

POSTAL NEWS

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1. Ukraine - Service Cutdowns To Ease Economic Crisis

16 March 2009 by Franz Groter - © Hellmail.co.uk

Joseph Vinsky, Ukrainian Minister for Transport and Communications said last week that reducing public sector workers pay, notably those of postal workers and railway workers, was not the way forward in terms of easing the economic situation in the Ukraine.

He said it impacted ordinary people and such measures would not only fail to improve the economic situation, but create additional tension in society. He emphasised however, that it would be necessary to be prudent and look at ways to slash costs associated with public services which could lead to cutbacks in services.

The Minister stressed that he fully support the union and that he would protect the interests of those involved in transport and communications.

"I have asked Verkhovna Rada to adequately assess the situation and look at measures to reorganise some of the spending budget of the Ukraine" said Vinsky.

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2. IDS Deliver iMail Postal Service

Integrated Documents Solutions (IDS), a document production specialist since 1997, has successfully developed the UK's first electronic next-day postal service.

Taunton, UK (PRWEB) March 16, 2009 -- Integrated Documents Solutions (IDS), a document production specialist since 1997, has successfully developed the UK's first electronic next-day postal service.

UK Mail, part of the Business Post Group, commissioned IDS in January 2008 to produce a system to allow their customers to generate and physically post letters directly from their computer or laptop.

"We wanted to develop a mail solution that combined the ease and environmental friendliness of electronic communication with the impact of physical mail," states Guy Buswell, CEO of the Business Post Group. "Our challenge was to find a partner that was capable of meeting our rigorous requirements and IDS ticked all the boxes."

Users of imail login via an Internet browser, compose their letter using familiar word processing tools then "post" it with a click of the mouse. Following this, the letter is sent electronically to a UK Mail sorting depot closest to its destination, where it is printed and inserted in a pre-paid envelope ready for delivery by the Royal Mail.

Not only does imail provide a convenient desktop to doormat postal service, it also reduces costs associated with the production and delivery of letters. UK Mail estimate the traditional method of generating and posting first class mail can be as much as £1 per item. With imail, this price drops to just 47 pence, inclusive of materials, production and first class delivery.

IDS developed a Web-based interface from the ground up to allow users to compose and administer letters. They also incorporated a combination of existing document production solutions to satisfy imail's back-end sorting, spooling and printing processes.

"A proven software solution called SpoolQ was used to provide the mechanism for managing and printing imail letters", comments Mark Dowson, Managing Director of IDS. "For over ten years, SpoolQ has been used by organisations such as The Bank of England, local Government authorities and the MOD, so we were certain it was robust enough to handle imail's printing requirements."

UK Mail estimated in excess of 80,000 letters would be generated and posted each day using imail, so it was paramount the hardware and software were capable of handling this quantity.

Mark continues: "To ensure we had the bandwidth to cope with the intended high volume of letters, we used a dedicated VPN link to connect the imail server to the SpoolQ systems at each of the eight regional UK Mail sorting depots."

South West Communications in Exeter (UK) was commissioned by IDS to provide a secure Tier 4 data centre for the imail server, along with the VPN link, and communications hardware required at each sorting depot.

IDS also worked closely with UK Mail's printer supplier, Konica Minolta, to ensure each imail letter is output as expected and within the deadline imposed by the Royal Mail to attain next-day delivery.

"Despite the complexity of the imail solution, and the involvement of multiple suppliers, the project was completed on time and within budget," states Mark. "We put much of this success down to our experience integrating bespoke document production solutions for a wide range of industry sectors, and our unprecedented knowledge of the software and hardware necessary to accomplish this."

Since its launch in November 2008, IDS has continued to manage imail, providing 24/7 support, software updates, and hardware tuning.

Mark concludes: "In addition to our managed service commitment, our relationship with UK Mail is destined to continue with the development and integration of an imail facility to create and deliver postcards and direct mail marketing literature!"

To find out more about imail, visit <http://www.ukmail.biz/imail/>

To find out more about the document production solutions available from IDS, visit <http://www.idocsol.com>.

About Integrated Document Solutions (IDS)

IDS have supplied and managed document production solutions for global businesses and organisations since 1997. All aspects of the document process are handled, from host to

printer connectivity through to document delivery, and all are backed up by first-class consultancy, comprehensive training, and dedicated support.

The company operates as the solutions and services arm of its controlling company, FunAsset, who have developed hardware and software products for the print production environment for over 18 years.

<http://www.idocsol.com>

About UK Mail

UK Mail is part of the Business Post Group, the UK's largest independent express delivery company, operating through a network of nearly 60 locations across the UK. The Group and its associates employ over 5,000 people, have a fleet of more than 3,000 vehicles and are responsible for the movement of over 150,000 consignments every working day.

UK Mail was the first organisation to be licensed by Postcomm, the independent regulator, to provide a competitive postal service effectively ending 370 years of Royal Mail's monopoly. It is the leading alternative to Royal Mail for business mail requirements and is the Business Post Group's fastest growing division handling 2.3 billion mail items every year, with a 15% share of the UK mail market.

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3. Editorial: 'Closed, come back in an hour and 15'

Sunday, March 15, 2009

Times are indeed tough at the U.S. Postal Service — not just because of the weak economy but email's growing popularity. So postal rate hikes (like the one due in May) and service cutbacks are understandable. But the latter still have to be implemented carefully, so as to minimize customer inconvenience.

Somehow, the idea of shuttering a post office branch located in the heart of a thriving business district for an hour and 15 minutes each afternoon — as Scotia's Mohawk Avenue post office intends to do starting next month — strikes us as anything but convenient.

Problem is, there will be customers who simply assume that the branch's operating hours are like most other branches' — and other small businesses, with the possible exception of tiny mom-and-pops': Once open in the morning, they stay that way until evening. The reason is pretty simple: People have a hard enough time keeping track of the time during the course of their busy days, much less the erratic hours that the businesses they like to patronize might keep. (And lest the people who work for the Postal Service forget, it is, above all, a business.)

The Postal Service doesn't advertise much — and certainly not for things like hours — so it will be hard to get the word out to the branch's occasional customers. It seems inevitable that there will be a lot of people who will pull up to the post office doors between 1 p.m. and 2:15 p.m., only to find it closed. Yes, they'll have the option of driving five miles to East Glenville, or over the bridge and into downtown Schenectady, but if they're like most workers, they won't have an hour and 15 minutes off for lunch to do it.

Can't branch officials figure out a more practical way to fulfill service cutback mandates, either by opening (still) later in the day, closing earlier, or getting a handful of other workers to each do an extra 15 minutes at the lobby window every day?

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