

How To:

IDEAS+INSPIRATION FOR YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS

OCTOBER 2011



WIN!
AN iPad2
IN TIME FOR
CHRISTMAS

See inside for details

Deliver
a great Christmas

**ALL THE SERVICES AND SUPPORT YOU NEED
TO HELP YOU THROUGH THE FESTIVE SEASON**



Royal Mail

Welcome

Christmas is the key revenue-generating period for most businesses. Getting your stock right for your market is just one part of the seasonal picture. Understanding consumer shopping habits pre- and post-Christmas is also vital. This short practical guide offers you useful insights into these and gives ideas for maximising sales, along with all the delivery services to ensure your customers receive their orders in time for the big day.

On **p3-7** discover tips to promote your goods plus delivery and collection options that will help your processes run smoothly. Read on **p8-9** about the great ways Royal Mail has helped business people like you manage and profit from the festive period. We also have tactics for when the pressure is on, see **p10**, and your all-important list of last UK and overseas posting dates on **p11**.

Wishing you a very successful season

WIN!
**AN iPad 2
IN TIME FOR
CHRISTMAS**



WE'RE GIVING AWAY THREE iPad 2s IN OUR ONLINE PRIZE DRAW
To enter and to view prize-draw terms and conditions, type in your personalised url, printed on the letter accompanying this booklet

Closing date 2 December 2011



Royal Mail

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How to: deliver a great Christmas is published on behalf of Royal Mail Group Ltd by Redwood Publishing Ltd, 7 St Martin's Place, London WC2N 4HA
Telephone: 0207 747 0700
Fax: 0207 747 0704



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12 ways to:

make Christmas easier for you
and better for your customers

1 Get set for Cyber Monday

Monday 28 November is set to be this year's 'Cyber Monday' – the busiest online shopping day of 2011*. At the same time last year, Visa Europe recorded 2,600 transactions worth a total of £184,000 every minute.

How to make the most of it:

■ **Nudge shoppers with direct mail** – 25% of purchases made online are prompted by people receiving catalogues or mailshots**. Send out a Cyber Monday flyer of great deals for as little as 63p an item with **Mailshots Online**

■ **Book extra staff to pick, pack and despatch** – and let Royal Mail take some of the strain by collecting orders direct from your business. Read more on p9

■ **Offer free deliveries or returns** – customers love them. If that's not possible for all items, you could offer them on orders over a certain amount. For example, if an average order is £15, offer free deliveries on orders over £25. If you receive over 2,000 returns a year, **Packetpost Returns** offers big savings. Returns are free for your customers and build better relationships

MORE INFORMATION:

www.royalmail.com/packetpostreturns
www.mailshotsonline.com



Photographs: Shutterstock, unless otherwise stated *IMRG 2010
**Royal Mail Delivery Matters 2010

2

Keep calm – and stay collected

When you're frantically fulfilling orders, sparing an extra pair of hands to go to the nearest post office only adds to the pressure. So let Royal Mail come to you. With our flexible **Customer Collections**, you can book regular pick-ups for the year, six days a week or even arrange a one-off.

MORE INFORMATION:
www.royalmail.com/customercollections



4

Help last-minute shoppers

For those who leave gift-buying until it's almost too late, Royal Mail **Special Delivery** can be a life-saver. It can get precious pressies there by 9am or 1pm the next day – even on Saturdays. Signatures are taken as proof of receipt and the top tier offers compensation for lost or damaged items worth up to £2,500*.

MORE INFORMATION:
www.royalmail.com/specialdelivery

3 Showcase yourself abroad

In mainland Europe alone there are 700 million people – but how to reach them? Our international services include **Aisure**, a speedy, trackable service with delivery confirmation for goods going to more than 30 countries, **International Signed For** that offers end-to-end tracking to 18 countries, while **International Destination Sort** offers a cost-effective way to reach overseas customers. Vernon Kerswell, founder of electronic gadgets company **Extremefliers.co.uk**, sends his gizmos, see below, by International Destination Sort.



*Depends on level of compensation purchased. See website for details **Royal Mail Delivery Matters 2010 ***1p011 2011

'This Christmas we expect to sell 100,000 of the Robocopter GST, of which 50,000 will go overseas – the USA is one of our biggest markets,' he says. 'International Destination Sort means that pre-sorting our items gives us a cheaper international postage rate, which we like – and so do our customers.'

Why use it?

■ **Any type of mail**, be it direct or fulfilment, transactional or business, personalised, correspondence, publications or goods can be sent via International Destination Sort

■ **Sort and bag your mail** before giving it to us to qualify for a competitive international postage rate

MORE INFORMATION:
www.royalmail.com/internationalbusinesshub

5

Reassure customers a gift is on its way

About 50% of consumers want to know where their goods are once they've been ordered**. With **Royal Mail Tracked**, you can offer your customers that reassurance. They get an automated email when their items are despatched and a unique tracking number to use online to check their progress. The service helps reduce calls to customer service when you're already stretched.

MORE INFORMATION:
www.royalmail.com/tracked

6

Offer extra convenience

For shoppers who aren't at home to receive a delivery – or who want to keep a gift secret from a loved one – you can offer **Royal Mail Safeplace**, which lets them specify a place for their goods to be left. It's available with **Royal Mail Tracked**. Or offer **Local Collect Business**, which lets customers pick up items from a local post office at times to suit them. Plus, we're trialling an initiative in selected areas between November and next February after 91.5% of our customers said that, when not in, they'd like the choice of having items delivered to a neighbour as long as they could decide to opt out of the service***.

MORE INFORMATION:
www.royalmail.com/safepace
www.royalmail.com/localcollect

7

We're open for longer

From **Monday 12 December** our enquiry offices will stay open later to give your customers more time to collect their packages. Local opening times will be printed on the "Something for You" card that we will leave if your customer is not in.

12 : **12** : **11**
DAY MONTH YEAR

8

Extra deliveries to help you out

We'll be making additional deliveries leading up to Christmas, to get your parcels there in time for the big day.

9

Save a packet on sending packets

Delivery charges can sway a shopper to buy or not to buy. High prices put off potential customers, but subsidising them hits your profit margin. If you're sending more than 5,000 small packets a year, use **Packetpost** 1st or 2nd Class. It will cut your costs and save you time because charges are based on the average weight and format of all of the items.

MORE INFORMATION:
www.royalmail.com/packetpost

10 Streamline your sales channels

If you're selling goods through several channels on- or offline, Royal Mail's **E-commerce Engine** brings them all together so you can view orders, stock levels and despatch in one place online. It's essential for keeping track of stock across all sales platforms so you know when to re-order. David Cooney of gift company **Baby Ducklings** began using E-commerce Engine last year to save time and boost sales: 'We launched **Babyducklingsboutique.com** and its sister eBay shop last November just in time for Christmas. Keeping an eye on stocks of popular toys like Hello Kitty on two sites could be a systems headache, but E-commerce Engine integrates inventory and avoids situations where our website sells out, but we have 50 left on eBay.'

Why use it?

- **Never miss out on a sale**

A single online inventory shows stock levels across all platforms instantly

- **It cuts paperwork** The service can be integrated with your IT systems to generate order, pricing and delivery status for your warehouse

MORE INFORMATION:
www.royalmail.com/logistics



*Retail Week

11 Manage peaks in demand

It's a given – you need your stock ready and your packing and despatch systems finely tuned to perform at their best for Christmas. If you're pushed for space, or need more despatch staff, **Royal Mail Warehousing** is your wish come true. Bhupendra Maisuria, above, of fancy dress e-tailer **www.escapade.co.uk** depends on it at his busiest times. 'People research costumes well before an event but leave buying until just before the party. At peak times like Christmas, monthly deliveries can move from 2,000-4,000 up to 20,000. Royal Mail Warehousing

adapts to customer demand – and we only pay for the space we use.'

Why use it?

- **It's an end-to-end service** Your goods are shipped directly to our warehouses, unpacked and put into pick locations ready for despatch. Choose your delivery services and we'll do the rest

- **Pay for the space you need, only when you need it** The service gives you the flexibility to deal with spikes in demand without breaking the bank

- **Benefit from our logistics expertise** We deploy extra staff when you need them and have your goods despatch-ready as soon we receive them

MORE INFORMATION:
www.royalmail.com/warehousing

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Start your sale on Christmas Day

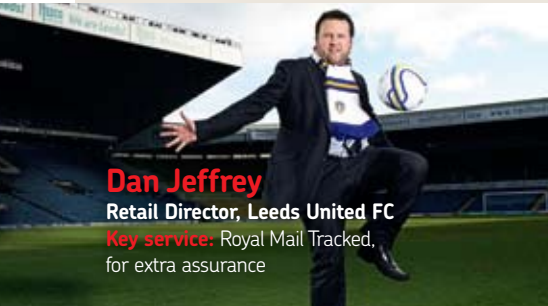
John Lewis Direct saw 15,000 people spend more than £100,000 online on the big day in 2010*. Combine a great offer with slick customer service to keep buyers coming back for more.



Photograph: John Miller

Presents of mind

THREE BUSY BUSINESS PEOPLE EXPLAIN HOW THEY DEPEND ON OUR SERVICES TO KEEP THEIR PROMISES TO CUSTOMERS



Dan Jeffrey

Retail Director, Leeds United FC
Key service: Royal Mail Tracked, for extra assurance

'People leave it very late now to buy for Christmas, which accounts for over 25% of annual sales – the first ten days of December are our busiest. Bestsellers are 1970s retro shirts and replica kits.

'We've used the Royal Mail Tracked 48-hour service for years and can't fault it. It's a cost-effective service and we're always confident Royal Mail will deliver. Customers get an email at the time of despatch and can track their order online – which reduces the number of query calls.'

Three reasons to use Royal Mail Tracked

- **Choice of delivery speeds** Choose from 24- or 48-hour delivery. The 24-hour turnaround is a great selling point for last-minute buys
- **Complete assurance** Your customers receive an email containing a unique tracking number so they can see the progress of their delivery online
- **It's flexible** Use with Royal Mail's Safeplace or Local Collect for extra customer convenience

MORE INFORMATION:
www.royalmail.com/tracked



Julie Slater

Founder of Julie Slater and Son, leather goods e-tailer
Key service: Special Delivery, for last-minute orders

'Special Delivery is important for us at Christmas – women tell their partners what gift they want, who then leave it until the last minute. So the fact that we offer express delivery for our leather bags and purses is a winner.

'The number of Special Delivery requests we get is bonkers. The service is also very popular with people living abroad who want to send gifts to relatives in the UK.

'We offer Special Delivery 9am, Next Day and Guaranteed Saturday Delivery. It's a great service and there's the reassurance that comes from using a trusted provider.'

Three reasons to use Special Delivery

- **It's a boon for customers** Orders arrive next day by 9am, by 1pm – and for a little extra on Saturdays*
- **Online tracking** You can monitor orders online and get electronic proof of delivery when customers receive their goods
- **Price includes compensation** The top tier covers items worth up to £2,500 in rare cases of loss or damage**

MORE INFORMATION:
www.royalmail.com/specialdelivery

Dan Jeffrey photograph: Richard Cannon *Guaranteed Saturday or next-day delivery by 9am or 1pm, or your money back **Depending on level of compensation purchased

Harriet Kelsall

Designer, e-tailer and founder of Harriet Kelsall Jewellery Design
Key service: Customer Collections, to save time

'Christmas is a romantic time of year and a busy period for us. We get lots of orders for engagement, wedding and eternity rings or bespoke pieces to be given as gifts. And at Christmas, orders jump 50%.

'We're based in rural Hertfordshire and have collections each morning and at 4pm. It's a valuable service that frees us up to concentrate on taking customer calls about commissions and working later to fulfil orders.'

Three reasons to use Customer Collections

- **Arrange one-off or daily collections at a time to suit you** Invaluable for allocating resources
- **Saturday collections** If you need an extra day in the week to get things done, a Saturday pick-up service could be the answer
- **Free pick-ups** Annual weekday collections cost just £650 (plus VAT), but if you spend more than £15,000 a year with us, the service is free

MORE INFORMATION:
www.royalmail.com/customercollections



Don't panic: help is at hand

OUR HANDY TIPS WILL EASE YOU THROUGH
THOSE LAST-MINUTE GLITCHES

Here's how we're gearing up to lighten your load this Christmas

- **A dedicated web page** with hints and tips on labelling, addressing and packaging plus Christmas services information
- **Additional packet sorting** centres are set to process all of those extra orders
- **An extra 18,000** pairs of hands have been hired to keep your mail on the move
- **More vans**, planes and trains are at the ready to deal with your festive deliveries
- **Customer collections** will take place as usual, except on the bank holidays 26 and 27 December, and on 2 January 2012*. To set up a one-off collection call the business customer service number below, right. If you send pre-sorted mail we will write to you separately about Christmas arrangements

MORE INFORMATION:

www.royalmail.com/greetings

Royal Mail's here for you all year round, too

- **Email service updates** keep you informed about what's happening in your area. This free, tailored service lets you know about changes to services as they happen – and tells you what we're doing to make sure your operation doesn't suffer.
Go to www.royalmail.com/serviceupdates
- **Our business customer** service teams are on hand to take your calls from 8am–6pm, Mon–Fri. See the number below
- **The @RoyalMail** team can answer your queries on Twitter and give you the latest information on disruptions to service, including bad weather

MORE INFORMATION:

www.royalmail.com/businesshelp
Business customer service: 08457 950 950

A customer's on the line, in a tailspin and needs a speedy solution. Here's how to make sure you don't make a drama out of a crisis

- **Count to ten** If customers are shouting down the phone, take a moment to put yourself in their shoes. Get to the nub of the issue, don't over-promise but do ensure that your customer service team responds quickly and accurately. Website updates, emails or Twitter messages are visible evidence you take queries seriously and do your best to deal with them
- **Act fast** If you're out of stock, offer an alternative. Social media or celebrity news stories can create a rush on an item that you didn't expect. If you've run out of a must-have, there are ways to turn initial customer disappointment into advocacy: offer another gift at a discount or money off the original item for delivery just after Christmas. A creative solution is always better than 'We're sold out'

Illustration: Laurence Whiteley *includes 3 January in Scotland

LAST POSTING DATES, AT A GLANCE

5 Dec

Airmail to South & Central America, Caribbean, Africa, Middle East, Asia, Far East (including Japan), New Zealand and Australia

9 Dec

Airmail to Eastern Europe, USA and Canada

12 Dec

Airmail to Western Europe

14 Dec

Standard parcels

17 Dec

Second Class and Recorded Signed For, Packetpost and Packetsort

19 Dec

RM Tracked

20 Dec

First Class and Recorded Signed For, Packetpost, RM Tracked High Volume and Packetsort

21 Dec

RM Tracked Next Day

22 Dec

Special Delivery

23 Dec

Special Delivery
–Saturday Guaranteed

Need help with
wrapping & packing?

MORE INFORMATION:

www.royalmail.com/greetings

