

Academic Society Marketing

Executive Summary

A major academic honor society with over 300 local chapters and 100,000 active members throughout the United States wished to improve the way it recruited new members and communicated with existing members. The incumbent method of ad hoc marketing by the local chapters was inconsistent and ineffective. The local chapters lacked full-time staff and local chapter heads had neither the time nor expertise to conduct direct mail and event marketing activities. And, its brand was not always used in a consistent manner.

Franklin presented the society with its **FranklinFast™** automated direct mail solution. This solution centralized brand management so that its imaging and messaging were consistent throughout all chapters. The creative elements of preparing recruitment and member communications could be handled at its national headquarters where a professional marketing staff could oversee all activities.

The solution also made the amount of time spent by local chapters more effective. Local chapter heads are now able to simply login to a privately branded FranklinFast interface and upload their mailing list. They see an online proof and the mail is produced in less than three business days. The result is timely and effective direct mail communications at a cost significantly less than the previous method.

What our users are saying:

“Franklin maintains the highest of standards in the print industry. Their ability to exceed expectations with data integrity and programming is only rivaled with their development of innovative results and creative solutions to our demands as a customer. In essence, they display honesty, loyalty and quality that clearly define excellence.”

“In terms of programming, I feel that they are second to none. The programmers provide a quick turnaround, but still take the time necessary to ensure that they are meeting the needs of my projects. Best of all, they are capable and willing to communicate directly with me instead of going through a middle man, which makes me feel more in control of my projects.”

“Every time we think we’re asking the impossible, the pros at Franklin come through with flying colors! From customer service to press and every step in between, the Franklin team is top-notch. They are an invaluable partner and consistently make us feel like we’re the most important client they serve.”



Challenge

The society attempted to centralize its chapter's marketing activities through a well-recognized direct mail production firm. The system they believed was going to give them more control actually got out of control.

- The firm did not have online pricing and postage costs, thus the chapters were not sure of their actual expenditures.
- The mail firm insisted on using a double window envelope that was expensive, and looked more like a statement than an invitation, thereby reducing response rates.
- Chapters did not have a clear indication of when their mail would drop. The vendor had a minimum order quantity of 500 pieces, meaning that if a chapter wanted to print a lesser quantity they had to wait for another chapter's order to make up the 500 or more pieces prior to its invitation being mailed. In some instances, invitations were sent for events that occurred prior to the date the mail was received.
- The program created an accounting nightmare as the mail firm presented the society with billing that was not broken down by chapter, meaning it was nearly impossible for the national body to collect funds due from the local chapters.

After nearly a year of administrative headaches, the program with this vendor was discontinued.

What is FranklinFast?

FranklinFast was designed as an online, web-based direct mail solution that enables you to create mailings right from your own computer. You simply upload your graphic and data files and see live proofs in minutes, including NCOA and postal processing.

Aside from the convenience factor, it also provides benefits such as speed, built-in quality control checks and reduced cost. While it is web-based, we provide the same hands-on approach that we do with all of our work.

FranklinFast lends itself to a number of customized applications, like the program you are reading about here.

A large retailer uses the solution to enable people to order online Visa gift cards via their website. Orders can be placed as late as 10:30 PM and delivered to FedEx by midnight for next day delivery anywhere in the country.

A nationwide bank uses our automation program to run its new customer onboarding program.

FranklinFast is a flexible direct mail solution that can be customized to fit a wide range of challenges.

Solution

We implemented our **FranklinFast** solution to perform the following tasks to streamline, express-lane and maintain strict quality standards:

- An online library of mail packages is available for chapter use so that the national chapter maintains full control over the use of its creative content.
- We provide online proofing and include the total program cost, including postage costs after automation and optimization have been applied for the best possible rate.
- There are no minimum quantities so chapters can send out even small mailings economically. And, the mail is produced within three business days.
- **FranklinFast** automatically generates invoices to chapters, payable to national headquarters, thereby enabling national to have better financial control.
- The invitation packages use a closed-face, personalized mailing envelope, providing a true invitational look and feel. An automated match-mailing system ensures that the letter and mailing envelope match.
- The system is so flexible and user-friendly that national may create and upload additional mailing packages for its chapters easily through its online client interface.

We also provide online mail tracking so that chapters can find out exactly when prospective new members received their mail.

FranklinFast Quality Assurance

FranklinFast is the culmination of 20 years of experience in preventing costly errors in the processing of data files for direct mail projects. By automating the time-consuming routine tasks of file scrubbing, de-duping, CASS Certification, Address Verification, seeds, and samples, the common mistakes caused by human error are eliminated.

By quickly arriving at the final quantity to be mailed, the print files can be pre-flighted, proofed, and sent to the client along with pricing, actual postage, and drop shipping opportunities for additional postage savings. Before any of the above can take place, the field names, variable amounts, and data integrity are all confirmed and total exposure verified back to original data base.

FranklinFast lends itself to repetitive projects that have been initially set up and programmed into templates for the matrix as well as the graphics. Initial set-up may require several hours on the more complex jobs. Once set-up, proofs can be returned in as little as 15 minutes and programming charges are eliminated. While the savings in time and programming costs are good, the real value of the process is air-tight quality control.

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Results

- Chapters now know what their exact costs are within minutes.
- Entire mailing is machine verified.
- Three business day delivery.
- Accounting nightmares are eliminated.
- Postage is optimized for lowest possible rate.
- Automated quality control.
- Customer can track mail online for chapter follow-up calls.
- Chapter members do not have to worry about being direct mail experts.
- Chapters can focus on membership building.

Ten Reasons Why You Should Work with Franklin

1. Robust information and physical security safeguards with independent third-party audit
2. Twelve full-time data programmers with extensive experience with major banks
3. Twenty-four hour operation resulting in fast turn times
4. No rush charges
5. \$11 million in errors & omissions insurance
6. Variable data experts
7. Web-enabled mail and job tracking
8. Two mailing facilities – Baton Rouge & Memphis
9. Drop shipping to save you postage costs and speed up mail delivery.
10. Woman-owned with National Certification

For More Information

To receive information on how a similar program can work for you, contact us today!