January 2022 MTAC Chat and Q&A Questions

Question:

Does the USPS have a plan for more messaging around service standard changes to counter the words that are advanced from FCC account statements from mailers that consumers should switch to e-billing to avoid late payments and fees?

Answer: That is a more cost-effective way for the remittance mailers and so forth to collect their money. And I don't think anything you say or do will stop that inertia right now because the cost is almost nothing and we can't compete with nothing. So, therefore we are looking at certain changes from Peak that are viable both from a cost standpoint, a service standpoint, and revenue standpoint. And you know we must acknowledge that type of thing. We'll have to thank God we have some people that just don't want to pay their bills that way. But you should pray for them that they live long and continue to have bills. But other than that, driving our costs down, making our services right, it all aligns to everything. This is not unusual, there are no outliers that this doesn't solve for and this is what we are trying to do.

Source: PMG Q&A session

Question:
So, where you are today what do you find the most rewarding when you started and what goal do you have today for the next say eight months as your most challenging.

Answer: I changed the leadership culture here into engaging; it's very engaging to work through a plan. And working on the right things about delivering the mail and impactors…. To that effect we can now execute on an operational strategy collectively across the organization.

I can't tell you much, but we are working with the US and the public. We're working with the White House and we are a really a big part of what's about to happen in a national emergency. And you'll see as we move out that it's going to be remarkable.

I'll say the other thing coupled with that is when we build a management team that is really engaged in what it is doing, we have created a voice for the Postal Service. Because all we are doing is delivering mail and packages across the nation and we are providing access to that. And we need to do is doit well and we have a voice. I think I have kind of sponsored that also.

Source: PMG Q&A session

Question:
In case Pritha doesn't address: Log4J vulnerability what is the plan to upgrade PostalOne version 1.2.17.0 to 1.2.17.1?

Answer: We are upgrading to log4j 2.17.1; however, we did not call out log4j specifically in the industry Alert that was sent out about the release on January 30, 2022 to upgrade the client.

Source: CIO&EVP Org

Question:
Would this mean that users of USPS Connect Local would not be restricted to using Click N Ship only to pay for the service?
Answer: Correct, customer will be able to generate Connect Local Labels and pay via EPS account.

Source: CIO&EVP Org

Question:
It takes over 2.5 months to gain access to one API. Are the requirements for gaining access? We've been pushed all over the place to get access.

Answer:
Pre-Requisites
- o CRID, MID, EPS Account and enrolled in package platform

Access to the developer portal has two steps
- o Create account and password in the developer portal
- o Signup/Authorization of API products

Source: CIO&EVP Org

Question:
Who do they contact to participate in the pilot?

Answer: Thomas Sromovski: Thomas.J.Sromovski2@usps.gov

Source: CIO&EVP Org

Question:
We volunteer to be a tester.

Answer: Need Company information and contact and Tom will reach out.

Source: CIO&EVP Org

Question:
Log4J vulnerability what is the plan to upgrade Postal One version 1.2.17.0 to 1.2.17.1?

Answer: We are upgrading PostalOne on Sunday January 30, 2022. An optional new client 54.0.2.0_PROD will be available after this release. This optional new client 54.0.2.0_PROD will become a mandatory client after March 20, 2022 release.

Source: CIO&EVP Org

Question:
How are you going to make Informed Delivery work more effectively for students and universities and colleges? Right now, students can't use this service.

Answer: Two things make enabling Informed Delivery difficult at colleges and universities.

1. The variety of addressing styles at various institutions often leads to scenarios in which individual students do not have unique delivery points. Informed Delivery depends on each household – in college and university settings, "student" – have a unique delivery point. In those instances where all student mail goes to a single drop to be distributed by a non-Postal mail room, Informed Delivery does not have sufficient data to be able to show students daily digests securely.

   In the future, the use of Informed Addresses by students would mitigate the need for unique delivery points. However, there is no timeline for restarting Informed Address at this time.

2. In instances where colleges and universities do offer unique delivery points for students, transience makes Informed Delivery usage possible. However, in these instances, students must file Changes of Address when they acquire a university address and file new Changes of Address when they move or leave the institutional address. While Informed Delivery usage is possible here, it does depend on students to maintain their information. In addition, the institution must inform the Postal Service that these are residential addresses and not "business" addresses.

Source: CTO&EVP Org

Question:
Do you have stats on what type of companies are using informed delivery -such a charities, financial institutions, etc. Do you have % of each mail type owner?

Answer: The Informed Delivery Quarterly Report (10/2021) displays industry participation based on the top 20 performing Informed Delivery campaigns.

Source: CTO&EVP Org

Question:
Interested in Package Campaigns. Can we discuss offline?

Answer: Please contact the Informed Delivery Program Office at USPSInformedDeliveryCampaigns@USPS.gov for assistance. Someone will be happy to get in touch with you to set up a conversation.

Source: CTO&EVP Org

Question:
How does the AEXD compare to Predictive Delivery Date (PDD) in Mail?
Answer: PDD is an estimate of the actual delivery date of a mail piece; it is dynamically updated at each scan throughout the USPS network; this is just for mail
- This date is determined based on historical and recent service performance data for that mail profile (mail class and shape) for that ZIP Code pair
- The PDD will be calculated when the 1st manifest or scan is available to UV and dynamically updated with a revised prediction for each subsequent visibility event
- AEXD works in a similar way for packages as it updates the expected delivery date for ground packages
- AEXD uses individual scans and nested container scans and updates the expected delivery date if it determines that the expected delivery date is different than the original calculation
  - Initial prediction date is calculated by the service delivery calculator
  - Prediction date is updated using network scan events using a probability of delivery calculation

Source: CTO&EVP Org

Question:
Create a logical start the clock event.

Answer: The Postal Service is open to partnering with the mailing industry to review the current service performance measurement business rule and discuss how they can be refined/expanded to include additional scenarios that may not have been taken into account previously

Source: CTO&EVP Org

Question:
Agree with David M....seems pretty straightforward......could you report both with/without logically "started" pieces?

Answer: It is not as simple as it sounds, this would require a large capital investment to create a new system to include parallel measurement using the logical start-the-clock or any alternative measurement methodology without jeopardizing the accuracy of the current system. We maintain a ~650-terabyte system and have to be very careful on how this data is being utilized without impacting the accuracy and reliability of the official measurement system.

Source: CTO&EVP Org

Question:
Can we find out why pieces are not scanning?

Answer: Typically, this is due to the mailpiece barcode quality causing the barcode to be not readable. The external facing SPM Exclusion by CRID tool can be used to identify potential quality issues if high percentage of the volume is excluded due to "No Piece Scan" exclusion reason.

Source: CTO&EVP Org

Question:
Doesn't measuring only "good" mail skew the resulting score?

Answer: The Postal Service's measurement system is built to be statistically accurate, reliable, and representative. This measurement system was approved by the Postal Regulatory Commission after multi-year parallel testing in comparison to the 3rd party measurement system. The business rules for including mail in measurement are not dependent on service performance.

Source: CTO&EVP Org

Question:
Is no container scan by USPS a reason for no STC?

Answer: If there is no visibility of the container it could possibly be a reason why no STC was received, however each induction method relies on different business rule to make a determination if STC is applied or not.

Source: CTO&EVP Org

Question:
Can you share more details on the long-haul pilot (timeline, etc.?)

Answer: The Pilot is starting the last week of January through mid-February, after which it will be determined if it is a practical solution to onboard additional mailers.

Source: CTO&EVP Org

Question:
How much of the excluded mail measurement is because it is too old? (30 days for FCM Presort, 45 days for other categories)

Answer: Response: 0.01% for the period of 10/9/2021 through 12/24 2021.

Source: CTO&EVP Org

Question:
Is there a formal RCA, etc. being done?

Answer: The USPS monitors commercial excluded from measurement by exclusion reason and has a Resolution Guide that documents the known root causes for the exclusions. That monitoring data and Resolution Guide will be available to Industry in the SPM Exclusion by CRID tool.

As an example: We found an issue with a mailer that had 100% of their mail was being excluded. We conducted an internal investigation and found that there were several 99M container barcodes that never received a scan. We reached out to the mailer and discovered because they did not know how many 99M's they would need to produce; they would produce extra placards. Our business rules require for logical mailing that all 99M's receive an unload scan. We worked with the mailer on a solution to provide us with the 99M's that were not used, and we developed a process to remove them and their mail came back into measurement. This was then added to the resolution guide as a root cause so other mailers can see if that fit's their particular situation. As we work with mailers that have mail excluded, we are continually adding to the resolution guide so that the industry and the USPS can use the guide to resolve mail excluded from measurement.

Source: CTO&EVP Org

Question:
The USPS' business rules around measurement: "If the day of entry is a holiday or Non-Airlift Day, the "Start-the-Clock" Day-0 will be the next applicable acceptance day?" (Is this correct?)

Answer:
- When Start-the-Clock falls on a federal Holiday, it is advanced to the next processing day.
- For Origin entered mail, if Start-the-Clock falls on a Sunday, it is advanced to the next processing day.

- Start-the-Clock may fall on a Sunday for Destination entered Drop Ship mail if a FAST Appointment is arrived on a Sunday.
- Start-The-Clock may fall on a Sunday for Destination entered Delivery Unit mail, if as IMDAS Container Scan is performed on a Sunday.
- If the initial Start-the-Clock Date is one day before a no airlift day, and one or more pieces in the container/tray (Start-the-Clock grouping) are expected to transit by air, the Start-the-Clock Date for all pieces in the grouping will be the next processing date.

Source: CTO&EVP Org

Question:
Can an MSP qualify as a "customer" for USPS Connect Local?

Answer: Yes, they can. They would need to sign up for a business account on Click N Ship, agree to the Terms and Conditions, prepare labels, and prepay for their pieces like any other company before taking them to the post office / DDU.

Source: CCMO&EVP Org

Question:
Who do we contact about IMBa if we are interested?

Answer: You may contact the MSSC for onboarding QBRM to IMbA. They can be reached at: MSSC@usps.gov or 1-877-672-0007.

Source: CCMO&EVP Org

Question:
Why is IMBa only QBRM and not include BRM?

Answer: Intelligent Mail barcode Accounting (IMbA) is currently available for automation compatible Qualified Business Reply Mail (QBRM) Postcards, 1 oz and 2 oz letters ONLY. A unique ZIP+4 is assigned for each QBRM mail type, (Postcard, 1oz, 2 oz). An Intelligent Mail barcode (IMb) is also required to participate in IMbA. The IMb on the QBRM mailpiece is attributed to that mailer and the ounce increments. The IMbA application submits scan data electronically to PostalOne! for final invoicing based on the ZIP+4 code assigned for the mail type and weight identified in the IMb.

Business Reply Mail (BRM) is assigned one ZIP+4 for use on all mail types regardless of size, weight and shape. An Intelligent Mail barcode (IMb) is not required on BRM pieces.

Source: CCMO&EVP Org

Question:
How much mail will survive rates +15% to + 18% in 18 months?

Answer: The Postal Service certainly recognizes that higher prices lead to lower volumes however, the increase in the revenue from the higher prices is needed to move the Postal Service towards a financially stable path as outlined in the Delivering For America Plan.

Source: CFO&EVP Org

Question:
Is the July 2022 Rate Increase the same percentage increase as 8/29/2021 for marketing mail and first class?

Answer: So far, the estimated overall price increase in Marketing Mail and First-Class Mail appears to be about the same as the August 29, 2021 price increase. The final estimate of the CPI authority will be available in mid-March 2022, and the PRC will authorize the final additional authorities by the end of March.

Source: CFO&EVP Org

Question:
Are we still on track for the April date for the additional fees which were removed from the Jan event?

Answer: Yes, we're on track with implementing the Nonstandard Fees and Dimension Noncompliance Fee on April 3, 2022.

Source: CFO&EVP Org

Question:
Sharon, if PSRA passes will the retirement adjustment be eliminated?

Answer: No, if the PSRA passes, the retirement adjustment will not be eliminated. However, the annual increases in rate authority will be less, since RHB amortization payments will be eliminated. CSRS and FERS amortization payments will remain as under current law so some rate authority will still be necessary and authorized.

Source: CFO&EVP Or

Question:
So not expecting Competitive changes in July cycles, correct?

Answer: The Governors will decide if there are any price or structural changes that need to be addressed in the July cycle.

Source: CFO&EVP Org

Question:
If Legislation passes after 7/10, will retirement authority be backed out?

Answer: No, if the PSRA passes, the retirement adjustment will not be eliminated. However, the annual increases in rate authority will be less, since RHB amortization payments will be eliminated. CSRS and FERS amortization payments will remain as under current law so some rate authority will still be necessary and authorized.

Source: CFO&EVP Org

Question:
By end of FY or CY on the FSS machine removal?

Answer: The removal of FSS equipment in areas of opportunity is tracked by FY. Each FY, volume is reassessed for additional opportunity as part of the Delivering for America 10-Year Plan.

(CLPO&EVP Org)

Question:
Was MTE purchased based on 2020 volumes (a bad COVID year) or based on 2019 a normal year?

Answers: Pallets were being utilized to move all mail types including tubs and trays along with parcels. Parcel size and depth of sort for trays and tubs are key factor with pallet utilization. First class separations were being separated deeper providing fewer trays / tubs per pallet. The same with larger parcels utilizing more pallets.

(CLPO&EVP Org)

Question:
If the skids are barcoded - can a history of who created or touched what be created… and provide visibility to support accountability? It would make it much easier to track and monitor MTE.

Answer: Yes, barcodes can assist in tracking and everyone will have to scan to provide the visibility.

(CLPO&EVP Org)

Question:
What is the USPS' time-line for replacing the FAST system?

Answer: We are in the preliminary stages of the FAST Redesign. At this time we do not have a timeline.

(CLPO&EVP Org)

Question:
Shouldn't USPS statements about service performance note that they're based on measuring only a portion of the mail?

Answer: The Postal Service's measurement system is built to be statistically accurate, reliable, and representative. This measurement system was approved by the Postal Regulatory Commission after multi-year parallel testing in comparison to the 3rd party measurement system. The business rules for including mail in measurement are not dependent on service performance.

Source: CTO&EVP Org