



April 2002 is

Waste-Free Month!

Reduce Business Junk Mail!

This document provides detailed steps that you can take to reduce your organization's unwanted mail. The Environmental Forum of Marin encourages organizations to make an effort to start reducing unwanted mail during the month of April as a way to celebrate Earth Day 2002.

1. Contact two major sources of business-to-business mailing lists and ask them to remove your business from their lists:
 - Dun & Bradstreet: phone Customer Service Center, 1-800-333-0505
 - InfoUSA: create letter with the following:
 - At the top of the page, address to "Attention - Business Update Department"
 - Include the complete business name, address and phone number, name and title of person requesting the deletion and that person's signature
 - Fax to 402-331-0176 or mail to InfoUSA, P.O. Box 27347, Omaha NE, 68127
2. If possible, assign one person the task of reducing all unwanted mail, which will streamline the process. This could be a temporary worker (especially up front), a full-time employee, or a volunteer. Suggestions for getting off mailing lists:
 - Announce the mail reduction program to the entire company along with instructions on how employees can help out (see step 4 below). Post informational posters and/or periodically send out reminders to encourage continued support for the program. Explain your mail reduction program to all new employees.
 - Put out clearly marked collection boxes near the mail slots for each department and ask employees to place all mail and faxes they no longer want to receive into these containers. If only name corrections are needed, ask them to note the corrections on the mailings.
 - How to handle different types of unwanted mail:
 - Take advantage of toll-free or local fax or phone numbers and any enclosed postage-paid envelopes or postcards (tape your address to the postcard with a request to be removed from the mailing list). Toll-free area codes are 800, 888, 877, or 866.
 - For first-class mailings or mail marked either "Return Service Requested" or "Change Service Requested", cross out your name and address and the bar code, write or stamp "return to sender", and give back to the mail carrier.
 - For bulk-rate mail without a fax number or postage-paid return mailer, remove and save the page with both your address and the sender's address and recycle the remaining paper. Group unwanted mail from the same sender together. Periodically, mail pre-printed postcards (see step 3 below) or letters to all senders.
 - If desired, request that all listings for your company be removed.
 - To promote recycling of all paper, provide plenty of clearly marked recycling containers throughout the company (including at employee's desks).

3. Create a model postcard to send to businesses requesting removal from their mailing list. Three ideas for creating postcards:
 - Preformatted postcards available at <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/swd/nwpc/bizjunkmail8.htm> (click on "Model postcard in Adobe Acrobat PDF format")
 - Design a multi-use postcard (similar to preformatted card above):
 - At the top of the card, leave a space to tape the address label. You can say: "TAPE ADDRESS HERE." It is important to have the address (that you want deleted) taped to the top of the card, not the middle or the bottom, to avoid confusion at the post office.
 - Print a series of check-off boxes:
 - "Delete Address." Below that, if you like, you can have smaller check-off boxes that say, "Info not wanted," "Person no longer here," "Person unknown," "Address Insufficient" or "Other"
 - "Do NOT place my address on any mailing lists"
 - "Please keep sending mailing, but change info to:" (then leave spaces for name, title, organization, and address)
 - Create a postcard, with room for taping the address label at the top, along with the message: "To whom it may concern: In an effort to reduce our disposable waste products, we are requesting that you remove our name from your mailing list." You may also want to request that the sender notify you when the names and addresses have been successfully deleted.
4. Ask your employees for help in reducing unwanted mail by:
 - Making sure all personal items are delivered to their homes
 - Depositing all unwanted mail and faxes into collection boxes
 - Asking businesses they deal with to not sell or trade your company's mailing information
 - Whenever possible, only providing other businesses your company's name, phone, and e-mail, but no physical address (including if they enter contests or drawings)
5. If no one is available to run the mail reduction program, ask employees to do the work to get off mailing lists. Provide preprinted postcards/letters along with easy-to-follow instructions.
6. When your company registers for classes or conferences, purchases products or services, and/or orders subscriptions, include a request to not have your company's mailing information distributed to other vendors. This could be standardized as a memo or a comment added to the bottom of documents. Ideas:
 - On the bottom of purchase orders, print "In the interests of reducing waste, please do not share this name or address through mailing list sales or trades."
 - Create a standard form for registrations for subscriptions, conferences, events, training classes, etc. Include a no distribution request at the bottom.
7. Ask your receptionist to only provide your company's address to callers with a legitimate reason for seeking such information.
8. If you send direct mail, clean up your own mailing lists. Suggestions:
 - Consolidate mailing lists into one computer database and delete duplicate listings
 - Send customers who receive multiple mailings a list of their recipient employees and ask them to cross off names of employees who have left or relocated
 - Label all direct mail as "Return Postage Guaranteed" and buy return postage for Standard Class (formerly Third Class) mailings that are returned as undeliverable
 - To delete names from your mailing list, set up and maintain a system that can handle both undeliverable mail and customer requests for removal
 - On every mailing you send out, print easy "opt out" instructions in a visible place on the mailing

We welcome your comments or questions: communitydevelopment@MarinEFM.org

Web address: www.MarinEFM.org

Source: National Waste Prevention Coalition (<http://dnr.metrokc.gov/swd/nwpc/bizjunkmail.htm>)