

Interview with Daniel Haldi, Head of Business & Marketing Mail International at Swiss Post International

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Since September 2005, Daniel Haldi (born 1972) has managed the Business Mail International line of services and since August 2009, as manager of Business & Marketing Mail International, has also been responsible for the international business customer solutions in the mailing area.



We make it easy for our customers to send their international business mail.

Mr. Haldi, you have managed Business Mail International since 2005, which was developed for handling international business correspondence. Does such an offering have a future?

Absolutely, yes, I'm convinced of it. The paperless office that has been discussed for the last 20 years has still not taken shape internationally. While substitution by electronic media in the national arena is progressing rapidly, international business correspondence is developing much more slowly.

Why is that?

Electronic post in a global context has many weaknesses. For example, the signatures used in nearly every country are different. The authenticity of a document cannot, therefore, be verified 100%. This still plays a role, for example, with invoices, statements of account and confidential business

correspondence. Add to this the different national regulations and laws. Due to those different national laws concerning advance tax deductions, it's almost impossible to send a uniform electronic invoice internationally.

Do Swiss virtues such as reliability of the daily post play a role in business correspondence?

Our customers place great value on reliability, security and discretion in particular. What is crucial is that we make it easy for them to send business mail internationally. When you consider that, even in Europe, the largest diversity of postage criteria such as size, weight or delivery times have to be considered, it makes sense to seek advice from professionals. They always know the optimal route and make sure that each country's regulations are adhered to. Thus we provide skilled support to the customer, from consulting through to delivery.

What does that mean in detail?

In detail it means offering companies the complete value chain, from collection through sorting to franking and distribution worldwide. In this way, for example, firms can save on their own mail room and outsource the service. Small and medium-sized companies in particular benefit from this as they no longer have to maintain their own infrastructure. Our aim is to offer, in addition to the classical postal services, more and more services and totally support companies as "the postal system supplier".

Which services do you offer to companies and organizations?

Among other things, we print account statements for financial service companies. Our sister company, Swiss Post Solutions, has specialized in that. As well as in electronic solutions in the field of Internet and dialogue marketing. With Swiss Post Solutions and other partners we can provide the whole range from advice about the production of mailings and cards through to a complete dialogue solution.

Is there still room, then, for the classical registered delivery?

Yes, for this very old service there is still no alternative. For some business processes, registered delivery is as essential as ever. For example, when senders must always verify that their consignments have arrived. In this way an insurance company can, in the course of a damage claim, say exactly when a reminder about the term of the insurance cover was issued. As before, the advantage of registered delivery is that, legally, the consignment has been delivered. Track and Trace will be an even more attractive proposal for more and more destinations and will offer the sender even more security than registered delivery. We're currently expanding electronic consignment tracking via the Internet internationally to handle this.

Do you also help customers with logistics?

We help there, too. We store information brochures and prospectuses that the customer can dispatch through us by simply pressing a button. In this way we take over the complete service. In Austria, for example, we've specialized in tourism together with a fulfilment centre. Many tourism organizations dispatch all their information packs worldwide, through us.

How will business post develop in the individual countries in the future?

The markets are at different stages of maturity. In Scandinavia, for example, e-commerce is widely used, while in other countries the potential has not yet been exploited. In addition, many companies are only now discovering the opportunity for using their international business correspondence as an advertising medium. Our experience so far shows that Transpromo Mail (short for transpromotional mail), also known as Whitespace Marketing, generates a far higher response than classical promotional mail. In the United States, the combination of transaction letters such as account statements and advertising is already widely used. Together with our sister company Swiss Post Solutions, we offer Transpromo Mail advice and production around the world.

How much importance do you attach to printed mail in the future?

Due to the economic crisis, many companies have reduced their advertising budgets. That has had a clearly noticeable effect on addressed promotional

mail. Since the end of 2010, however, advertising spend has been increasing again and the volumes of cross-border mailings are on the up. The reasons for this, I feel, are very clear. Mailings offer optimal target group accuracy, a high response quota and, most importantly, the success is immediately measurable. In addition, promotional mails are ideal for raising the awareness level of a company, products or services. Passive media such as the Internet, where the user must call up the information himself, cannot achieve this.

How do you support companies in Direct Marketing?

We advise companies undertaking international Direct Marketing campaigns right from the start, as every small detail is important for large volumes. For example, with International AddressGuide we've developed a reference book that offers information about several hundred suppliers of private and company addresses, prices, data protection and specific features for 20 European countries plus Russia and the USA.

International Address Cleaning helps companies to improve the effectiveness of their mailings. This significantly reduces the number of non-deliverable items by filtering out duplicates and correcting addresses, and it enables comparison with reference databases from more than 240 countries. The advantage: mailing costs are significantly reduced.

Which services are you developing further?

The trend towards individualization and target group-specific communication in direct marketing is unbroken. That's why franking also plays an important role. Using the "local look", companies can take on the appearance of a local firm, thus increasing their credibility and hence the acceptability of their mailings. Or, using "individual look" they can design their own postage paid impression at a computer. In this way, advertisers can design their mailings according to the target groups, thus ensuring an optimal response. We place special emphasis on the future developments relating to response capabilities.

What exactly is behind that?

Currently we're investigating how the replies can best be digitized and sent back to the customer. We already offer a Swiss P.O. box for worldwide replies.

How important is Customer Relationship Management (CRM) for the direct marketing of tomorrow?

Here also, there are new application areas associated with the increased networking of the marketing tool and the deliberate orientation to customer requirements in order to increase a company's credibility. For instance, the retail trade uses the customer information won by CRM and loyalty cards for mailing out product recalls, as the auto industry has been doing for years. That has been very well accepted by customers who feel addressed individually and see that a company is considering their overall needs.

In this area, are there differences between the individual sectors?

Yes, there are enormous differences. Each sector has a different set of aims and plays a different score on the keyboard of the instrument. On the other hand, the differences between the individual countries are minor in comparison. As the postal system supplier, we advise companies individually and offer them exactly those services that they require.

Mr. Haldi, many thanks for the discussion.

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