

POSTAL NEWS

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1. Nigeria: Union Members Kick Against Postal Reform Bill

27 January 2008

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Betrand Nwankwo
Abuja

Members of the Senior Staff Association of Communications, Transportation and Corporation (SSACTAC) have criticised the proposed postal reform bill currently with the National Assembly, saying federal government should concentrate with the manpower development and deployment of ICT based facilities before embarking on any reform.

The union members who are angry with the dwindling fortune of the Nigerian Telecommunication Limited (NITEL), and the Nigerian Mobiletelecommunication (MTEL) since they were sold to Transnational Corporation (Transcorp), urged the federal government to put the postal reform bill in abeyance until required manpower development and ICT based facilities and other basic developments expected from the government are put in place, to serve as a spring board for an efficient postal service delivery.

In addition, SSACTAC member have equally called for the removal of the current Postmaster General of the Federation, Mallam Ibrahim Mori Baba to make way for expert and seasoned administrator to head the Nigerian Postal Service (NIPOST). The union resolved that a workable post sector policy that would meet the future challenges and aspiration of all stakeholders, can only be achieved when government meets the acceptable transportation system and the designation codes and its commitment on investment in infrastructure development in NIPOST.

Addressing a press conference in Abuja, president general of SSACTAC, Mr Adetunji Adesunkanmi said that deployment of ICT infrastructure and man power development

in the postal sector would not only grow the postal services market, but will "ensure the survival of NIPOST as a universal postal operator in the face of vicious competition even in a so called regulated market".

The union also agreed that adequate resources should be released for the postal reforms to follow especially to enable NIPOST meet its business plans. "That a performance bond based on quantifiable and achievable objectives should be drawn for NIPOST to guide its management team by the BPE management and organised labour (NUPTE and SSATACTAC)" Adesunkanmi said.

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2. Microsoft Product Veteran Joins Earth Class Mail as VP of Product Management

Jan 27, 2008.

Software executive and product developer Rajeev Dujari, who made key contributions to Microsoft's Internet Explorer and Unified Communications products, will spearhead new product deployment for Earth Class Mail's international, online postal-mail service.

Seattle, WA (PRWEB) January 28, 2008 -- Earth Class Mail Corp., a global service that delivers postal mail online, announces the appointment of 15-year Microsoft veteran Rajeev Dujari as its Vice President of Product Management.

Dujari will be responsible for defining the product roadmap for the company's breakthrough online postal-mail delivery service. Continued software innovation and operational efficiency will accelerate the growth of Earth Class Mail's international customer base. Earth Class Mail's customer base includes individuals, small businesses, enterprises, government agencies, military branches and national postal services.

"We are truly fortunate to attract senior talent like Rajeev to Earth Class Mail, especially given our strategic partnership with Microsoft's Postal Group and the strong alignment of our investor base (including lead venture investor Ignition Partners) with Microsoft," said Ron Wiener, CEO of Earth Class Mail. "Having such a high level of Microsoft expertise within our engineering leadership will help to streamline integration of our web-based application, which is built on the Microsoft .NET platform, and will synergize with key Office System components such as Outlook and SharePoint Portal Server."

At Microsoft, Dujari established a track record of delivering globally recognized innovation in products and services. During his first 10 years at the company, he made key technical contributions to Microsoft's Windows operating system and five major releases of its Internet Explorer web browser. He was also an inventor on 12 issued patents, with two currently pending. Over the past five years, Dujari led product units charged with delivering major advances to the company's Exchange Server, Office Live Meeting and Visual Studio products.

"I'm fortunate to have had the opportunity to shape 18 well-known products at Microsoft," said Dujari. "I'm excited to apply that experience in helping drive the creation of a global service for individuals, businesses and national posts at Earth Class Mail."

Dujari's areas of expertise include desktop clients, enterprise services, hosted services and software platforms and tools, as well as staff recruiting, mentoring, team-building and offshore project management. He earned a B.S. in Electrical Engineering and a M.S. in Computer Science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where his graduate research focused on parallel algorithms for real-time speech recognition.

About Earth Class Mail

Earth Class Mail™ gives people the ability to access their U.S. postal mail online from anywhere in the world, 24x7. The service is used by individuals, small businesses and major corporate and government enterprises, with users currently accessing the www.earthclassmail.com website from over 130 countries. It is a popular alternative to P.O. Box rental, executive suites and mail-forwarding services. Earth Class Mail technologies also manage standardized process mail, such as claim forms, invoices and checks, more efficiently and cost-effectively than ordinary document management and storage solutions, for companies that are trying to "go paperless" or have large numbers of mobile workers, telecommuters and expatriates. Founded in 2004, Earth Class Mail is headquartered in Seattle, Washington, and has over 20 points of presence in the USA from New York to San Francisco where customers may have their mail delivered. The company is exclusively featured in a new eight-part high-def documentary TV series, "Start-Up Junkies," that debuted Jan. 24 on cable network MOJO HD.

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3. Post office addresses environment

By AMELIA FLOOD - aflood@kcchronicle.com

Jan 27, 2008. ST. CHARLES – When customers call Geneva Postmaster Belinda Bolding, they ask about what happens to refused or undelivered mail. They don't ask about recycling or other green initiatives the post office undertakes, Bolding said.

The Geneva postmaster stood at the former St. Charles Post Office at 1405 W. Main St., which is not Geneva's carrier center, watching workers lug blue recycling bins.

The U. S. Postal Service as a whole handles 703 million pieces of mail daily. For two decades, certain classes of mail that come back to the office have been recycled instead of destroyed. The office also has looked to alternative-fuel vehicles, green building techniques, and programs with mailing agencies to cut waste.

"Environmental issues are growing issues for all of us," said Tim Ratliff, spokesman for the Northern Illinois region of the postal service.

"The postal services have really been on the cutting edge," Ratliff said.

St. Charles, Geneva, South Elgin and Elburn post offices fall within the Northern Illinois district. Sugar Grove and Batavia are in the Central region.

The Postal Service won the 2006 WasteWise Partner of the Year Award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for its work reducing industry and solid waste.

In post offices such as those in Geneva and St. Charles, mail that is destined for recycling is sorted out and sent to a central location for processing.

Geneva also is looking forward to a change out of some of its carrier trucks for alternative-fuel models.

“We’re waiting for them,” Bolding said.

The Northern Illinois region has 1,800 alternative-fuel vehicles, and St. Charles already has some, Ratliff said.

Only certain classes of mail can be recycled, Ratliff and Bolding said, and that is only if there are no requests placed on the mail by sender. An example of a request could be forwarding to a new address, Ratliff said.

While the service has been working with large-scale mailing entities to reduce wastes, the main responsibility, Ratliff said, was the recipient’s. Although people might not like receiving some mail, the Post Office must deliver it if it is addressed to the person or to the “current resident,” Bolding said.

“No mail is junk mail to us,” Ratliff said. “Once you receive that mail, you own that mail.”

Charles Baumann of Geneva understands that, he said.

“We recycle all of the junk mail we get,” Baumann said, hauling a tub of mail out of the Geneva Post Office on Third Street.

In an effort to cut waste, the agency worked on the design of its stamp coils to eliminate liners for their labels. This resulted in the elimination of close to 700 tons of scrap paper, according to “Postal Facts 2007,” a U.S. Postal Service fact-sheet. Envelopes, post cards, Express Mail and Priority Mail envelopes are made with 100 percent recycled content, 80 to 100 percent of which is post-consumer derived.

Some of the payoff that comes with the green efforts are cut costs and increased efficiency, Ratliff said. Because the Post Office does not receive tax money, it is a self-supporting agency. Switching bulbs to energy-efficient models and automating many functions save in both materials and funds.

“It’s a way to be wise stewards of our resources,” Ratliff said. “We’re looking for creative solutions.”

4. Public praises Postal Service, slams FEMA

By GREGG CARLSTROM

January 28, 2008

A new survey of American attitudes toward government finds the U.S. Postal Service as the most popular agency in government, the Federal Emergency Management Agency as the most reviled, and the Housing and Urban Development Department as ... who are they again?

The survey found mixed results: Roughly half of the departments that survey respondents were asked about have seen their popularity dip in recent years, while the rest have remained largely unchanged. For many agencies, the problem is that they are simply unknown: More than 10 percent of respondents had no opinion of every department except for the Education and Defense departments.

For high-scoring agencies, the ratings might be validation for good work and successful public relations efforts. Lower scores might indicate poor performance — FEMA almost certainly took a bruising because of its bungled response to Hurricane Katrina. For some, a low score could just be a sign that the public doesn't know enough about them.

And public perception can affect every aspect of an agency's operations, especially staffing and funding. The government is a complex entity, and agencies with a poor public image are often poorly understood, said John Palguta, vice president for policy at the Partnership for Public Service, a nonprofit that promotes employment in the federal sector.

"The biggest disadvantage for government is that it does so much, is so big, that people don't have a good understanding of what it does," Palguta said.

"Generally speaking, the more familiar an individual is with an organization, the more likely they are to give it a highly favorable rating," said Kathy Sheehan, a vice president at GfK Roper, the firm that conducted the survey.

The New York-based Roper conducts the survey every one or two years. Researchers conducted in-person interviews with more than 2,000 Americans in August and September. They ranked dozens of federal agencies and departments on a four-point scale, ranging from "unfavorable" to "highly favorable." The survey was quantitative, so respondents were not allowed to explain why they made their choices.

Among the survey highlights:

Seven of 13 departments saw their favorable ratings slide since at least the last survey taken two years ago.

Among small agencies, the Federal Trade Commission and Securities and Exchange Commission showed particularly big gains in their favorable ratings. FTC saw its favorable rating increase eight percentage points, to 51 percent, since the last survey, the largest increase of any agency. SEC jumped five percentage points to 52 percent. The largest drop in popularity was at FEMA, which saw its favorable ratings plummet 10 percentage points to 42 percent.

Among Cabinet-level departments, the Homeland Security Department has watched its favorable ratings careen from a high of 65 percent in 2003, shortly after the department's formation, to just 49 percent in 2007. DHS also had the highest unfavorable ratings in government, with 39 percent of respondents holding an "unfavorable" or "not too favorable" opinion of the department.

“It’s a bit surprising,” said Kathy Sheehan, a senior vice president at GfK Roper. “We don’t normally see huge swings in many of these agencies because there are a lot of people who don’t know anything about them.”

Some big swings in agencies’ popularity are more explainable than others.

Frank Dorman, an FTC spokesman, who admitted to being a bit surprised at the score his agency received, said he can think of at least one good reason for his agency’s impressive standing.

“This is the agency that does the Do Not Call [Registry] program, a very popular program,” he said. “So that probably raises the profile of this agency.”

The ratings at lesser-known agencies may have been a bit skewed, according to Sheehan. Respondents were allowed to say they had “no opinion” of an agency, and many chose that option: 28 percent had no opinion of SEC, and 30 percent didn’t know anything about the Bureau of Land Management.

And it’s pretty easy explaining why FEMA suffered the largest drop in popularity.

“Back in July 2001, they were at 63 percent favorability,” Sheehan said. “It’s not surprising, when you think about Hurricane Katrina, that even two years later that agency is still really struggling to regain the favor of the American consumer.”

The public also has turned more negative toward the National Institutes of Health, which posted a six-point drop, and the Justice Department, which lost five. The quantitative survey couldn’t explain those drops, and neither could Sheehan or those agencies.

Meanwhile, the best marks went to the Postal Service, which had an 81 percent favorable rating. Nearly half of that was “highly favorable” grades, by far the highest of any agency or department.

“That’s one agency that most Americans touch,” Sheehan said. “They have some type of interaction with the post office. It’s a service where people see value, and in many cases a personal face.”

Many departments that have spent considerable sums on marketing are still relative unknowns to Americans. Despite \$31 million in public relations spending from 2000 to 2007, 14 percent of Americans had no opinion of the State Department; that figure is higher, 18 percent, at the Veterans Affairs Department, which spent \$13 million during the same timeframe.

And the Housing and Urban Development Department — a department which spent \$47.8 million on marketing between 2000 and 2007, the seventh-highest among civilian agencies — is still an unknown to nearly one-fifth of Americans, who didn’t know enough about it to form an opinion.

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5. Nigeria: Union Issues Ultimatum Over Nitel Sale

This Day (Lagos) 27 January 2008

Posted to the web 28 January 2008

Lagos

Telecommunication and postal workers have issued the Federal Government, 21-days to revoke the sale of Nigerian Telecommunication Limited (NITEL) /Mtel, to Transcorp Plc.

The Senior Staff Association of Communications, Transport and Corporation (SSACTAC) and the National Union of Postal and Telecommunications Employees made the demand in Abuja.

The unions also asked the government to halt the proposed liberalisation of the postal sector until the required technical and manpower development were put in place.

Addressing newsmen, the President General of SSACTAC, Mr. Adetunji Adesunkami, said Transcorp had fallen short in the agreements reached in the privatisation deal .

"MTEL is only received in Abuja, while the subscribers list have dwindled from over one million in 2006 to less than 200,000 in 2007. And the fixed active lines in the country is just 50,000", Adesunkanmi said.

He accused Transcorp of making promises to revitalise the companies without success, 15 months after it acquired 51 per cent equity shares of the company.

He said Transcorp had threatened to further deplete the workforce of 3000 workers in NITEL and 500 in Mtel, while staff salaries had not been paid for six months.

The union leader urged the Federal Government to release 30 per cent of its 41 per cent equity and Transcorp 30 per cent of its equity to investors.

He said the six months order by NCC to Transcorp to revive the companies was not feasible.

The spokesman of Transcorp, Mr Adebayo Ojo, accused the unions of embarking on propaganda.

"The sale of NITEL and Mtel to Transcorp followed due process as laid down by government, And it is totally baseless to say that we have not done anything to turn the fortunes of these companies", he said.

Ojo said the plan to retrench workers was an issue for NITEL management since the government still had 49 per cent equity in the company.

NITEL was sold to Transcorp in 2005 at the cost \$500 million by the Bureau of Public Enterprises.

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6. BCC Software Announces PEAK Webinar Series, Co-Hosted by Chris Lien and an Array of Postal Experts

Series kicks off in February with two-part series on Intelligent Mail Barcode

Rochester, NY, January 28, 2008 --(PR.com)-- BCC Software, a BÖWE BELL + HOWELL company and a leading developer of high-performance solutions for professional mailers, will launch a new series of informational Webinars beginning in February 2008. The series, collectively known as Postal Education and Knowledge (PEAK), will be hosted by BCC Executive Vice President Chris Lien and co-hosted by many well-known and recognized mailing industry experts.

“The rapid succession of change in this industry is simply unprecedented. Mailers need to stay informed if they are going to transform today’s challenges into tomorrow’s opportunities,” Lien said. “The PEAK series is designed to probe the most vital and complex issues facing mailers today, in a format offering maximum candor and convenience. We’re looking forward to giving attendees the tools they need to become better and more profitable mailers.”

The PEAK series will kick off with a two-part program on the United States Postal Service® (USPS®) Intelligent Mail® barcode:

Getting Intelligent about Intelligent Mail Barcodes (February 21, 1:30-3:00 p.m. EST): Chris Lien and USPS Marketing Technology & Channel Management Manager Pritha Mehra will probe the origins and impact of the next big postal innovation. This PEAK event will cover the following IMB-related topics:

How the Intelligent Mail® barcode will replace POSTNET™ and PLANET® codes
Different types of IMB levels, and what will be required in order to retain automation discounts beginning in January 2009

How IMB can improve your mailings’ visibility now as they travel through the mailstream

How to tap into a vast number of services through IMB to enhance address quality and improve customer response rates

The Mailer ID: what it is, how to get one, and when to use it

IMB: Hitting the Ground Running (March 20, 1:30-3:00 p.m. EST): In this session Chris Lien and Margaret Choiniere, USPS Operations Research Analyst, will reveal the crucial operational steps necessary to ensure proper IMB use in mailing jobs.

Topics covered will include:

How the “nuts and bolts” of IMB data fit together in one comprehensive barcode
Various types of IMB services offered, and how their proper use can boost your business

Steps you can take to ensure IMB uniqueness for 45 days as part of the Full Service option

Reliable methodologies for ensuring quality barcodes that can be read and leveraged for automation discounts

Future IMB ideas that extend into the next decade

Future PEAK sessions will be scheduled every one to two months apart (likely 2008 topics will also include Move Update Compliance, PostalOne!™ and Electronic

Documentation, Mailpiece Design, and the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act), and co-hosted by Lien and a postal expert whose specialty coincides with the topic. Each Webinar will last between 60 and 90 minutes, and will include live Q-and-A time between attendees and hosts.

Pricing for the PEAK series will be \$199 per Webinar, or \$149 for current BCC customers. A recorded version of each session will be included in the live-session registration price, or available for non-attendees after each session at a reduced rate for a single viewing. For registration and program details, visit www.PEAKwebinars.com.

About Chris Lien

A widely respected expert on mailing industry issues for more than 15 years, Chris Lien joined BCC Software as Executive Vice President in December 2007. He is a sought-after speaker at mailing-related conferences and events, and frequently delivers presentations at the National Postal Forum, Mailcom, Graph Expo, and many regional Postal Customer Councils. He has written numerous industry articles related to address quality, and hosted many online webinars on that topic and others.

About BCC Software

For more than 25 years BCC Software Inc has offered high-performance software and solutions for professional mailers. The company is committed to providing clients with the highest level of customer service and technology training. Current BCC clients include such well known names as Harvard University, The Miami Herald, Wal-Mart, Papa John's, American Civil Liberties Union, R.R. Donnelley, K/P Corporation and the U.S. House of Representatives. In 2005, BCC became a BÖWE BELL + HOWELL company. For more information about BCC products and services, visit bccsoftware.com or call (800) 453-3130.

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