

Breaking New Markets

Metromail installs World's biggest Pitney Bowes FPS inserter to make its mark in the transactional mail arena.

Based in Peterlee in the North East of England, Metromail is an established name in the field of direct mail. The company has been operating for over 20 years and is now one of the UK's largest mailing houses – working across sectors for clients of every size.

Metromail's direct mail output regularly exceeds 240m mailed items each year. Recently, the company saw an opportunity to extend this production expertise into the transactional mail market.

Alan Purvis, Managing Director, comments: "Customers in the transactional field demand security, integrity and longevity from their mail services suppliers. Our 20-year-plus pedigree is an extremely attractive proposition for buyers and we decided to enter the transactional market knowing that work would be forthcoming from at least one of our existing customers. We were confident that we could attract business quickly once we were up and running."

Metromail's confidence is exemplified by the investment made in new technology. Rather than starting on a small scale and dipping a toe in this new market the company opted to buy big – very big. Metromail invested in a Pitney Bowes FPS inserter, a proven and sophisticated transactional mail system that operates at speeds of up to 12,000 envelopes per hour. Metromail asked Pitney Bowes for a bespoke model with a total of 24 insert stations – to date, the largest FPS inserter anywhere in the world.

Alan states: "We aren't scared of investing if the opportunity is right – indeed, the company has invested some £8.5 million in new kit over the last four years. We looked at the existing transactional market and looked at the drawbacks with typical set-ups. We noticed a potential disadvantage in the amount of technology set-ups required to process numerous smaller-run jobs on multiple machines.

"Our decision to invest in the FPS with 24 stations was based on the time and money that could be saved by processing different document runs on the same inserter. The FPS requires far less set-up time and gives us a significant productivity advantage over competitors."

The FPS is also configured to meet the very strict mailpiece integrity levels that transactional customers demand. "We upgraded the standard machine by asking for cameras to be fitted on each of the insert stations," continues Alan.

“Using barcodes we have an incredible amount of processing control and can guarantee 100% accurate mailings 100% of the time.

Any high-volume technology requires robust service backup to ensure productivity is maximised. For the largest FPS inserter in the world, benchmark service takes on even greater significance.

Alan concludes: “The service and support that we have received from Pitney Bowes has been outstanding. They have been extremely responsive to our needs and have demonstrated a ‘can-do’ attitude throughout.

“It took just eleven weeks from our initial concept to the FPS being up and running. We now have three customers in the transactional space and we are delighted with the opportunities that the new technology is opening up.”

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