

A graphic consisting of three vertical bars of increasing height from left to right, colored dark grey, yellow, and dark red. The bars are slightly slanted and have a white arrow pointing upwards inside the yellow bar.

NPF 2026
FORGING
BOLD HORIZONS
National Postal Forum

Boot Camp For Mail Center Managers – Part 1

Pat Ring – *Boston University*

Steve W. Smith - *Base 60 Consulting*

Overview

- Part I
 - USPS Organization
 - USPS Regulations
 - Networking & Industry Organizations
 - Mail Center Management
- Part II
 - Mail Center Management (Trends & Technology)
 - Management 101
 - Professional Development

State Of The USPS

- Mix of mail continues to change
 - Declining FCM and USPS Marketing Mail
 - Slowdown in parcels
- Network Rationalization
 - Facilities and equipment
 - Routes
 - Employees
- FY 2024: \$9.5 billion loss

USPS PMG David Steiner Era

- Infrastructure
 - New leadership structure
 - New Areas for Operations and Marketing
 - Consolidations of Districts
 - Network Overhaul
 - Delivering For America Plan
- Delivery Standards
 - Transfer mail volumes from aircraft to surface
 - New delivery standards for most products,

Future Network – Delivering For America (DFA)

Regional Processing and Distribution Center (RPDC)



- All outgoing operations
- Destinating Parcels to the 5 digit
- Cross dock destinating 3-digit letters and flats

Local Processing Center (LPC)



- Letters and Flats to DPS or carrier route
- Cross dock 5-digit parcels

Sorting and Delivery Center (S&DC)



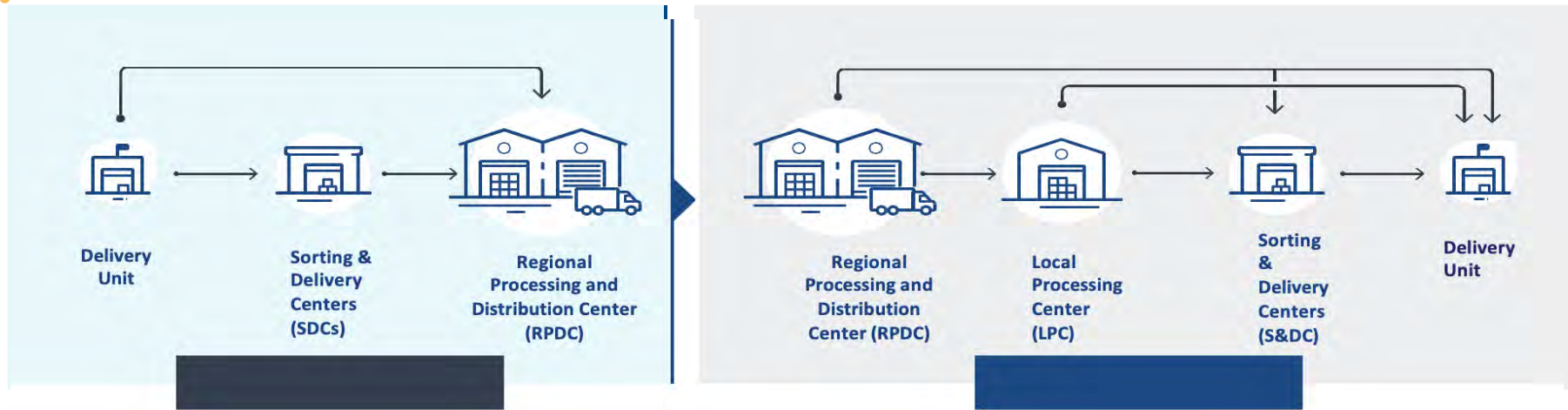
- Destinating Entry
- Carrier Routed Parcels
- Cross dock to and from DU

Delivery Unit (DU)



- Maintain Current Operations, including destination entry

The Future Network Flow: End-to-End Model



REDUCE COST • IMPROVE ON-TIME DELIVERY • RELIABLE SERVICE STANDARDS
OPTIMIZE RESOURCE & PROCESS YIELD • ENERGIZE EMPLOYEES • EXPAND USPS CONNECT REACH
ENHANCE PRODUCTS • ALIGN NETWORK TO GROUND ADVANTAGE • CAPTURE MORE PACKAGE MARKETSHARE

Regional Transportation Optimization

- Elimination of PM Mail Dispatch In Offices >50 Miles From **RPDC**
- Impacts on Service
- Affects Huge Numbers Of US Population
- **South Dakota – Vermont – Wyoming**
 - Have Customers Greater Than 50 Miles From The RPD

USPS Postage Rates

- Postal Regulatory Commission – new rate system (11/30/20)
 - CPI + mail density + retirement amortization
- August 29, 2021 – first increase under new rules
- September 15, 2021 – new USPS rate schedule
 - No increase January 2022
- July 2022 - CPI + mail density + retirement amortization
- Beginning January 2023
 - January and July Increases
 - January = CPI + unused authority
 - July = CPI + mail density + retirement amortization
- July 2025 – PRC: One Annual Rate Increase,

USPS Rates: Success – Today and Tomorrow

- Know Your Mail
 - Content
 - Characteristics
 - Categories and quantity
- Continuous review
 - Weekly
 - Monthly
 - Quarterly
- USPS – Use your local resources
- Promotions & Mail Growth Incentive

2026 USPS Promotions.

- **Tactile, Sensory, & Interactive Promotions** (5% Discount) Rewards Mail Using Special Paper, Scents, Textures, Inks or Pop-Ups To Create Sensory Experience.
- **Integrated Technical Promotion** (5% Discount) Encourages Using Advanced Technologies Like Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), Video In Print, or NFC Tags to Bridge Physical Mail to Digital Experiences
- **Catalog Insights Promotion** (10% Discount) New for 2026 Targeting Bound, Multipage Catalogs Encouraging Consumer Engagement, Such As Using QR Codes To Visit A Shopping Page.
- **First Class Mail Advertising Promotion** (5% Discount) Focus On Speed of First Class Mail For Promotional Mailings (**September 1 – December 31, 2026**),

USPS Contacts – Who Should You Reach Out To?

- Factors to Consider
 - Where are you located?
 - ZIP Code
 - Point of mail entry
 - What are you trying to accomplish?
 - Mail Piece Design, Rates and Classification
 - Mail Entry
 - What size customer are you?

USPS Contacts – Who Are You Gonna Call?

- Local post office (Postmaster)
- Business Service Network
- Business Mail Entry
- Mailing & Shipping Solutions Center (MSSC):
 - 1-877-676-0007
 - MSSC@usps.gov
- Mailpiece Design Analysts:
 - 1-855-593-6093
 - mda@usps.gov

Boot Camp

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

Regulations and Publications

USPS Regulations: Resources

- Postal Explorer (DMM & IMM): <http://pe.usps.gov/>
- Glossary of Postal Terms (Pub 32): <https://about.usps.com/publications/pub32/welcome.htm>
- Designing Letter and Reply Mail (Pub 25): <https://about.usps.com/publications/pub25.pdf>
- Recommendations for Designing Flat-Size Mail (Pub 178): <https://about.usps.com/publications/pub178/welcome.htm>
- Nonprofit Standard Mail Eligibility (Pub 417): <https://pe.usps.com/text/pub417/welcome.htm>
- Customer Support Rulings: <https://pe.usps.com/CustomersupportRuling/Index>
- Rate Fold: <https://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/Notice123.htm>
- Templates:
 - Notice 67 Cards & Letters Template
 - Notice 124 Automation Flats Template
 - Notice 3A Letter-Size Mail Dimensional Standards Template

Physical Mail: Online Resources

- USPS website - www.usps.com
- PE Explorer - <http://pe.usps.com>
- PostalPro – <https://postalpro.usps.com>
- Business Customer Gateway - <https://gateway.usps.com>
- Mailing & Shipping Solution Center - MSSC@usps.gov
- Mail Piece Design – MDA@usps.gov ,

Documentation & Payments

- Enterprise Payment System - <https://postalpro.usps.com/EPS/>
- PostalOne! and Manifest Mailings - <http://www.usps.com/postalone/welcome.htm>
- Business Customer Gateway - <https://gateway.usps.com>,

Commonly Used Acronyms

• Postal Facilities

- NDC (Network Distribution Center)
- ASF (Auxiliary Service Facility)
- BMEU (Business Mail Entry Unit)
- BSN (Business Services Network)
- PDC (Processing & Distribution Center)
- SCF (Sectional Center Facility)
- ADC (Area Distribution Center)
- AADC (Automated Area Distribution Center)
- DDU (Destination Deliver Unit)
- AMF (Air Mail Facility)
- APO (Army Post Office)
- S&DC (Sorting & Delivery Center)
- DPO (Diplomatic Post Office)
- FPO (Fleet Post Office)
- MPO (Military Post Office)
- DMU (Detached Mail Unit)

• Equipment

- AFSM 100 (Automated Flat Sorting Machine)
- UFSM 1000 (Universal Flat Sorting Machine)
- FSS (Flat Sequencing System)
- BCS (Barcode Sorter)
- OCR (Optical Character Reader)
- MLOCR (Multiline Optical Character Reader)
- MERLIN (Mail Evaluation Readability Lookup Instrument)
- APPS (Automated Package Processing System)
- SPBS (Small Parcel Bundle Sorter)
- LPSS (Large Parcel Sort System)
- PBCS (Parcel Barcode Sorting System)

• Address Management

- CASS (Coding Accuracy Support System)
- MASS (Multiline Accuracy Support System)
- PAVE (Presort Accuracy Validation & Evaluation)
- NCOA^{link}® (National Change of Address)
- LACS^{link} (Locatable Address Conversion System)
- ACS (Address Change Service)
- AEC (Address Element Correction)
- UAA (Undeliverable As Addressed)
- MID (Mailer ID)
- CRID (Customer Registration ID)

• Others

- DMM (Domestic Mail Manual)
- IBI (Information Based Indicia)
- IMB (Intelligent Mail Barcode)
- BPM (Bound Printed Matter)
- BPRS (Bulk Parcel Return Service)
- QBRM (Qualified Business Reply Mail)
- BRM (Business Reply Mail)
- CRM (Courtesy Reply Mail)
- MRM (Meter Reply Mail)
- FIM (Facing Identification Mark)
- OEL (Optional Endorsement Line)
- PCSC (Pricing & Classification Service Center)
- NCSC (National Customer Support Center)
- CSR (Customer Support Rulings)
- PVDS (Plant Verified Drop Shipment)
- FAST (Facility Access & Shipment Tracking)
- REC (Remote Encoding Center)
- RPDC
- S&DC
- DU
- RTD

Besides The DMM, What Is The Most Common But Least Valuable Postal Manual In Existence?

ISS Manual

Boot Camp: Networking and Industry Organizations

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Bootcamp: Networking Basics

- What is networking?
- Why network?
- Who can network?
- Where do you network?
- How do you network?
- Resources

What Is Networking.

- Dictionary.com
- Harvey Mackay – *Multiple Books On Networking (Must Reads)*
- Mark Fallon,

What Is Networking?

1. Everyone lives by selling something.”
2. Education, training & talent will only take you so far.
3. You don't know who knows who.
4. You don't know who's looking for you.
5. People are interesting – as people.

Why Network?

- **Anyone** can network.
- **Absolutely** anyone can network.
- Networking is something that **anyone** and **everyone** can learn.
- Networking is something that anyone and everyone **must learn.**,

Who Can Network?.

- Positive Attitude
- Visual Contact
- Seek Common Ground
- Be Interested, Not Interesting
- Be Polite
- Follow-up,

Online Networks.

- Multiple channels – LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
- Groups, topic-specific sites (LinkedIn groups, Blogs, etc.).
- Joining isn't networking – **participation** is networking.
- Think before you post – the Internet is forever!

This Is Great, But I Am An Introvert.

- 1., Don't go it alone.
2. Listening is good.
3. Practice.
4. This is a survival skill – you have to network!
5. Great networker — Steve Smith

Boot Camp: Mail Center Management

Boot Camp: Mail Center Design.

- Mail Center Design
- Standard Operating Procedures
- Security
- Trends and Technology

Mail Center Design: Principles and Concepts .

- Principles and Concepts
- Equipment
- Examples (workflows, photos)
- Resources

Mail Center Design: Principles & Concepts

- Workflow
- Ergonomics
- Safety
- Security

Mail Center Design - Workflow.

- Clockwise, left to right
- Proximity to entrance and exit
- Separate areas for separate functions
 - Inbound / Outbound
 - Rough sort / Fine sort
 - Prep packages / Shipping and metering

Mail Center Design - Ergonomics

- “Ergon” = work / “nomos” = rules
- Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs)
Injury to the muscles, tendons, ligaments, peripheral nerves, structures, bones or associated vascular systems of the body.
- Ergonomic Risk Reduction Process (ERRP),

Principles & Concepts: Ten Principles for Ergonomics

1. Use neutral postures
2. Reduce unnecessary force
3. Keep everything in easy reach
4. Work at proper heights
5. Reduce repetitive motions,

Principles & Concepts: Ten Principles for Ergonomics

6. Minimize strain and fatigue
7. Minimize contact stress
8. Provide clearance
9. Move, exercise and stretch
10. Pay attention to the environment,

Principles & Concepts - Safety

- Clear paths, clean work areas
- Wipe up spills as soon as possible
- Risk assessment
 - Corporate Insurance
 - Corporate Security
 - Human Resources,

Principles & Concepts - Safety.

- Limit access to mail center
- Posted emergency and evacuation plans
- Training
- Rehearsals

Mail Center Design: Equipment

- Design before you buy
 - Facilities management
 - Architect
 - Furniture sales company
- Why not wheels?
- Durability isn't always inexpensive
- Buy – don't borrow (USPS tubs/trays are for mail)

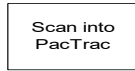
Examples: Definitions of Shapes



This shape means a predefined process.



This shape means a decision point.



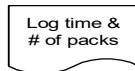
This shape means a process.



This shape means a preparation.

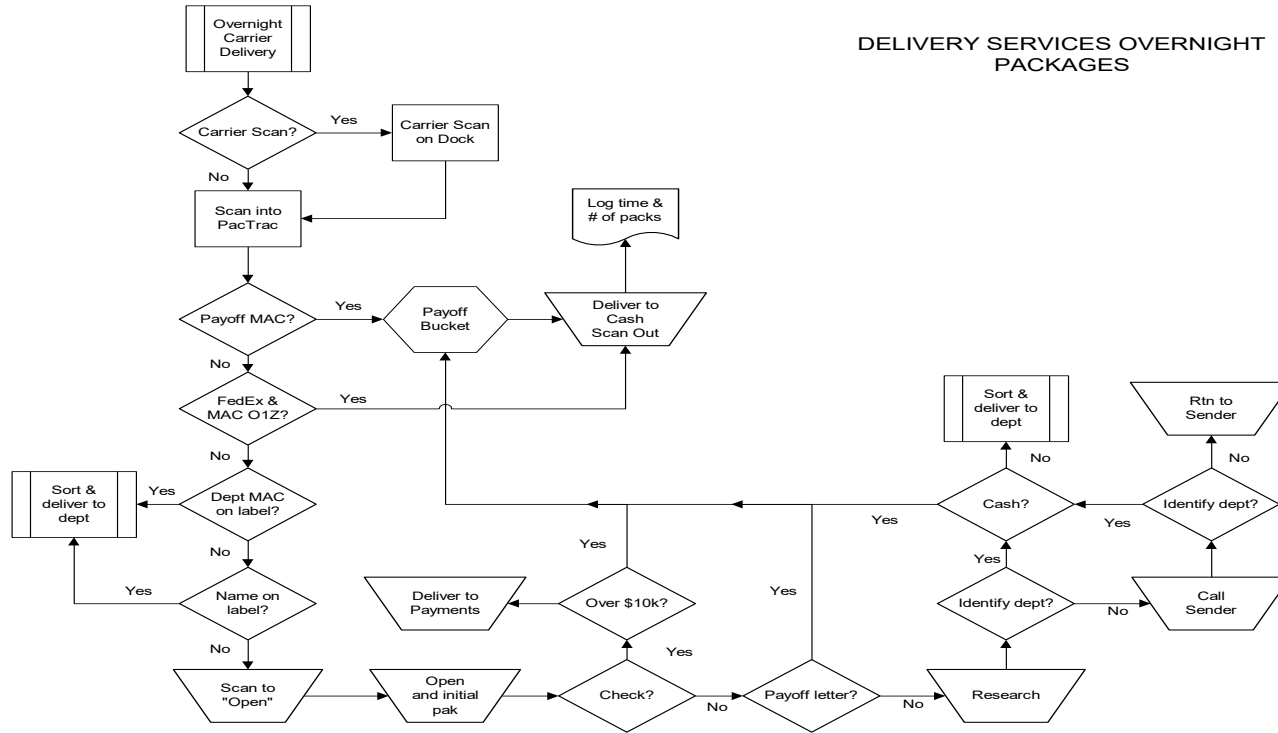


This shape means a manual operation.



This shape means a document.

Examples



Mail Center Design Resources

- American with Disability Act (ADA)
<https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/disability/ada>
- Ergonomics
www.ergonomics.org
- National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH)
www.cdc.gov/niosh/homepage.html
- Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA)
<https://www.osha.gov/ergonomics>

Boot Camp: Standard Operating Procedures

- Why?
- What are they?
- Reviews – who and when?
- Samples

Boot Camp: Why Standard Operating Procedures?

- You can't always be present.
- Employees understand their role.
- Continuity.
- Disaster recovery.

What Is In It?.

- Overview of what we do
- Operations Section
- Administrative Section
- Contact List Section
- Employee Resource Section

Who Should Review?

- Senior Management
- Human Resources
- Legal Department
- Purchasing
- Customer Service

Periodic Review – How Often?

- Daily
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Annual

Boot Camp: Security

- Prepare
- Threats and Risks
- Policies and Procedures
- Plans
- Training

Security

- To be prepared, managers need to move outside of their comfort zone.
- We don't know where the road will go, but you don't have to go it alone.

What Is Next?

- 1. Identify threats.
- 2. Conduct a risk analysis.
- 3. Develop policies.
- 4. Draft procedures.
- 5. Prepare contingency and continuity plans.
- 6. Communicate and train.

What Is Next?

- International or Domestic terrorists.
- Domestic hate groups.
- Disgruntled employees/workplace violence.
- Acts of nature (flood, fire, earthquake, flu, sprinklers).

Security: Resources

- Your posture should reflect your company's mission.
- Resources include:
 - Company/agency security
 - Local law enforcement
 - [Mail Center Security](#), USPS Inspection Service

How Do You Prepare?.

- Policy – a plan or guiding principle.
- Address areas identified as priorities in risk assessment.
- Get support from upper management and key officials.
- Examples:
 - Access to mail center.
 - X-ray of packages.
 - Opening all mail.

Identify Threats

- Procedure – series of steps taken to implement a policy.
- Be as specific as possible, and update as needed.
 - Employee safety.
 - Inbound mail.
 - Identifying suspicious packages.
 - Outbound mail.
- Post procedures in conspicuous locations.

Necessary Plans

- **Occupant Emergency Plan**
 - How you safely evacuate and assist people during an emergency.
- **Contingency Plan**
 - How you immediately relocate your operation and restore services.
- **Continuity Plan**
 - How you return services to normal operational levels.

Training

- What do people need to know to carry out policies and procedures?
- No one-time training and not one size fits all.
- Keep yourself informed.
- You can't just react, you and your staff must prepare for the unknown.
- Mail center employees must remain aware of their surroundings and the mail they handle.

Questions?

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Credit and Thanks – Content Based On Presentations

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