

## Ask Marcus

A question  
of translation

**Question:** Must a mailer provide an English translation of non-English Periodical Rate publications upon entry of each issue?

**Answer:** No, according to **Ed Schmidt, MTAC rep for the International Labor Communications Assn.**

He points to DMM 56, E213.1.8 which states, "If a publication is printed in a foreign language, a brief translation of the contents of the copies (e.g., a synopsis of each article and advertisement) must accompany the **(Periodical Rate) application.**" Not each issue.

The question came to the fore when the July issue of *Mailers' Companion*, a USPS publication, implied that each non-English Periodical Rate publication submitted for mailing must have an accompanying English translation.

USPS will publish a clarification in the September issue.

**Marcus J. Smith, Publisher**

**PS:** Send your mailing-related questions and problems to: [msmith@ucg.com](mailto:msmith@ucg.com), or call: 301-287-2204.

## Co-sourcing - lower-cost alternative to standard mail center staffing

There's a third choice to staffing called co-sourcing that you should explore before sticking with in-house staff, or going with pure outsourcing. One proponent of the concept reports saving 10%, over pure in-house staff, plus reducing absenteeism to near nil.

At **Marsh & McLennan Companies Inc., New York, NY**, absenteeism in the mail center ran to 3.4 people per day out of a staff of 40 in mail ops when all personnel were in house, says **Peter Ferdinandson, CMDSM, mgr., mail/distribution services.** Mail service is a critical business for MMC and something had to be done. The knee-jerk solution was straight outsourcing, but that's not part of the MMC corporate culture. Further, a total switch to outsourcing is often disruptive.

As an alternative, Ferdinandson approached his upper management with the idea of co-sourcing, making a deal with an outsourcing firm willing to provide mail ops trained staff, but not a total take over. Millennium Group, Piscataway, NJ, ([www.tmg4mail.com](http://www.tmg4mail.com)) was willing to give the idea whirl, starting with two staff persons to fill open positions. Now, years later, out of a the total mail ops staff, over half are Millennium Group personnel, including the top sergeant under Ferdinandson. The version was made gradually taking advantage of retirements and attrition. Benefits of the deal according to Ferdinandson:

- 1) If any staff persons are absent Millennium provides an immediate fill in from a pool of pre-instructed clerks.
- 2) Training is shouldered by Millennium at its HQ and at the MMC site so the burden of keeping staff up to speed is shared.
- 3) Millennium staff work on a straight 40-hour week, not 35 as MMC support staff do, which saves overtime. Overall, Millennium staff save MMC about \$1,500 per person/year, says Ferdinandson, or approximate \$33,000/year.

There are two keys to making the deal work according to Ferdinandson and **Tim Kerner, VP at Millennium Group.** First, the source of staff must be more than a temp "body shop," the staff source must supply skilled mail operatives, and on-site technical advice/leadership as the need arises. Second, the client must fully integrate the outside staff, taking the extra time to put them in the know about the particular needs on the site served. Ferdinandson spends approximately 1.5 hours/week providing these insights in small group sessions with Millennium and MMC staff. ☒

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