



USPS: Summer Sale....

The USPS plans for the sale, which started in June, was approved by the Postal Regulatory Commission, for Standard Mail permit holders meeting a minimum volume who would be able to qualify for the proposed 30% discount. Nonprofit groups also would qualify.

The sale period is from June 15 to September 15, and the USPS said the additional cost to the agency would be minimal since no additional processing would be needed.

The USPS estimated about 5% of the current 160,000 permit holders would qualify.

“We are always looking for ways to use our pricing flexibility to improve business, and the current economic climate makes that more important than ever,” said Steve Kearney, SVP of customer relations for the USPS. “Promotional pricing is one possibility, an idea that would need to be reviewed by the Postal Regulatory Commission. As we move forward with specific pricing promotions and other business incentives, we’ll announce them to the industry and the media.”

The Direct Marketing Association has already come out in favor of the idea.

“The current economic climate demands this new pricing strategy to grow mail volume during the slow summer season,” said DMA president and CEO John Greco in a statement. “It has taken two years for this to come to fruition, and we welcome its continued progress.”

There might be some concern among mailers about the lead time to take advantage of the sale, said Jerry Cerasale, SVP of government relations for the DMA.

“Many mailers have already locked in June and July, so we are uncertain of how many can take advantage of it, but some will,” he said. “Because of a short lead time, the reaction to this won’t be the same as if there was a lot more notice.”

Still, the idea is a good start, Cerasale continued. “Let’s applaud them for it,” he said. “We hope the postal service uses this as a baseline to look at and implement further sales.”

“We are very pleased they are thinking out of the box and using innovative approaches to stimulate mail,” he said.

Davison said he, too, was initially concerned about the short notice given mailers, but added that “there’s a lot of excitement and appreciation” among catalogers for the sale.

