Have a Great Summer!

Flagship Software does not publish a newsletter in July or August however our offices are open for regular business hours and our on-call support is available after hours, weekends and holidays. Our first newsletter after the summer will be in September. We would like to wish all of our customers a relaxing and restful summer with your family and friends!

Container Fill

We receive questions quite often on how to calculate fill rates for containers (lettertainers, flats tubs and the new LFTs). While the software will perform a mathematical calculation based on the interior dimension of the container and the width of your piece, fill doesn't always work out the way we like. In particular with thin pieces, such as postcards, a tiny variation in the measured width can result in a very big difference in fill over the length of the container.

In a perfect world, the ideal way to calculate fill would be to pack a container with finished pieces and then count the total, keeping in mind bundle strapping for LCP and NDG mailings. However, few mailers have the luxury of enough finished pieces to do this and often are working with a sample. Micrometers can provide an accurate width but, defying what seems quite logical, not often helpful in calculating fill.

Image courtesy of Canada Post Corporation
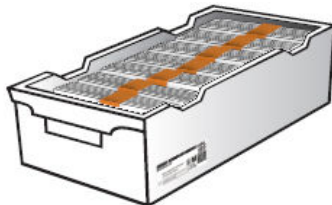
Our preferred method does not involve anything more than a desk or table, ruler, hand and a steady eye. Here are the steps:

1. Take 10 finished pieces (or samples if that is all you have) and stack them at the edge of a desk. If they have spines and half will be reversed within a bundle, make sure to do this with your stack, too.
2. Rest your hand on top of the stack. Don't push down too hard, just enough to push the pieces together.
3. Line your ruler up against the stack and take your measurement in millimetres.
4. Divide that measurement by 10 to give you the width of a single piece.

Experience is the best measurement. When you complete a job, keep a sample and make a note of the number of pieces that best fit into the container. That way when you do a similar job, you will have an accurate fill. One of our mailers has binders with samples, dimensions, fill and production notes for each job. They are then able to find a similar previous piece to help guide their fill calculations and be forewarned of any issues with finishing or machine set-up.

So what if something goes wrong with fill? When in doubt, call the Customer Serve Network and ask for assistance. However, if your lettertainers are over-filled, you can do the following:

(a) Put bundles along the sides of the lettertainers if they fit, or
(b) Put bundles flat along the top of the bundles as long as they do not damage your mail and a lid will still fit.

Calculating fill can be one of the trickiest parts of the data work associated with a job. Should you have any questions about how to calculate fill, please feel free to e-mail support (**support@flagshipsoftware.com**) or give us a call (1-866-672-0007). We're always happy to help!

Customized Indicias/Permits

Did you know that both Canada Post and the USPS allow customized indicias/permits on mail? There are rules to follow and the USPS normally charges for this service but it can be an excellent way to make your mail piece stand out from the crowd and promote your brand or special event. The following summarizes the programs available.

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Your artwork can appear to the right of the postal indicia. You must use Canada Post supplied artwork for the left side of the indicia (canadapost.ca/indicia). Your customization can include a logo, text, graphic or image and must be approved by Canada Post before use. There are different minimum and maximum sizes depending on whether the indicia will be placed horizontally or vertically.

To submit for approval, download the template and prepare a mock-up of the mail piece including the indicia in JPG or PDF format. E-mail this to customizedindicia@canadapost.ca well in advance of your mailing or contact a Commercial Serve Network Rep at 1-866-757-5480. Canada Post indicates they will provide a letter of approval with service ticket number within three business days of submission. Either write the service ticket number on the ESOM or attach a hard copy of the letter of approval.

Image © USPS 2012

Mailers need to have an approved Form 3615 (Mailing Permit Application and Customer Profile). The Picture Permit application is Form 3615-A (Application for Picture Permit Imprint) and must include a copy of the commercial images and/or text to be included in the indicia.

The normal charge for Picture Permits is $0.01 per piece for First Class Mail letters and cards or $0.02 per piece for Standard Mail letters and cards. However, the USPS is running a promotion from August 1, 2013 to September 30, 2013 which will waive these fees for approved mailers. The mail pieces must contain the Intelligent Mail barcode and must be submitted electronically. To apply, visit https://www.usps.com/business/promotions/picture-permit.htm

Reminder about LFTs

Image Courtesy of Canada Post Corp.

LFTs are currently in use for Short/Long Machineable Lettermail and Short/Long Machineable Addressed Admail. As of July 17, 2013, LFTs will also be available for Short/Long LCP Lettermail and Short/Long LCP Addressed Admail. Please remember that a mailing must use only one type of hard-sided container; lettertainers and LFTs cannot be mixed within a mailing.

Should DM Go on Holiday?

With much of the population taking vacations during the summer months, many businesses see a slowdown in business and scale back their advertising accordingly. Does that mean your direct mail should take a break too? Some marketers see this slowdown as an opportunity to stand out from the competition and get noticed.
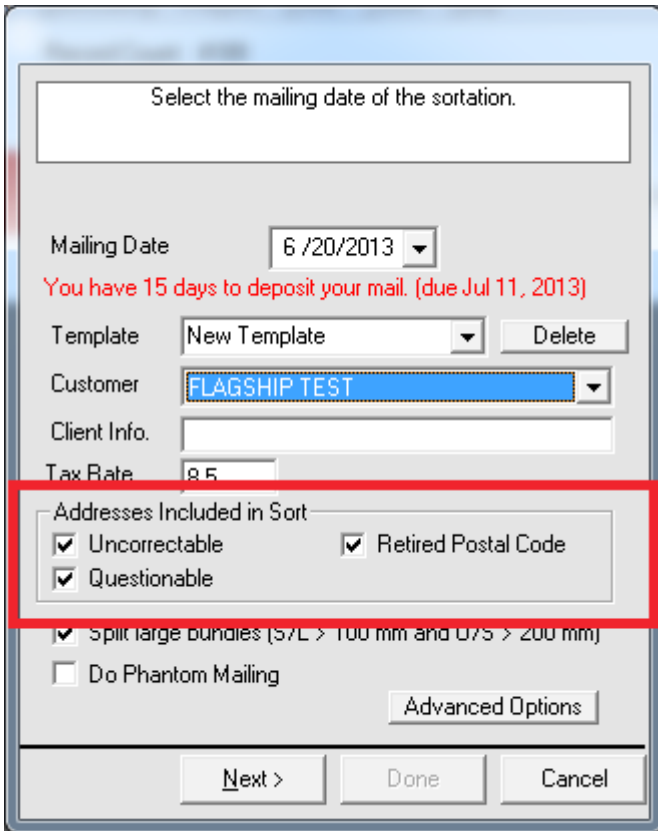
Mike Sprouse of Sprouse Marketing Group outlines why advertising in the summer is a good idea. He notes that consumers are more relaxed and spending more money during the summer months. With fewer companies planning marketing campaigns, those that do invest at this time can see significant returns. Suppliers may provide discounts or promotions during these slower times which can save you money, your piece won't be lost in the clutter, and consumers will have more down-time to consider your offer. It can also give your brand a leg up in the fall when the competition increases.

So be sure to enjoy your holidays this summer but keep in mind DM doesn't need to take a break, too. An attractive, relevant direct mail piece can pay off with consumers with time on their hands and money to spend.

Please proceed to page 3!

New iAddress™ Feature

We've added some additional functionality to iAddress™. As illustrated in the screen shot, you will now have the option from the Presort menu to remove your Uncorrectable, Questionable or Retired Postal Codes℠ from the sortation.

If you deselect the box for any or all of the Uncorrectable, Questionable or Retired Postal Codes, these addresses will no longer be included in the sort, and will be reflected on the Statement of Mailing (SOM) as Uncoded pieces.

Conversely, if you choose to include any or all of the Uncorrectable, Questionable or Retired Postal Codes, they will be sorted IF the postal code exists in the Delivery Mode Data (DMD) database, as was previously done in the sort.

Barcode App for New Container Labels

A reminder to our customers that Flagship Software has developed a **FREE** application for Android and Apple smartphones called **iAdd CA Scan**. This app will scan the new 2D barcodes and provide the container, service, postal code, customer number and drop date information so that you can verify with your ESOM.

This **FREE** app is available at the iTunes Store. Search under "iAdd CA Scan" or "Flagship". Contact us for details if you use an Android.

Web Training

Flagship Software continues to offer **Web Training** over the summer! If you are a new customer, would like a refresher course on *iAddress™* or if you have new hires, please contact Carolyn at **carolyn@flagshipsoftware.com** to schedule a web session.

If you wish to be removed from this newsletter list, please email us at **newsletter@flagshipsoftware.com** or call 1-866-672-0007.