Changing the Game
What Would Happen If a Well-Known Media Player Wasn’t Getting Paid?

By Colleen Pro, Vice President Sales

Diamond Marketing Solutions was approached by a television network known for its creativity that didn’t want to become known for outdated invoicing practices. Agencies and marketers all over the country place their ads with this noted media game changer in order to reach their target audiences. But while design and clear communication are givens for advertising, they are also essential in delivering invoices and statements to clients. Without clear communications in easy-to-read formats, the network’s clients might have trouble understanding the complexities of their media buying, and that translates into slow payments.

As business evolved over the years, the way the network communicated financial information to its clients had not kept up with the times. Things came to a head a year ago, when the billing department realized that its media invoices weren’t getting printed and into the hands of advertisers and agencies promptly, delaying payment. To keep the operation going, stopgaps were put in place, but that only compounded the problem. The whole invoicing process had become cumbersome, with multiple costly and redundant steps involved.

The billing department was responsible for several lines of business (LOBs). Since each LOB had its own specific set of business requirements, that meant multiple forms and no consistency. To meet these varied needs, the network had developed unique statement templates, and each had its own layout, format, logos, and color schemes. On a regular basis, a specific number of forms for each format were preprinted, but because they were all different, it created redundancy, spoilage, and an inability to take advantage of economies of scale.

SOMETHING HAD TO CHANGE

Given today’s business environment, clients were holding onto their cash for as long as possible, and the additional delay in the
Dear Colleague,

What do a letter to Grandma, a monthly financial statement, and a year-end W-2 have in common? They are all considered “critical mail” by both the sender and recipient.

Knowing we could never add value to a handwritten note to Grandma, at Diamond Marketing Solutions, we focus on our clients’ daily, weekly, and monthly critical communication needs concerning their business partners and customers.

Diamond Marketing Solutions supports hundreds of clients every day with some or all of the products and service offerings we provide as a company. Many of our clients are unaware that Critical Communications is a core competency of the company and the fastest-growing segment. We consider any project that requires 100% in-home or business delivery at First Class postal rates to be a critical communication.

Daily billing, monthly statements, quarterly reports, checks, and year-end compliance information all require specific expertise and a strong commitment to quality and security in order to ensure success.

At Diamond Marketing Solutions, we go through rigorous annual audits to meet specific vertical market requirements. These audits include HIPAA compliance in the healthcare space, PCI compliance for financial service communications, and SAS 70 certification for all markets. The extent of our documented processes and data security measures gives our clients peace of mind that their data and the resulting paper or electronic mail will reach each client as intended and on time.

Some of our critical communication solutions include:

- Medical and financial billing and statements
- Membership ID and payment cards
- Payroll, refund(s), and A/P checks
- Information reporting statements
  - W-2
  - 1099/1098
- Credit union solutions

If you have not thought of Diamond Marketing Solutions as a critical communications provider, we look forward to discussing our capabilities further.

If you are a current customer, we thank you for your business.

I never wish time away, as it moves ahead fast enough, but here’s to a quick end to winter and the arrival of spring.

Sincerely,

Mark D. Peterson
President and Chief Executive Officer
Diamond Marketing Solutions
Making Holiday Magic
By Cyndi W. Greenglass, Senior Vice President of Strategic Solutions

Did you participate in our Holiday Thank-You campaign? If so, you were not alone. In fact, the results were so impressive, we wanted to give you a “behind the curtain” peak at how it was done.

This year, Diamond Marketing Solutions wanted to find the best way to thank you for your ongoing support, while at the same time highlighting our diverse, multi-channel communications capabilities. To accomplish this, we created the “What are you grateful for?” campaign.

THE DATABASE
The campaign was targeted to over 2,000 unique individuals in the DMS database and segmented by the following:

- Contact type – client, prospect, or business partner
- The DMS relationship owner – account executive assigned to each contact

THE CAMPAIGN
DMS believes in multi-touch, multi-channel communications, and we maintain both physical and email addresses on all the contacts in our database. Our Holiday Thank-You campaign was launched December 17, 2010, with all contacts receiving an email that included an embedded Personal URL (PURL). The email thanked individuals for their business throughout the year and asked them to complete a short three-question survey. In return for their participation by January 10, 2011, we would mail a personalized notepad that included their name along with a quotation. The dynamic landing page provided three different quotes to choose from.

Since the first communication was sent so close to the holidays, we received a high percentage of soft bounces from “out of office” replies. It was decided to redeploy the email to non-responders on January 6, 2011, to remind professionals that they still had time to participate in the campaign and receive their notepad.

After the deadline, the completed surveys and responses were compiled, and a mail package was sent to each participant that included a personalized letter and notepad.

The Survey
The survey was designed to encourage engagement, be easy to complete, and provide meaningful information that DMS could share with participants. The three questions selected were:

1. What is your #1 business priority for 2011?
2. What do you expect your budget to be like in 2011?
3. Tell us what you are thankful for this year.

Email Deployment
DMS designed and deployed a winter-themed HTML email that contained a personal URL.

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Dear Colleague,

The very future of marketing lies in “Precision Marketing” which that leverages data analytics together with the strategic use of color and compelling design. Inside you can read about how Diamond Marketing Solutions is using these techniques to turn critical communications into the most talked about targeting tool in your toolbox.
In our Fall/Winter issue of Frontrunner, we encouraged mailers to prepare for some deadlines coming in 2011. Events over the last few weeks have brought some changes to the USPS’s plans and to mailing industry expectations. Here are two that may impact the way you mail:

• **Rate Increase** – The rate increase we expected to see in May will actually happen on April 17. The increase will average 1.741%, slightly less than the 2% expected. We always caution that mailers should look at the specific rate categories they use most, rather than just check the average, but in this case, very few categories deviate significantly from the average increase. Your DMS account team will help you analyze the increase for your mailings.

• **Intelligent Mail Barcode** – For about a year, mailers have been working toward a May deadline to use the Intelligent Mail barcode (IMb) to earn automation discounts. Also in May, the Postnet barcode was to become obsolete. When the USPS announced the April 17 rate increase change, Postmaster General (PMG) Pat Donahoe also announced that the deadline to convert to the IMb was being **delayed indefinitely**.

The USPS’s stated reason was that some customers reported needing more time to convert their internal systems. While PMG Donahoe’s new management team has a stated goal of being more user friendly, it’s also clear that the Postal Service is having their own problems getting their full-service Intelligent Mail product to function smoothly. The USPS has been trying to implement a complicated new system at a time when the economy has put severe budget restraints on their development budget and the budgets of their customers. This delay will give everyone some breathing room.

So far, the USPS has not indicated when they will reinstate the IMb requirement. We do, however, recommend that you convert to the basic version of the IMb if you haven’t already done so. Your DMS account team can help facilitate your transition.

PMG Donahoe and his management team are moving quickly to make the changes the Postal Service needs in order to adjust to the changes in the way we communicate. We will use Frontrunner to detail other changes that will impact business mailers. ❖

At a recent dinner party, one of my neighbors asked that all too familiar question, “What do you do for a living?” I responded that I sell critical communications. My neighbor thought for a second and then said, “I know what direct mail is, but what’s the difference?”

“Great question,” I told him, and then I proceeded to explain. I said the purpose of direct mail is to get you to open it and generate a response, and in many cases, it has an unsolicited, promotional advertising message. But when it comes to critical mail, the individual is expecting to receive it—and usually on a specific day. So think of critical communications as including your payroll check, your phone bill, your monthly bank statement, and even your 1099 and W-2 forms.

Now if you didn’t receive any of the mailings I referenced here, there is a good chance you might be calling the company and asking where your mail is and that costs companies lots of money. It requires answering your calls, sending out new mail, and then waiting for payments on bills. So we make sure that the important communications that you need to receive get to you accurately and on time.

“Ah,” my neighbor said. “Now I get it.” ❖
Have You Ever Wondered If Your Mail Is Actually Being Delivered?

Worry no more with DiamondView™ Mail Tracking

By Dawn Mellas, Vice President Client Services

With DiamondView™ Mail Tracking from Diamond Marketing Solutions, you’ll know where your communications are in the mail stream and have an estimated delivery date based on information received directly from the United States Post Office. Knowing when your pieces will be delivered allows you to be more confident about your delivery while taking advantage of multichannel communications. By timing the delivery of your email or teleservices calls according to your mail piece delivery date, you can maximize the compounded benefit of multiple touch points and realize improved response results as well. Now you can deploy an email to arrive within 24 hours of a customer receiving mail, or you can time a telesales call to your highest donor right after he or she just took your donor solicitation out of the mailbox.

And the best part? It doesn’t add processing or mail delivery time and won’t compromise the visual integrity of your mail piece design.

How does it work? DMS embeds the mail tracking information into the Intelligent Mail barcode (IMb) during normal file processing. Then, when your individual mail pieces are actually running on the USPS equipment, the Post Office reads the IMb and transmits the delivery information back to DMS electronically. This data is then fed into our DiamondView system so that you can track every mail piece, every mailing, and every step of the process.

Whether you are mailing statements, checks, donor appeals, or time-sensitive sales campaigns, it is critical to deliver your pieces in a timely manner and, in some cases, to have confirmation that your mail is being processed.

The DiamondView System allows you to track your First Class and Standard Class letters and flats with online reporting that is updated multiple times a day and available 24/7. Reports include statistics by State, SCF, in-home delivery, and entry point. Having delivery information as it is happening lets you identify critical issues or potential delays before it’s too late. Oftentimes, we can identify the problem, contact the appropriate USPS representative, and get your mail pieces delivered without any more delays.

We can even track an individual mail piece! Not only is DiamondView a great reporting tool, but it also gives you the ability to drill all the way down to an individual mailing record, where you can look up individual mail recipients by name, address, or a unique ID (such as an account number). With minimal information and the click of a button, you can retrieve the delivery information for any record in your mailing.

We give you peace of mind for your investment. With postage costs making up such a large percentage of any communication, we ensure that your important communications are actually being delivered.

Not sure how DiamondView can work for you? Please contact your DMS account executive for details.
delivery of invoices aggravated the network’s A/R situation. The CFO was not pleased. With these business issues needing to be addressed, this well-known media player came to DMS for help. We conducted a complete process review for producing the current invoice, as well as an assessment of the current statement’s look and feel. Based on our review, it became clear that a redesign was necessary in order to improve readability and present a better brand image.

**REENGINEERING THE PROCESS FOR SUCCESS**

First, we started with the technical processes. A total rewrite of the program was necessary to automate and streamline the redundant internal steps performed by the network’s internal team on a weekly and monthly basis. Starting with each business unit, DMS developed a series of automated programs based on the following criteria:

- The media required – paper, electronic, or both
- The line of business
- The delivery method – expedited, mailed flat, or mailed First Class in a #10 envelope

But the processes required an automated data-posting method that was immediate, accurate, and secure. In addition, since the data was coming from multiple users within multiple business units, the system needed to have the appropriate filters so that everyone would see only the data and signoffs that were applicable to them. To solve these needs, DMS set the network up on the proprietary DiamondViewSM web-based portal system. DiamondView provided an online project management tool that allowed proofs to be reviewed anywhere and at any time. Data could also be verified as soon as it was available, and all reports were archived in one central place for two full years, allowing access whenever needed.

The last step in the makeover required a redesign of the actual statement. By using digital color technology, DMS was able to create a unique look for each line of business while not impacting efficiencies and consistency of output. Individual logos are now imaged in color, and each LOB has its own background and orientation. Critical information, such as amount due and payment date, is also highlighted in color to improve readability and response.

**THE BENEFITS OF ELECTRONIC DELIVERY**

This major media player was so delighted that they asked us to look at their international program as well. Since the network does business globally, they had been sending statements and bills all over the world using an expensive expedited shipping method. Although this improved delivery, it could still take several days for clients to receive their invoices, and that again meant costly delays in receiving payment.

To save both time and money, DMS created an e-bill solution that made invoices available to the network’s international clients by 8 a.m. on the morning after approval. Not only did this reduce the total cost of production and eliminate expedited mailing costs, but it also helped to improve cash flow by delivering the invoices in a more timely manner.

**A PERFECT PARTNERSHIP**

By reengineering the invoicing process, redesigning the statements for better branding and readability, and providing an online management productivity tool, DMS delivered across the board. In turn, our client solidified their status by implementing a solution that improves communication, delivery, and bill tracking. In fact, we have already begun discussing the next phase of the program, which will include duplex imaging, electronic delivery for all lines of business, and a custom version of the DiamondView tool. And a true business partnership has been formed.
Making Holiday Magic, continued from pg. 3

(PURL) directing individuals to their personal landing page. Once on the welcome page, they were asked to complete a short survey and customize their notepad.

Dynamic Landing Pages
Using a PURL, we were able to create dynamic landing pages for each contact. On the welcome page, individuals could either confirm or change the name as it would appear on their notepad, select their quote, and answer a short survey.

The final step was a triggered email that automatically deployed to the respondents, thanking them again for their business and confirming when their notepad would be mailed.

The Mailing
Once the deadline passed, our team assembled a database of all respondents, their survey responses, selected quote, and AE assignment. We used CASS to standardize the recipients addresses and create the notepads. Each quote had a different feeling, so the font style used in printing varied by quote. Notepads were personalized with the relationship manager’s email and contact information, and we included marketing tips and promotional copy throughout. This will allow DMS to stay top of mind all year long as our customers and partners use their notepads.

Included in the mailing was a personal letter that thanked the participant, shared the results of the survey, and provided a sample of the individual comments we received.

THE RESULTS
• 94% of deployed emails delivered.
• 32% unique visitors to their PURLs.
• 66% of visitors completed the survey and requested a notepad.
• 16% of our total database responded.

The reminder email played an important role in our response success:
• 24% of the unique visitors came from the second deployment.
• 23% of the completed surveys likewise came from the reminder.

We were also encouraged by the optimism expressed by respondents regarding the business climate and their plans for the year ahead. The charts on this page show a summary of the survey results.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?
1. Integrating multiple channels boosts response and results. The combination of email and mail made for a more memorable campaign.
2. Frequency really helps lift response. Our results would not have been as impressive without the second email.
3. Freemiums work. The addition of the notepad increased response and provides an opportunity to stay top of mind with our business partners and clients.
4. And most importantly, we got to say “thank you” to all of you who have made our success possible.

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Expected 2011 Budget

#1 Priority for 2011

Outsourcing Non-Essential Services

Customer Retention

Cost Containment

Customer Acquisition

Try not to become a man of success but a man of value.
—Albert Einstein

Happiness is where we find it, but rarely where we seek it.
—J. Petit Senn

Don’t bunt. Aim out of the ballpark.
—David Ogilvy

Inspirational Quotes

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." —Maya Angelou

"The only way to do great work is to love what you do." —Steve Jobs

"You miss 100% of the shots you don’t take." —Wayne Gretzky

"The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall." —Nelson Mandela

"In a world where you can be anything, be kind." —Unknown
We hope you enjoy this issue of Frontrunner that highlights our critical communication solutions.