

Components of Periodicals publications

As many publishers are all too aware, the postal regulations surrounding Periodicals mail are extremely complicated. Determining what can be included in or with a Periodicals publication without postage penalty can be a daunting task. A key to solving some of the mystery of these postal regulations is to understand and use the correct postal terminology for various components of a Periodicals publication. To follow are the definitions for the most frequently used components of Periodicals publications.

Supplement: a supplement for postal purposes is a printed component that is not bound or stitched into the publication, but rather is mailed loose with the publication inside a wrapper, such as a polybag or envelope. Supplements must contain at least 25% non-advertising and the supplement must be endorsed "Supplement to XYZ Magazine." Supplements cannot be separate publications with separate ISSN numbers, separate price, or separate subscription order information from the host publication. Catalogs do not qualify as supplements, nor do pieces that contain a permit imprint or indicia. Supplements may exceed any of the dimensions of the host publication, including trim size, thickness, and weight. Multiple supplements may be included with the host publication, keeping in mind that the host publication plus all supplements must be included together when calculating the ad/edit ratio for the issue. Publishers should use caution with supplements that are paid for or sponsored by a single advertiser. This is true even if the supplement is virtually all editorial. The key to single sponsored supplements is who is paying for the supplement, how much of the supplement is paid for, and who has control over the editorial content.

Ride-along: this is a piece which does not qualify for Periodicals rates that rides along with a Periodicals rate publication. These pieces may be either bound or stitched into the publication, attached to the cover of the publication, or mailed loose with the publication inside a polybag or envelope. These are items that would mail at Standard postage rates if

they mailed by themselves, but the ride-along rate is much less expensive than Standard rates. The ride-along rate is 12.4 cents per piece, whereas the average Standard postage rate for a comparable piece is 26.1 cents. Examples of ride-alongs are catalogs, brochures, show guides, product samples, CD's, DVD's, start-up publications, etc. These pieces, if polybagged, may exceed any dimension of the host publication (including supplements) except the weight, however the combined piece must maintain a uniform thickness. Ride-along pieces are also restricted to items weighing 3.3 ounces or less. To illustrate the weight qualification for ride-along, if you have a publication that weighs 2.5 ounces, any ride-along with the publication cannot exceed 2.5 ounces. If the publication weighs 2.5 ounces and there is a qualifying supplement that weighs .5 ounces (for a total Periodicals weight of 3 ounces), then the ride-along may weigh up to 3 ounces. The mailpiece must be endorsed "Periodicals Ride-Along Enclosed." This endorsement may appear on the polybag or envelope, on the cover of the magazine, in the ID statement, or on the mailing label. Only one ride-along per copy of the publication is allowed. If you have more than one ride-along piece per copy, it is usually less expensive to mail the combined weight of all the ride-along pieces at the Standard rates of postage than to mail one of the pieces at the ride-along rate and the other pieces at Standard rates.

Standard enclosure: this is a piece which does not qualify for Periodicals rates or for the Ride-along rate, that is mailed with a Periodicals rate publication. Like ride-alongs, these pieces may be either bound or stitched into the publication, attached to the cover, or polybagged/enveloped with the publication. Like Ride-alongs, examples of Standard enclosures are catalogs, brochures, show guides, product samples, CD's, DVD's, start-up publications, etc. The difference being that for Standard enclosures these pieces either do not meet the weight criteria for ride-alongs, or they might be one of multiple pieces mailing with the Periodical, in

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Banta Publications Group Distribution Contacts

As a customer, you are encouraged to direct all of your communications to your plant Account Manager. However, there may be occasions when you may need to contact someone in the distribution areas directly. To facilitate this, the following is a list of contacts:

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Bobbie Hill
816-792-5300 ext 6376
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Greenfield, OH plant
Distribution Manager
Don Anglin
937-981-6367 Phone
937-981-5032 Fax
danglin@banta.com

which case it is less expensive to mail them at Standard rates than ride-along rates. These mailpieces must be endorsed "Periodicals Standard Mail Enclosed." This endorsement may appear on the polybag or envelope, on the cover of the magazine, in the ID statement, or on the mailing label. It is important to note some weight limitations for Standard enclosures. The total weight of the Standard enclosures may not exceed the weight of the host publication (including supplements) by more than 300%. Also, the total weight of all Standard enclosures cannot exceed 15.99 ounces. Once the weight of the enclosures reaches 16 ounces or more, it becomes Package Services mail, and this is not allowed to be mailed with Periodicals publications.

Cover tip: for postal purposes, this is defined as an attachment to the cover. These attachments must be securely affixed to the spine edge of the publication, and must fall within 3/4" of the trim size of the publication. Attachments that do not fall within 3/4" of the trim size must either be glue tacked, tabbed or the publication must be polybagged or enveloped. Cover tips must prominently show the publication title, and may contain editorial, advertising, or both. Cover tips must be included when calculating the total ad/edit ratio.

Cover wrap: for postal purposes, this is defined as a protective cover and must be securely affixed and cover the front and back of the publication to within 3/4" of the trim size. As with cover tips, wraps that do not fall within 3/4" of the trim size must be glue tacked, tabbed, or polybagged/enveloped. Cover wraps must also show the publication title prominently and may consist of advertising, editorial, or both. As with cover tips, the wraps must be included in the ad/edit calculation.

Bellybands: these are considered wrappers by the USPS. These paper strips approximately 5 inches in height that are completely wrap around the center, or "belly" of the publication. Bellybands must be glue tacked to the publication in order to qualify for automation discounts. Bellybands must not obscure the title of the publication, and may contain editorial, advertising, or both. Bellybands must be included in the total ad/edit calculation. However, if a bellybanded publication is subsequently polybagged, then the definition and regulations change completely. In this case, the polybag is now the wrapper, so the bellyband can no longer be the wrapper. Rather, it becomes a loose enclosure. As such, the only way for a polybagged bellyband to mail at Periodicals rates is to meet the criteria for supplements, i.e. consist of at least 25% non-advertising (the blank reverse side does not count as non-advertising!) and be endorsed as a supplement. If a polybagged bellyband does not meet the criteria for a supplement, then it must mail at the ride-along or Standard rates. In that case, the bellyband is not included in the ad/edit calculation.

Regarding calculating the ad/edit ratio, remember that any component that qualifies for Periodicals rates must be included in the ad/edit calculation. Ride-alongs and Standard enclosures should not be included in the ad/edit calculation.

This summary does not cover all components of Periodicals publications, nor does it cover all the detailed regulations regarding components of Periodicals publications. Hopefully this summary has provided a base of information for publishers, so at the very least you will know what questions to ask when considering inclusion of these components in your magazines.

Secondary barcode stickers

You may have noticed in the past few months a few magazines or catalogs coming to you in the mail with a barcoded sticker applied to the cover. The barcode is called a 4 state barcode, and is the new barcode format that will eventually replace the existing postnet barcode on the mailing label or ink jet address. These secondary barcode stickers are being applied by the USPS as these flat size pieces are being processed through the flat sorting equipment. We have received conflicting information from the USPS as to why these stickers are being applied. It appears that the USPS is in the process of deploying equipment to read and/or apply these new barcodes, and that these stickers are being applied by the USPS during the test-

ing process of this new equipment.

The stickers are causing some concern from publishers, as they can potentially deface the mailpiece. We have seen some pieces where the sticker has been applied so that it covers most of the delivery address, which could potentially cause delivery delays. In once case, we saw a magazine where the sticker had been applied to the back cover advertisement.

The application of these stickers is limited to a few postal facilities and is not a widespread practice, but we thought you would like to be informed in case you receive some of your publications or catalogs with these stickers applied.

Package Services Vs. Standard mail

The differences between the classes of mail can be confusing, and that is especially true of Standard and Package Services mail. Often the only thing separating the use of Standard or Package Services mail is the weight of the mailpiece.

Both of these classes of mail are used for materials that are not required to be mailed at First-class, and do not qualify for Periodicals class. Examples are items such as catalogs, brochures, books, publications not qualifying for Periodicals rates, and merchandise. For purposes of this article, we will restrict the discussion to printed materials such as catalogs, books, and magazines.

Both classes of mail are handled very similarly by the USPS; the primary difference is the weight. Pieces that weigh less than 16 ounces mail at Standard rates, while pieces weighing 16 ounces or more mail at Package Services rates. Within Package Services, there are various rate categories, such as Parcel Post, Bound Printed Matter, Media Mail and Library Mail. We will concentrate here on Bound Printed Matter.

The postal regulations for the two classes of mail are also very different, as are the postage rates. This becomes a concern for publishers who are mailing Standard mail pieces with weights approaching the one-pound mark. If the mail is not prepared properly for the weight, it can cause problems with acceptance of the mail and may even result in additional postage. Even if you consistently mail pieces over one pound at the Package Services rates, there can still be cause for concern if the thickness of the pieces approaches or exceeds 3/4" because the thickness can determine the processing category of the mail.

Pieces that exceed 3/4" in thickness move from the "flat" processing category to the "machineable parcel" processing category. This affects how the mailing list is presorted, and mailing machineable parcels also requires that each individual piece in the mailing be prepared as a parcel. In essence, this means that each piece must either be cartoned, polybagged, or shrink wrapped. Obviously this can make a big difference in your manufacturing costs and production schedules.

The wording on the permit imprint or indicia is different for Standard Vs. Package Services mail.

The examples below illustrate the differences:

PRSRT STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT # 123
LIBERTY, MO

BOUND PRINTED
MATTER
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT # 123
LIBERTY, MO

Ancillary endorsements may also have different meanings in the two classes of mail. If you want to receive address corrections, or have the mailpieces forwarded or returned, the use of the ancillary endorsements for requesting these services varies by class of mail. Using the incorrect ancillary endorsement can result in additional postage, or you may not receive the services that you intended.

Postage is calculated much differently in the two classes of mail. In Standard mail, postage is calculated on a per piece basis for pieces weighing 3.3 ounces or less, and on a per piece plus per pound basis for pieces weighing above 3.3 ounces. In Package Services Bound Printed Matter, there is a per piece plus a per pound charge regardless of the weight, but the per pound rates are distance sensitive and are higher the farther the destination of the mail from the printing plant entry point.

There are drop ship discounts in both Standard and Package Services mail, but they are much more lucrative in Package Services mail. Even so, your Standard rate mailings of the past can see a sharp increase in postage if the weight goes up and causes the class of mail to change to Package Services.

To prevent surprises, it is best to keep in mind the estimated weight and thickness of your mailpieces during the planning and production process. This will help insure that you are preparing your mailing properly and reduce the chances of acceptance delays and additional postage. Your Banta client services representative can supply you with an Excel spreadsheet for use in estimating both the weight and thickness per copy.

For more information on the differences between these classes of mail, contact your local USPS business mail entry office, or your Banta client services representative.

Banta PubNet Design

This issue was designed and assembled by Banta PubNet. If you are currently outsourcing the design of your publication, you might want to investigate Banta's design and assembly capabilities. Banta's creative team has the experience it takes to design outstanding publications from scratch, or work with your existing templates. We can also convert your native layout documents to PDF for streamlined computer-to-plate workflow, as well as provide custom-designed graphics and layouts for your magazine.

For more information, contact Wayne Metcalfe at 816-792-6394, or make an e-mail inquiry to wmetcalfe@banta.com.

For additional copies of the Banta Mailbox, contact Michelle Brasic, Database Coordinator at 630-575-2054 or at mbrasic@banta.com

Banta Mailbox is a monthly publication produced by the Banta Publications Group. Any comments or questions are welcome. Please contact Monica Lundquist of the Banta Publications Group by phone at 816-792-6370, by e-mail at mlundquist@banta.com, or write to Banta Publications Group, Mailing & Distribution Services, 3401 Heartland Dr., Liberty, MO 64068-3378.

Statement of Ownership reminder

It is not too early to remind publishers to prepare for filing your annual Statement of Ownership with the USPS. This form is required to be completed and submitted by October 1 every year for each Periodicals rate title authorized under the General or Requester categories. Filing this form is not required for Periodicals publications authorized under any other category, publications that mail at Standard or Package Services rates, or publications for which the Periodicals authorization is pending.

The Statement of Ownership, form 3526, requires information about the ownership and circulation of the publication. The circulation information is required to be reported for the issue of the publication closest to the filing date, along with average information for all of the issues for the year. It is this circulation information that is the most difficult part of the completion of this form. This is why we encourage publishers to keep track of this information consistently during the course of the year, so that completing the form is quicker and easier at deadline time.

One of the critical components of the circulation information is to account for both subscriber and non-

subscriber copies. Make sure your mailing statements are correctly reflecting the subscriber and non-subscriber counts on each issue. If they are not, notify your list processor so that the problem can be rectified early on. The USPS matches up the non-subscriber counts on the mailing statements to the non-subscriber information on the Statement of Ownership, so it is important that these counts are reflected accurately.

If you are required to complete the Statement of Ownership, you also need to plan to publish the information from the completed form in your publication. The required information must appear in an issue whose primary mailed distribution is produced not later than October 10 for publications issued more frequently than weekly, or not later than October 31 for publications issued weekly or less frequently but more frequently than monthly; or in the first issue whose primary mailed distribution is produced after October 1 for all other publications. There are no requirements for format or placement of the published Statement of Ownership in the magazine, as long as it is legible.

Online Information

More information on Banta Corporation is available through the company's Web site at www.banta.com

This piece was printed by Banta Print Services. For more information about Banta's Print Services, contact Patrick J. Aho, Banta Print Services Manager, 320-732-7907, or send an e-mail to paho@banta.com. To order reprints Online, visit our Web site at www.BantaReprints.com.