

Don't Get Caught Without Your Safety Net!

Benjamin Franklin famously said, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” When it comes to your business’ safety program, however, an ounce of prevention is likely worth quite a bit more than a pound of cure. After all, although you cannot put a price on the impact that an injury could have on one of your employees, we all know that the cost of not complying with OSHA and other governmental regulations can be extremely high.

Helping your business prevent injuries and ensuring that you are in compliance with local, state and national regulations is what SafetyNet, Inc., PIA’s newest Partner company, is all about. For over 25 years SafetyNet has been helping companies nationwide improve their safety programs through onsite safety audits, training, consulting services, equipment-specific step-by-step Lockout Tagout procedures, safety program management software and more.

Now we are excited to introduce SafetyNet to you.



SafetyNet’s expertise is extensive

“Over the past 25 years we have developed intimate knowledge of the manufacturing industry,” says SafetyNet Founder and President Steven Brooks, “and I came out of the printing industry as well. I started on the floor as a helper, and worked my way up to journeyman lithography pressman and then plant manager. So I’ve been in PIA members’ shoes.”

Over the years SafetyNet has worked with manufacturers of all sizes, from “Mom and Pop” to Fortune 500. This has given them a broad perspective and deep expertise regarding best practices in safety and compliance.

“One of the hardest things for people to do is hire a safety manager who truly ‘knows everything,’” Steven relates. “With SafetyNet you get a team of people working for your safety, versus just one person with a relatively narrow field of knowledge.”

A “one stop shop” for safety and environmental issues

In addition to being well-versed in both national and state-specific OSHA regulations, SafetyNet also provides assistance complying with ANSI standards, Arc Flash labeling, NFPA® 70E standards, VOC record keeping, local regulations (such as storm water, CUPA and AQMD regulations in California), high pile storage permits and more. Their goal is to provide all-inclusive compliance assistance.

Audits that go beyond pointing out what’s wrong

“We like to call our audits ‘Gap Assessments,’” Steven explains, “because our goal is to identify all of the gaps between where you’re currently at and where you should be.”

During a walk through for the printing industry SafetyNet will:

- **Identify and photograph hazards,** risks and violations. This includes both physical and behavioral issues.
- **Interact with workers.** “We’ll poll the employees a bit,” Steven relates, “as if we are an OSHA inspector. This helps us get a good understanding of the safety culture at the company. ‘Gee, how’s the safety here?’ ‘Do you have any concerns about safety? What are they?’ ‘How’s the training at this company?’ ‘Do you feel safe?’ Sometimes the people on the front line are intimidated to go to their own managers with their concerns, but they’ll share with us. The fact that we also speak Spanish is helpful as well.”
- **Present our findings at an exit interview.** The audit ends with an exit meeting with management at which SafetyNet presents and discusses their findings. “We go through the photos,” Steven states, “and show you what the issues and priorities are.”

- **Provide detailed advice on what to do.** SafetyNet’s written reports include the findings, an explanation of why it’s a violation or risk (including the associated regulations or standards), and, most importantly, a recommended course of action.

“This is where we really shine!” Steven exclaims. “It’s one thing to be told that you’re missing a guard on this piece of equipment. But how do you fix it? We take pride in going beyond pointing out problems to also providing actionable solutions.”

Training to support your team

“A common problem,” Steven points out, “is that managers don’t get training. For example, back when I was managing a printing plant, I was told to manage the safety program – but I was never taught how to do this. SafetyNet fills this gap. In addition to our Supervisor Safety Excellence Risk Management Training course, we also offer pre-recorded online courses for the whole team covering the basics, such as Hazard Communication, Heat Illness prevention, Lockout Tagout, Material Handling & Storage, etc.”

The starting point is a free needs assessment

An important point to keep in mind is that safety is not just about eliminating accidents and reducing liability exposure. Safety also increases productivity, because a safe workplace is a more productive workplace.

If you would like to take advantage of SafetyNet’s expertise, the first step is a free needs assessment video conference. To schedule your meeting contact Amanda Seneff at 951-530-1814 or AmandaS@SafetyNetInc.com. To learn more about the company, visit their website at www.SafetyNetInc.com.

NATIONAL NEWS

The United States Postal Service in 2023

The United States Postal Service (USPS) wraps up its fiscal year at the end of September. Then, by the middle of November, it releases its annual report, a document that is chock full of assessments of its results and plans for the future. The USPS is now entering the third year of its 10-year plan called “Delivering for America,” first made public in March of 2021. The major takeaways as described in the USPS’s press release (see bit.ly/USPSReport23) are quite sobering. The top line is that the USPS reported a \$6.5 billion loss in the 2023 fiscal year. This part is not that surprising given the various economic factors that the USPS is saddled with. More concerning is the report of an 11.4% decline in volumes within the Marketing Mail category.

A USPS assessment

United States Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, who was appointed by President Trump in June of 2020, spoke recently at the 2023 Concordia United States Summit. (Concordia is described as a “member-based organization dedicated to actively fostering, elevating and sustaining cross-sector partnerships for social impact.”) In his talk entitled “Delivering for America: Lessons of Leadership from the United States Postal Service,” De Joy was alternately optimistic and concerned about the future of the USPS. He started with numbers:

- 31,000 retail centers
- 19,000 delivery units
- 400 processing plants
- 250,000 vehicles (expect an announcement soon about an environmental plan)
- 300,000 carrier routes
- 165 million delivery points
- 640,000 employees

He described the USPS as one of our country’s most trusted, most used and most needed institutions. He asserted that the USPS was in catastrophic condition when he became Postmaster General in 2020 and he thought at the time that it was possible that it might fail. He is now more confident two years

into his 10-year plan but acknowledges the challenges that face the USPS.

Key among those challenges is an ongoing drop in mail volume due to electronic delivery methods. He also cited “institutional memory” as an issue. It was difficult for an institution like the USPS—which was accustomed to growing print volumes through the 1970s and early 1990s—to figure out how to rethink its methods in an entirely changed competitive environment. He also cited what he called “deliberate destruction” through policies of Congress, Postal Regulators and the mailing industry, which have been further exacerbated by political interference on funding regulation.

His solution was the Delivery for America plan, which has three tenets:

1. Deliver to 165 million addresses, six days per week.
2. Cover the cost of performance, as a requirement to be able to compete effectively.
3. Believe and act as an institution.

De Joy’s 2023 report notes that just two years into this 10-year plan, USPS’ projected losses for the decade have been reduced by more than half, from \$160 billion to \$70 billion, and that significant progress has been made toward the goal of break-even in 2030, despite the impact of inflation.

As quoted in a USPS press release, Postmaster General De Joy states, “Although we are just in the early stages of one of the nation’s largest organizational transformations—which is improving our processing, transportation and delivery operations—we are already providing more consistent, reliable and timely delivery to America’s businesses and residences. We are also addressing near-term financial headwinds relative to inflation as we make strong progress in our long-term cost control and revenue generating strategies, including launching new products like USPS Ground Advantage. The whole organization is highly focused on implementation of the Delivering for America plan and

creating a more effective, efficient and competitive Postal Service to serve the nation far into the future.”

Looking into the numbers

A few things stand out when looking at the USPS’s 2023 revenue and volume numbers:

- Overall revenue is down somewhat despite regular postal rate increases.
- Only two service categories showed revenue increases between 2022 and 2023: First-Class Mail and Shipping and Packages.
- Volume dropped in every single category.

Table 1: USPS Revenue and Volume Comparison (2023 versus 2022)

Service Category	2023 Rev.	2022 Rev.	2023 Vol.	2022 Vol.
First-Class Mail	\$24,505	\$23,990	45,979	48,960
Marketing Mail	\$15,076	\$15,996	59,410	67,092
Shipping and Packages	\$31,641	\$31,317	7,057	7,232
Informational	\$1,571	\$1,712	322	355
Periodicals	\$918	\$955	2,993	3,400
Other	\$4,475	\$4,537	385	405
Total operating revenue and volume	\$78,186	\$78,507	116,146	127,444

Note: Revenue figures are in millions of dollars; volume figures are in millions of pieces.

Source: United States Postal Service. November 2023

An outside perspective

A recent Printing Impressions webinar entitled “USPS 10-Year Plan: Three Years In” featured Leo Raymond, the Managing Director of Mailers Hub. This webinar was promoted as “an information resource for commercial mail producers and other companies in the commercial mailing community.” Raymond pointed out a number of concerning factors. Perhaps the biggest one moving forward is whether the USPS can find success given the impact of decreasing mail volume combined with frequent postal rate increases.

Raymond points out the size of the USPS’s workforce as another challenge, with the associated costs of employee compensation and benefits. The USPS added close to 5,000 employees in 2023 and has been encouraging “pre-career” employees to shift to “career” positions. During 2023, 525,000 employees of the total 640,000 USPS workforce were career employees while 115,000 were pre-career. Pre-career USPS positions

are temporary. These workers do not get the same benefits as career workers and are not guaranteed a regular work schedule. The move to increasing the number of career employees is intended to improve employee retention as well as to maintain strong service levels, but it comes with the financial challenge of achieving break-even with such a workforce, whose benefits include layoff protection and biannual increases.

Raymond notes that, “The value of mail as a marketing tool remains unchanged.” He recommends that mailers have to aggregate volumes to gain cost benefits, but he is very concerned about what he sees as aggressive postal rate increases. He also believes that the USPS is not being as

transparent as it should be about its moves to consolidate delivery operations.

The bottom line

Moving forward, the USPS hopes that an emphasis on packaging will offset the loss of hardcopy mail volume. This requires remaining competitive with other services like FedEx and UPS. This focus on packaging is not exactly reassuring to service providers handling marketing mail and transactional documents, particularly when they see ongoing rate increases in their segments. There is no question that Postmaster General De Joy has a significant challenge on his hands. And while there have been some positive takeaways in the early years of his Delivering for America plan, some significant challenges remain.

Source: Jim Hamilton, Consultant Emeritus at Keypoint Intelligence

Content Creation Pro Tip: Batching

For many businesses, consistently producing highquality marketing content is essential for success. Keeping up with all this content creation, however, can be quite challenging. A proven way to ease the burden is to create your content in batches. Letting your weekly blog or video or your monthly newsletter become a weekly or monthly project can be a recipe for failure!

Why create content in batches?

Batching your content creation...

Helps ensure it actually gets done – When your business gets busy it’s easy to push “content creation” down on your priority list. Creating in batches on your slower days helps avoid this problem.

Reduces stress – Getting a batch of content created and scheduled at once eliminates the constant pressure to brainstorm and create more content.

Is more efficient – Getting in the content creation flow is usually harder than staying in the flow.

What can you do in batches?

Brainstorm content topic ideas – Having a running list of topic ideas makes it possible to dive right in when you’re ready to write. ChatGPT can be very helpful for this.

Write your blogs and newsletter articles – If you’re writing about things that will be just as relevant months from now as they are today, I recommend that you write three to six months’ worth at a time. This is what I do for my clients.

Create your social media posts – There are tools available that let you pre-schedule these, too. Be sure to create both the visual and text elements for each post.

Film and edit your videos – With some quick wardrobe changes it won’t be obvious that you made a batch at once.

Prepare for your business networking meetings – If you belong to a group that devotes time at each meeting to letting each attendee stand up and deliver a little “30-second commercial” about

their business, you can write these in advance. Not sure what to say or how to say it for maximum impact? I’ve created an on-demand course about that, at www.BusinessNetworkingCourse.com.

Source: Linda Coss, Plumtree Marketing, Inc., www.PlumtreeMarketingInc.com.



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BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

A “3-2-1” LinkedIn Strategy for Printers

Printers need to be utilizing LinkedIn. There is a wealth of statistics to support this. Many printers struggle with a content strategy. Hopefully, this content will make it much more manageable.

Below is a simple and effective strategy for your LinkedIn company page. This was taken from an article on Social Media Examiner.

In a two to three-week period, aim to post six times. These posts should consist of the following:

- 3 “good to know” posts. These include third-party industry, inspirational and informative posts you share on your company page. You likely encounter these types of articles daily.
- 2 “good to feel” posts. The goal is to create and share content that helps people get to know and feel good about your company. Community involvement, employee milestones, company celebrations, charitable endeavors, etc.
- 1 “good to buy” post. These posts will highlight and promote specific services you offer. Examples of a recent job, a client success story, equipment features, etc. These posts are focused on promoting your expertise.

Source: Patrick Whelan, Great Reach Communications, <https://greatreachinc.com>.



CLASSIFIED

FOR RENT:
Office space available at commercial printer in Huntington Beach, CA. Perfect for print broker or designer. 3 offices + bathroom (approx. 400 sq ft). Separate entrance and parking. Please contact Eugene Schilhab at (714) 824-2254 or print@qualityprintingservices.com.

FOR LEASE:
17,480 SF, at 7738 Scout Avenue, Bell Gardens, CA. Has heavy power (great for a printing company!) and a large, secured yard. Please contact Lui Salazar (626) 818-0444 or lsalazar@daumcommercial.com.



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Services for Graphic Communications

**Events**
CALENDAR

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February

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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FOR FULL LIST OF EVENTS,
PLEASE VISIT
WWW.PIASC.ORG/EVENTS

- Webinar – Bad Bots & Beyond: Shielding Your Organization From Modern Cyber Threats
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM PT
Online
bit.ly/BadBots
- Print Excellence Awards Call for Entries Deadline
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23
www.piasc.org/printexcellence/
- Paper and Substrate Show
THURSDAY, MARCH 28
5:30 - 9:00 PM PT
Irvine, CA
www.piasc.org/papershow/
- Americas Print Show 2024
WEDNESDAY - THURSDAY, MAY 8-9
Cleveland, Ohio
americasprintshow.com
- Save the Date: Graphics Night
THURSDAY, MAY 2
Yorba Linda, CA

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Feature

National News

Business Management

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THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE IN 2023

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Native News

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