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Business Reply Mail Pointers

Proper graphics can save BIG money

As more automated equipment comes on line at your local post office, there are new opportunities to save money. The latest has to do with Business Reply Mail (BRM). If your graphics meet all post office standards, the cost for processing can drop from \$.44 to just \$.02 per piece. However, there are tight tolerance requirements for art and printing. So tight, that you'll need a series of post office approvals during both art and print stages to be on the safe side. In fact, the post office requires you to give them 50 printed samples for testing to determine if your BRM is completely machine readable. Meeting these tolerances is well worth the effort. Automated processing can drop the cost of receiving 2,000 BRM pieces from \$880 to just \$40 by following proper guidelines.

Business Reply Legend Box:

The words "Business Reply Mail" are required above the address in capital (upper case) letters, 3/16" minimum height. Immediately below this, the words "First-Class Mail Permit No" followed by the permit number and the name of the issuing post office (city and state) in capital letters. These should be enclosed in a box.

Permit Holder Space:

The upper left corner of the address side is available for permit holder use. It may contain a return address, logos, distribution codes and form numbers.

Postage Paid Line:

Appears (in capital letters) under the business reply legend box.

Company Logo:

A company logo is permitted in the address block as long as it does not extend below the top of the delivery address line. The logo must not interfere with any of the required business reply endorsements.

Address Format:

The complete address, including the name of the permit holder (company or individual), must be printed directly on the mailpiece.

Recommendations for Address Block Format

- uniform left margin
- city and state (2 letter state abbrev.) in upper case letters
- 10-12 point type
- uniform line spacing
- 1 space between city and state
- 2 spaces between state and ZIP+4 code
- letter spacing: 1 point character spacing is recommended
- word spacing: the width of 1 full-size character, such as an "M"
- 2-3 point line spacing
- simple sans serif types with uniform stroke thickness
- an appropriate ZIP+4 code to identify the piece as BRM
- no punctuation (except hyphen in ZIP+4 code)

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Facing Identification Mark (FIM):

A facing identification mark (FIM) is another type of postal barcode used in automated processing of mail. It's a pattern of vertical bars printed on the top right portion of the address side of the piece. A FIM is required on all BRM postcard and letter-size mailpieces. This is required so computerized cancellation equipment can align, postmark and direct the mailpiece properly.

Postage Endorsement Box:

Be sure to print the endorsement "No postage necessary if mailed in the United States" in the upper right corner on the face of the mailpiece.

Horizontal Bars:

This is a series of horizontal bars immediately below the "NO POSTAGE" endorsement. These bars must be uniform in size, evenly spaced.

POSTNET Barcode:

A barcode is a series of tall and short bars printed on a mailpiece. The barcode on BRM represents the 9-digit ZIP+4 code. A camera-ready barcode positive may be obtained free of charge from your Postal Business Center.

Note:

Each BRM permit holder is issued a ZIP Code or ZIP+4 code to identify the piece as BRM. Care should be taken to ensure the proper ZIP+4 code and barcode are printed on the mailpiece.

Size Standards

In order for letter mail to be compatible with computerized processing equipment, it must be between 3½" x 5" minimum and 6⅞" x 11½" maximum. In order to qualify for postcard rate, the piece must be at least 3½" x 5", but no larger than 4¼" x 6". Larger postcard sizes are mailable; however, they will be charged at the regular First-Class Mail letter rate. The thickness must be at least 0.007" thick and not more than 0.0095" thick.

Ink/Paper Colors and Typestyles:

Not all colors of paper and/or ink and typestyles are compatible with automated equipment. Contact your Advertising Agency or Postal Business Center for guidance on ink and/or paper color and readable typestyles.

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