personalized direct mail forms. Cards can be plastic or paper and are printed by Data-Mail in-house. To achieve the match between the card and the form, the personalized direct mail form contains a personalized 2D barcode. The equipment that affixes the card will scan the 2D barcode, look up the data record for that individual, and then affix and personalize the card to match the form. According to Bruce Mandell, “A personalized card containing a discount offer is an action device. It drives traffic into the retail location.”

Data-Mail is also working with its clients on mobile barcode campaigns. A mobile barcode, such as a QR code, is a specific matrix barcode (or two-dimensional code) that is readable by dedicated barcode readers and smartphones that have a mobile barcode reader app. Brands, agencies, and traditional media outlets are seeking innovative ways to utilize mobile barcode campaigns as an effective means of passing product information in-store, bringing direct mail pieces to life, and engaging with customers through video content or loyalty reward systems. Data-Mail is working with its clients to offer the integration of offline, online, and mobile to make it easy for customers to respond. Mobile barcode campaigns can link printed direct mail pieces through a mobile device to a mobile landing site, call a phone number, or send an e-mail or text message. Data-Mail can provide clients with the tracking details related to who scanned the mobile barcode, which can then trigger another marketing message.

### **The Bottom Line**

Bruce Mandell sees a bright future for Data-Mail. He concludes, “I see tremendous opportunity for Data-Mail as well as our customers, and all of these opportunities will be driven by advances in technology. I believe that sophisticated clients will continue to use print and have it grow, but they will become more selective. They will tie it into other media. They will want to differentiate the way that they deliver messages to their customers. Our ability to combine full service with innovation will deliver results for Data-Mail as well as its customers.”

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