

be close

the bpost international newsletter

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editorial

Plans for the future

First of all, I would like to offer you my best wishes for 2011. This is going to be a special year for post operators because of the liberalisation of the European postal sector, although, in fact, not much is going to change for us as we have already been proving for a long time that we are an international player on an open and competitive market. bpost has been guaranteeing a good price/quality ratio and client-oriented approach in this international context since 2002, providing us with a strong position in Western Europe and the US, to name but two regions. We are also doing well with our extra services. For instance, with SPEOS, a bpost subsidiary, we are offering high-value printing and mailing solutions for international distribution, and the further development of 'hybrid mail' solutions is high on the agenda for 2011. We also offer an excellent range of products and solutions for e-commerce activities, which we are continuously developing and fine-tuning. Our services enable e-tailers to fully focus on their online sales, since we take care of transport, storage, customs formalities and return logistics. The fast-growing e-commerce market is also an opportunity for us to further develop the distribution of B2C parcels and small packages globally. After all, who else but the postal networks are able to deliver every day and everywhere? This network, combined with our personal approach, is clearly bearing fruit. Indeed, a recent satisfaction survey revealed that we are perceived as a strongly motivated team that is committed to the customer's interests, the vast majority of our clients gave us the highest score as they were "very satisfied"! I would really like to thank you for this trust and would like you to know that we are already doing everything we can to satisfy every single one of our clients next year! I also wish you a very successful 2011.

Peter Somers
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news

Green Post bpost opts resolutely for sustainability



Cutting CO₂ emissions at bpost by 35% by the end of 2012: this is the objective set in bpost's Green Post programme. The equipment used in the sorting centres, solar panels, green electricity, good insulation, a code of conduct, etc. all have to contribute to this, "But we go way beyond that," says Jacques Bruyneel, Direct Marketing Expert at bpost. "We also actively help our business clients who regularly organise Direct Mailings, so that they can work in the most environmentally-friendly manner possible."

The Carbon Meter: a unique tool
bpost created a unique tool which has been in use since March 2010 to measure the environmental impact of commercial mailings: the Carbon Meter. Jacques Bruyneel is understandably proud. "This tool makes it possible to completely map out the CO₂ emissions generated by a Direct Mailing operation. We use it to measure everything: paper production, the transport of that paper, printing, address and data management, postal delivery, etc., up to and including sorting just before the documents are placed in the consumer's letterbox. This know-how allows us to reduce the CO₂ emissions generated by a Direct Mailing at several levels."

Positive reactions
"We also carry out tests to compare the environmental impact of 'regular' and more 'eco-friendly' mailings" Jacques Bruyneel continues. "We can even calculate the exact percentage of the CO₂ impact, and this allows our clients to indicate on their documents that the CO₂

impact of their mailing is much lower than usual, thanks to the right choice of paper, ink, etc. Research has shown that this type of message is read and appreciated by 25 to 30% of consumers, and this is obviously a good thing for the advertiser's image... and that of bpost," he adds. "We presented our Carbon Meter to the European Post Association, and quite a few major postal operators were immediately interested."

"The Carbon Meter index the CO₂ emissions generated by a Direct Mail."

Ecological advice
bpost not only makes the Carbon Meter available to its clients, but it also helps them to organise more environmentally-friendly mailings. "It's important to have a good balance between opting for more ecological production strategies, while still maintaining the quality and impact of the mailing," says Jacques Bruyneel. "Trying to save by reducing the size of the envelope or using fewer colours is not a good idea, because this often leads to lower response rates. There are many other ways to organise greener Direct Mailings. We specifically studied this matter and compiled the results in a set of specifications and recommendations. Our clients are free to use this information as they please, and on top of this, there are of course bpost's DM consultants who not

only advise customers about their choice of target audience, message and strategy, but also about ecological aspects."

CO₂ offsetting
This spring, bpost will take yet another step towards reducing the ecological footprint of Direct Mailings. The idea is to give businesses that regularly organise large mailings the opportunity to offset the resulting CO₂ emissions by paying a modest amount. Jacques Bruyneel tells us more. "When a client organises a mailing, we calculate the CO₂ emissions (during collection, sorting, and distribution) it generates in the 'postal chain'. Based on the result, we suggest that the client donate a small amount to an organisation which sets up environmentally-friendly projects in developing countries."

Green master plan
So what are our conclusions after this conversation? Green Post didn't start this initiative just because it's now fashionable to be concerned about the environment. Quite the contrary. This is a future-oriented plan based on a strong commitment, and on top of quality and punctuality, more and more international clients are convinced that full compliance with the ISO 14001 Environmental Management Standard is a major advantage.

Jacques Bruyneel
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solution

we contribute to the success of your **Direct Mailings**

The importance of Direct Marketing is growing worldwide. In fact, studies have shown that in some countries up to half of the communication budget is now being invested in this approach, with the lion's share going to Direct Mailing. Why is this? Because a direct, personalised approach works, as clearly shown by standard response rates.

bpost international goes beyond borders

If you are planning to organise an international Direct Mailing, you need the services of a reliable logistics operator. Someone who knows local and international customs requirements, and who can provide you with solid advice and tailor-made solutions. And of course, someone who can also ensure that your commercially addressed items will be delivered to the right mailboxes right on time. So, in other words, someone like bpost international. We are convinced that a creative, result-driven Direct Mailing is one of the most effective marketing tools available.

The power of Direct Mailing... we prove it every day through creative and effective mailings

You can either highlight the importance of Direct Mailings using figures, or demonstrate that an eye-catching mailing with a highly personal approach draws people's attention, but we decided to

combine both approaches. Our prospects received a mailing featuring a "Pop Art" likeness of their bpost international Account Manager explaining the effectiveness of paper mailings by means of some figures. Through this, we were able to show that Direct Mail is excellent for 1-to-1 communication and for initiating dialogue! In our request for people to contact us, we added an innovative incentive to boost response rates: anyone asking for more information would be entitled to receive a "Pop Art" version of his or her favourite photograph! Addressees were given two options for

"We strongly believe in the power of the creative DM, geared towards the results."

responding: either a standard pre-paid response slip or a special web page containing more information on our services... a perfect example of integrated communications.

Take advantage of our tailor-made solutions

We had two goals in mind when developing our "package" mailing offer: draw attention to our parcels solutions and show that we are able to provide customized services. And so we did... literally! Our prospects received a bpost international package containing a T-shirt with the slogan "No stretch. bpost international has the tailor-made solution". The solutions were presented in a brochure and a letter. The response slip (naturally a pre-paid self-mailer) zeroed in even more on our flexibility with a most appropriate gift: if prospects asked for more information about our package solutions, they would be able to order T-shirts for themselves and their team and of course, in the appropriate sizes and with the text of their choice!

Convenient extra services

bpost international does more than just dispatch and deliver your administrative

post, packages and direct mailings on time. In fact, we also offer other solutions which add value to your product offer and allow you to build customer loyalty. "Easy Return" is just such a new solution which makes it very easy to return a package. Our prospects really needed to test this themselves and that is why we sent them a package containing a large image of a boomerang, which symbolises the product. Inside the box they not only found a letter and a brochure with more detailed information, but also a return sticker which they only had to stick on their package to return it and test the system. "Easy Return" is that simple! And to boost the response rate we added another incentive: "in return" the Account Manager showed up with a relaxing gift."

Martine Moors

Marketing Director bpost international

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in the spotlight

bpost international shows its stuff at leading trade fairs

An international company needs to show its international credentials, so it's no surprise that bpost international presents its services at trade fairs both in Belgium and abroad. We were present at E-Commerce Paris in September 2010, and at the beginning of October 2010 we made something of a name for ourselves at the Nationale Vakdag Dialogue & Digital Marketing in Rotterdam.

First time in Paris: right on target

Key Account Manager Anne-Sophie Bernard takes a satisfied look back at bpost international's "maiden voyage" to Paris. "We want to play a key role in international e-commerce, and this is why we decided to attend E-Commerce Paris, the largest trade fair in Europe for our sector. When you go there, you generally meet two types of target groups: on the one hand, companies thinking about taking their activities to an international level which are mostly looking for information, and on the other hand, well-established international players on the lookout for new and promising opportunities." And does bpost international have something to offer both groups? Anne-Sophie Bernard answers enthusiastically. "Outside Belgium, we are considered to be an international

player providing bespoke solutions for mailings to over 180 destinations. Our service is seen as a very real alternative to other operators and thanks to this, we managed to make some very promising first contacts!"

High visibility in Rotterdam

Key Account Manager Filip Janssens agrees: "Being present at a trade fair where our biggest competitors are also there to meet clients is critical, and you simply have to be there if you want

"We're making a place for ourselves among the major international players."

international level exposure." He continues: "The Nationale Vakdag Dialogue & Digital Marketing trade fair is an event which is pre-eminently geared to the new generation of marketers. In just a day's time they get exposed to a multitude of new ideas, receive advice and are able to compare a whole series of mailing options. When this happens, it's absolutely necessary that they know about us."

Promising contacts

"During these fairs I meet both existing and potential clients" continues Filip Janssens. "But even if I already know quite a few visitors, it's still always nice to see them there and have a chat. Often, a number of questions come up and we are then able to provide an answer. And I must say that some of the contacts we made are particularly promising." For Anne-Sophie Bernard as well, bpost international's first time at E-commerce Paris showed a lot of potential. "We had an original, attractive and creative stand which drew a lot of visitors but, more importantly, the people we spoke to were very surprised and interested by our services. We are now energetically following up on these contacts to discuss our most effective and advantageous solutions."

Filip Janssens

Key Account Manager bpost international

Anne-Sophie Bernard

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in the spotlight

client satisfaction survey: “We’ve made **serious progress**”

Every year, bpost international carries out a full-scale satisfaction survey among its clients and those working with the competition. After all, it is only by comparing both types of results that you can really know whether or not you’re doing things right. “We’ve made serious progress” explains Koen Durant of Strategic Marketing & Planning, who was in charge of the survey between June and September 2010. But there is of course always room for improvement, and this type of study is only worthwhile if you can use it to draw the right conclusions.

Wide-ranging international survey

“The study looks at the opinions of both Belgian and international clients,” says Koen Durant. “But the questionnaire is the same for everybody and relatively broad in nature: how do you feel about our products, services, account management, complaints handling, administration and invoicing, etc. We certainly aren’t afraid to cover all the aspects of our business. We then ask the same questions to non-clients about their suppliers, allowing us to compare our performance.”

High level of satisfaction

“Based on all the responses we take our scores on a scale from 1 (very bad) to 7

“We even adapt our internal structure to suit our clients.”

(very good) and then calculate an average overall figure.” And the result for this year? “A level of satisfaction of 79%, which is significantly higher than last year.”

Always room for improvement

No chance of resting on our laurels; quite the contrary, actually. “This satisfaction level is a good general benchmark for the next studies, but the most important thing is to each time learn something from the points for improvement,” says Martine Moors, Marketing Director bpost international. “We can also see the results of this approach in this study. For example, feedback on complaints handling was not very good last year, but we did much better this year. Nevertheless, it continues to be a point for attention.” The same applies to administration and invoicing: better but not quite perfect yet. Here, Martine Moors is confident. “Recently, a number of administrative and logistics services were brought together into a single Business

Administration & Excellence Department and this is sure to yield positive results. So as you can see, we even adapt our internal structure to suit our clients!” (see article below). And if on top of that we add the fact that our products, our Account Managers’ personal approach and bpost international’s tailor-made client solutions have obtained excellent ratings over the past few years, we feel that we can look forward to good results for the next study.”

Koen Durant

Marketing Research bpost international

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zoom

in the spotlight: bpost international Business Administration & Excellence

Critical task package bpost international Business Administration & Excellence: yes, that’s quite a mouthful. But then again the team that has been working under Patrick Putman since late 2010 has to deal with varied - and historically fragmented - services, and it also has an especially extensive task package.

For example they have to order uniforms, manage projects, develop IT tools, map out investments, monitor regulatory changes, ensure that invoicing takes place properly, and deal with complaints. All these responsibilities fall on a team of 38 highly motivated staff who deal with all sorts of tasks. “What we do is quite critical in keeping bpost international operating” notes Patrick Putman. “More specifically, for this reason we decided to bring together various functions within one single group. And this makes things smoother and more straightforward.” Let’s have a quick look at them below.

Internal logistics

“This team is responsible for internal logistics and their job consists of reception duties, booking business trips, ordering uniforms and office supplies, etc. In short, they ensure that no one at bpost international runs out of anything and this is very important for the working environment.”

“We’re the oil that lubricates the motor.”

Project Management Office

The five people in this unit work on our larger projects. “This is done together with the Product Managers and all the in-house or external parties involved” says Patrick Putman. “They come up with an idea and we turn it into reality.”

Business Excellence

For this unit, the main goal is to ensure the continuous, systematic and structured improvement of processes at bpost international, in the broadest sense within four domains: risk and compliance management, business process and system architecture, knowledge and skills management, as well as reporting and analysis.

Business Administration

“This is the largest unit in our team. They manage all the interpostal documents and deal with accounting matters. This is a purely administrative

task, but it is a very sensitive role since international postal operations are very strictly regulated, and this involves dealing with major flows of incoming and outgoing documents.”

A well-oiled machine

There’s no doubt that the gears at bpost international are meshing smoothly and Business Administration & Excellence is doing what it needs to do to keep things that way. Or to borrow an expression from Patrick Putman “I consider us to be the oil that lubricates the motor!”

Patrick Putman

Director of Business Administration & Excellence bpost international

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communication

be alert! bpost international keeps you informed online

You know, as well as we do, that accurate information and fast communication are key to good client relations. For this reason, bpost international has recently launched two new tools on its website: "e-alerts" and a digital newsletter beneficial to both you and your clients. We talked about this with the Head of Campaign Management at bpost international, Filip Vindevogel.

E-alerts: staying on top of things

"Although we work with a reliable network of professional partners, there is always the possibility that something unexpected will happen somewhere in the long delivery chain which processes international postal items. For example a strike breaks out, packages are blocked because of a terrorist threat, air traffic is grounded because of bad weather, etc., and this causes delivery delays. Such unexpected events are obviously beyond our control, but what we can do is stay on top of things and immediately look for other options while informing our customers," says Filip Vindevogel.

With this in mind, bpost international has launched e-alerts. He explains how simple the service really is. "Our clients register online, and as soon as an event resulting in delays takes place, they are notified via e-mail. If they want, they can also choose to follow us through our Twitter account 'twitter.com/bpost_int' and receive tweets. In fact, we can now inform our customers before they start getting worried," he concludes.

Useful for both the sender and the recipient

e-alerts is not just an important service for bpost international customers since they in turn are able to immediately inform their own customers in case of a problem. Clearly, this can only be to the benefit of customer relations.

Stay informed of innovations

e-alerts is proof-positive: bpost international continues to renew and innovate and the be close newsletter you are holding in your hands regularly informs you of these improvements.

"As soon as an event takes place which may result in delays our clients are immediately notified via e-mail."

Filip Vindevogel "We will soon be launching a new quarterly digital newsletter in which we present new products, discuss Direct Mailing cases, provide information about developments, etc. Basically, we are committed to sharing our knowledge with our customers in a highly accessible manner. All our customers need to do is go to www.bpostinternational.com/newsletter and register. While there, they can also sign up for the e-alerts and our activities agenda."

Filip Vindevogel

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did you
know...

You can constantly follow your shipments online via our **Track & Trace application** on www.bpostinternational.com

agenda

26-27 January 2011

Webwinkel Vakdagen
Utrecht, the Netherlands

7-9 February 2011

World Mail & Express
Mexico, Mexico



More information ?



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