4 Steps to becoming
MAILMARK
READY

Mail that speaks volumes...

THE SOFTWARE BUREAU.

CONTENTS

Mailmark® enabled

FOREWORD
BY GREG NOBLE - ROYAL MAIL

Royal Mail Mailmark® is the revolutionary new mail attribute from Royal Mail which provides users of bulk mail with insight into the performance of their campaigns. Customers using Mailmark services can view online reports to more accurately predict delivery. These reports also show users what proportion of their mailings have been processed and read on Royal Mail's sorting. Finally, Royal Mail reports on the quality of the mail – for example, on address quality, and whether the mail was sorted accurately prior to handover.

Mailmark is already proving to be invaluable to bulk mail users and at Royal Mail we have invested tens of millions to ensure its widespread adoption. It is our vision to make mail as valuable as possible and bring the insight companies expect from digital channels into the physical world. Mail producers are a pivotal component in achieving this vision and that is why we have worked closely to build a program that makes Mailmark our most cost effective mailing solution.

As an existing provider of mail sortation software, The Software Bureau engaged early with the Royal Mail Mailmark programme to understand how its current offering could be extended to not only sort data, but also to append unique item reference numbers, create a barcode data string, and create and upload eManifests. The Software Bureau was one of the first third party software suppliers to offer this enhanced functionality, and has continued to work closely with Royal Mail to enhance its offer since Mailmark services launched in the spring of 2014.

GREG NOBLE
Mailmark Programme
Royal Mail

Mailmark is already proving to be invaluable to bulk mail users and at Royal Mail we have invested tens of millions to ensure its widespread adoption.

MAILMARK INTRODUCTION

Direct mail has suffered from a number of innovation false starts over the years. QR codes, 'Red Tag', personalised URL's and numerous other potential game changing technologies have failed to gain mass adoption. As a result, mailers and mail producers by extension have come to face a number of challenges.

Commoditisation of mail
With overcapacity and ongoing technology improvements there always seems to be a company willing to do the job that little bit cheaper.

Competition from online
An ever increasing array of digital communication methods offer marketers a more measurable and often more cost effective method of communication than printed direct marketing.

Reducing volumes
The focus continues to move from volume to quality of mailings. More of the budget is being spent upstream in areas such as CRM and data cleansing and less is being spent with mail producers.

'More than **70%** of all machine readable Bulk Mail will use Mailmark by 2016'

Royal Mail estimate of Mailmark adoption[1]

[1]http://www.royalmail.com/sites/default/files/ Royal-Mail-Mailmark-Migration-Consultation- 29th-May-2015.pdf

MAILMARK
INTRODUCTION

The Solution

Responding to these challenges, in March 2014 Royal Mail launched Mailmark, a transformational project with the aim of putting direct mail back on the marketers agenda. The project would dramatically improve the measurability of mail while systematically reducing the cost of the channel.

Almost 18 months and £70 million of investment later and Mailmark has been described as nothing less than a revolution in how bulk mail is delivered.

1.2 billion Mailmark items have been processed since the inception of the program[2]

[2]The Mailmark® Migration Consultation & Mailmark Update (27/07/2015)

WHAT IS MAILMARK?

Mailmark introduces new 2D or 4-state barcode standards for mail pieces (machine readable Business, Advertising and Publishing Mail) and a new data submission method to Royal Mail called an 'eManifest'. These changes have two significant implications for mail producers and their customers.

Cost Effective Mail

First, Mailmark mailings allow Royal Mail to reduce the manual handling of each mail piece and therefore they are able to offer their most competitive delivery rates. Mailmark is already the most cost effective UK delivery method with a 1% price differential for Mailmark ready mail. Royal Mail have committed to increasing this in January 2016 and it is widely rumoured the price differential will increase to 5%, making Mailmark significantly more economical than any other mail product.

Campaign Reporting

The second impact of Mailmark is the introduction of reporting. With mail being scanned at up to 5 individual stages through the delivery process it is now possible for customers to monitor their mailings in real time. Competing with online channels, Mailmark reports help customers accurately predict delivery dates and staff campaign follow up activity more accurately.
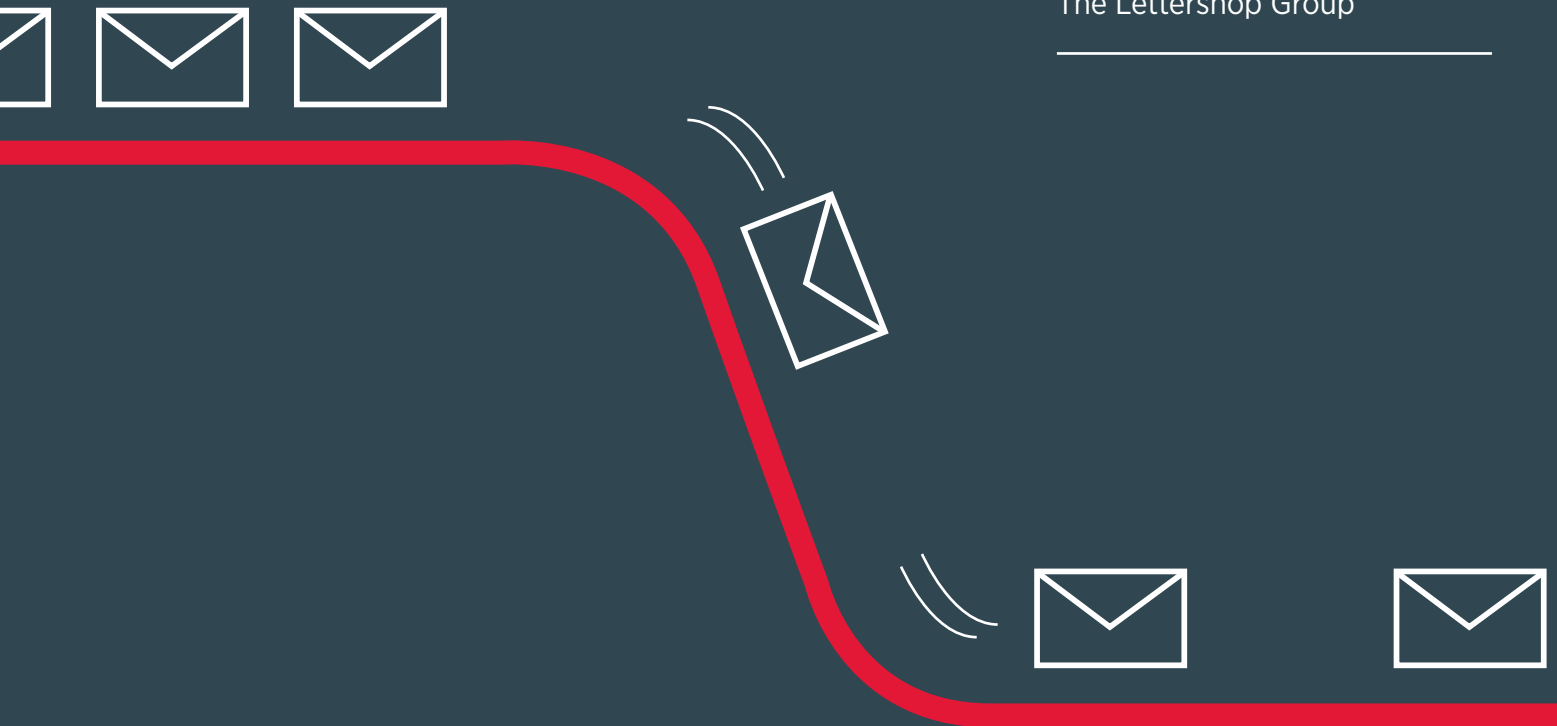
THE SOFTWAREBUREAU.

ABOUT THE
SOFTWARE BUREAU

The transition to Mailmark can be a daunting prospect. Working with The Software Bureau takes all the pain away. In collaboration with Royal Mail they have created a software solution that quickly, efficiently and cost effectively uploads all the required Mailmark information to Royal Mail's back end servers – a service that Royal Mail demands, but doesn't provide. Through GeMMA they offer standalone solution which is compatible with Mailmark output from their award winning products, Cygnus and SwiftSort, but is also compatible with many third party applications.

"For **any** mailing houses that aren't currently Mailmark ready, I'd recommend The Software Bureau."

Joanne Speight,
IT Services Manager,
The Lettershop Group

ABOUT THE SOFTWARE BUREAU

The Software Bureau develops and provides market-leading software that places the power of data management for direct marketing into the hands of its clients. Since the launch of its flagship brand Cygnus in 2000, and more recently SwiftSort and GeMMA for Mailmark, The Software Bureau has built a client base of over 100 organisations including mailing houses, marketing service providers, end users and some of the UK's largest charitable organisations. Cygnus incorporates in excess of 500 million trace and suppression records, making The Software Bureau one of the largest providers of data hygiene products and services in the UK.

About The Author

Mark Dobson has more than 20 years' experience at some of the UK's leading mail production companies and has been involved in Mailmark since long before its launch. Mark has already directly assisted over 30 companies to become Mailmark ready.

Get In Touch With The Software Bureau

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CLICK HERE TO REGISTER FOR YOUR **FREE** MAILMARK CONSULTATION

STEP 1 - IS MAILMARK RIGHT FOR OUR BUSINESS?

There is no doubt about it, Royal Mail is pinning the future of bulk mail on Mailmark. They made an initial investment of £70m in automation technology for processing and reporting and have committed to spending millions more to improve the format.

With this level of spending they require significant adoption levels to achieve their own cost saving objectives. So Royal Mail is indeed committed to getting you committed to Mailmark. But before marching forward to setup Mailmark in your business, the first step is to assess if it is right for you and your customers.

The benefits of adoption for a mail producer are pretty simple and really amount to two propositions. The first benefit of Mailmark is the price differential and it is a compelling case. Currently Mailmark is 1% cheaper than any other delivery method. Any volume mail user will agree this is not an insignificant saving, however it is widely suspected this price differential will increase to 5% in January 2016.

The second proposed benefit of Mailmark is the reporting and delivery traceability available to your customers. Royal Mail suggest by introducing reports that allow customers to accurately predict mail delivery dates and provide supply chain transparency mail will become a more appealing format for marketers. If Royal Mail predictions are correct there is an opportunity to win more business from clients and prospects looking for Mailmark ready mail producers.

Minimum volumes for use of Mailmark

Minimum volumes	Sorted		Unsorted	
	Letters	Large Letters	Letters	Large Letters
Retail				
Advertising Mail	4,000	1,000	1,000	250
Sustainable Advertising Mail	4,000	1,000	n/a	n/a
Business Mail	4,000	1,000	500	250
Publishing Mail	n/a	1,000	n/a	n/a
Wholesale				
Access 70	4,000	4,000	n/a	n/a
Responsible Mail	4,000	4,000	n/a	n/a

STEP 1 - IS MAILMARK RIGHT FOR OUR BUSINESS?

So far there has definitely been interest in Mailmark from mail users and it has been one of the key reasons why The Software Bureau customers get in touch to find out more about the subject. In a recent update Royal Mail sight that a national retailer is using Mailmark analytics, to assess the relationship between mail delivery and footfall in local stores and a travel company utilising the reporting to plan call centre resourcing.

Some mail producers welcome the supply chain transparency as an opportunity for differentiation from non-Mailmark providers. Others see the reporting as a useful way to identify and correct supply chain issues with a mailing.

The Case Against Mailmark
Although the price differential and the reporting facilities offer a significant incentive to adopt Mailmark in your business, there are still some considerations to be made. For Mailmark to operate Royal Mail require users to create an 'eManifest' file for each Mailmark mailing sent. This eManifest must only contain details of the mail that is being submitted for delivery within 48 hours. This is an extra process that requires software to create it and people to manage it. For time critical mailings, especially where volumes are smaller, this additional process could elongate production times. Mailmark also requires a 2 dimensional barcode or 4-state barcode to be applied to each piece of mail. Clients who are particularly concerned with the appearance of the mail piece may wish to avoid the use of barcodes. Additionally some composition software is unable to produce the barcodes required for Mailmark leading to further investment by the mail producer. Finally, small volumes of unsorted mail can use Mailmark, but arguably the most tangible benefits are found when more than 4,000 sorted pieces are sent.

For very short run mailings the cost savings could be consumed by the extra administration overhead of processing the job.

STEP 1 - IS MAILMARK RIGHT FOR OUR BUSINESS?

Investment In Change Scheme

Royal Mail recognises there is a time and cost overhead to becoming Mailmark ready. As such they have set aside a budget of up to £50,000 per mail producer to assist companies facilitate the adoption of Mailmark. Funding is based on the historical volume of qualifying mail sent. An application form containing all of the information required to apply for funding is available via the link in the box below. Alternatively just search the Royal Mail website for the term 'investment in change'.

CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD APPLICATION

Take Action: Appoint A Champion And Speak To Your Customers

Even at this early stage of roll out it seems highly probable that Mailmark is going to be adopted by bulk mail users and by necessity their mail producers. Appointing an internal Mailmark champion early is a great way to ensure success within the organisation. The person should have access and authority for both technical and commercial teams and carry the overall responsibility for Mailmark adoption within the organisation. Chances are if any of your customers have a direct marketing manager or team they already know a bit about it, however small to medium mail users may not be aware. Take this time to contact your customers, talk to them about the pros and cons and determine if the concept resonates with them and make an informed decision if Mailmark is right for your business.

'Without the **expertise** of The Software Bureau it would have taken us months to implement Mailmark'

Liam Baldwin
Kingsline

STEP 2
BARCODE FORMATS

Some mail providers approach The Software Bureau full of trepidation about the technical requirements of setting up Mailmark. Questions about barcode formats and eManifest files are commonplace and many are unsure of what technical considerations they have to make. The two key considerations to becoming Mailmark ready are barcode formats and eManifest files.

A barcode must be added to the design of your mail piece. This barcode replaces the Royal Mail CBC barcode. These new barcodes are scanned numerous times throughout the delivery process enabling your customer to track the position of the mail piece within the supply chain. Most sortation or data processing software such as SwiftSort or Cygnus by The Software Bureau will already produce the data formats to enable composition software to produce barcodes automatically. In addition to recipient data, the 2D barcode types contain additional mailing information such as return to sender details and can even accommodate custom data. This custom data can be anything you and your customer might find useful to track such as a campaign reference or even a redeemable offer. Sensitive personal information shouldn't be included in these custom fields due to the potential risk of malicious scanning for data retrieval.

Barcode Types And Fields

Field	2D Mailmark Format	4-state Format
1	UPU country ID	Format
2	Info type ID	Version ID
3	Version ID	Class
4	Format	SCID
5	Class	Item ID
6	SCID	Destination Postcode and DPS
7	Item ID	
8	Destination Postcode and Delivery Point Suffix (DPS)	
9	Return to Sender (RTS)	
10	RTS Postcode	
11	Reserved for Royal Mail	
12	Custom Characters	

STEP 2
TYPES OF BARCODE

The 2 types of barcode compatible with Mailmark are 2D and 4-state. The larger 2D barcode formats (type 9 and type 29) enable a larger amount of custom data to be tracked than the more discrete type 7 barcode. The much larger 4-state barcode formats don't enable custom data to be embedded, don't fit in a standard window envelope and are only employed when the mail producer is unable to produce a 2D barcode.

2D Mailmark™
Type 9

2D Mailmark™
Type 7

2D Mailmark™
Type 29

4-state
Mailmark™ L

16mm x 16mm	12mm x 12mm	8mm x 24mm	89mm	76mm
90 total characters	51 total characters	70 total characters	26 characters	22 characters
45 custom characters	6 custom characters	25 custom characters	0 custom characters	0 custom characters

Take Action: Find out which barcode data strings your sortation or data processing software can create. Determine which of the 5 barcode types your document composition software is able to produce. Cygnus data processing suite and SwiftSort postal sortation solutions from The Software Bureau is both able to produce all Mailmark barcode format data strings.

STEP 2
THE EMANIFEST

The eManifest is a data file you are required to upload to Royal Mail for each Mailmark campaign. While many mail providers will already be equipped with software to produce barcodes within their mailings, few will have the capability to produce the eManifest file.

The eManifest provides the mechanism for Royal Mail to produce the reporting about the position of a mail piece in the supply chain. The eManifest is a new concept, specific to Mailmark and is a mandatory requirement for those seeking to use the format.

As a mail producer you have two choices of how to manage your eManifest files. Either employ a software development team to write a bespoke application or purchase a software product such as GeMMA from The Software Bureau. Royal Mail estimates that in-house software development teams could take up to 3 months to develop an eManifest solution, whereas off the shelf software such as GeMMA can enable your business to be Mailmark ready within hours.

Key Consideration

To comply with Royal Mail specifications it is necessary that eManifest files only reflect the mail that leaves the building up to 48 hours prior to mail being sent. Mail providers do not always sort data the same day campaigns are dispatched and often individual campaigns can be dispatched over numerous days in different batches. Furthermore, the management of the eManifest may be undertaken by a different team to those responsible for data sortation or processing. When reviewing eManifest software providers ensure the process of generating and sending the manifest is separated from the sortation and data processing functions. Technical details of the approach to eManifest files can be found by clicking the red button.

Take Action: Decide if you are going to build or buy your eManifest management software. Contact a Mailmark software provider such as The Software Bureau and ask them to demonstrate their eManifest handling capability. Consider who within your organisation will be responsible for eManifests and what process changes you will need to make to accommodate this extra workflow step.

DOWNLOAD
GUIDELINES

STEP 3
HOW DO WE SETUP MAILMARK WITH ROYAL MAIL?

Once you know Mailmark is right for your business and you have a solution in place for barcode creation and eManifest handling it is time to contact Royal Mail. It isn't possible to run a campaign without going through the setup process with Royal Mail directly. The Software Bureau has helped more than 30 companies step through this process of sign off by Royal Mail.

Take Action: Mailmark introduces new processes and time critical activities with the eManifest. Involving your operational staff and data team early will help plan for these workflow changes.

ROYAL MAIL SETUP PROCESS

Contact Royal Mail

1

Contact your Royal Mail account manager or the dedicated 'take on' team at mailmark@royalmail.com and request a Mailmark test account.

You will receive access credentials to a test account which will include your Participant ID, five Supply Chain ID's (SCID) and some sample data.

Access Test Account

2

ROYAL MAIL
SETUP PROCESS

Register for Access

3

Use the credentials provided to register for access at https://customertest.rm-manifest.com/RegistrationUI

Test the Connection

4

Test the connection between your chosen eManifest software e.g. GeMMA and the Royal Mail web service.
If you have chosen GeMMA as your eManifest solution then connecting with the Royal Mail web service is as simple as entering the login credential provided by Royal Mail.

Produce Mail Samples

5

Produce 200 Live Mail Pieces with your chosen barcode variants and using your live Participant ID and Supply Chain ID. This will be provided once you have tested your connection using your test ID's.

ROYAL MAIL
SETUP PROCESS

Create the test eManifest

6

Create your first eManifest and upload to Royal Mail.
The steps to producing the emanifest are

• Create a new eManifest for a chosen supply chain from your sortation software such as SwiftSort.

• Upload your eManifest file to your Royal Mail account.

• Submit the eManifest up to 2 days prior to mail collection.

• Once all batches within the supply chain have been uploaded and mail is ready to be sent, the eManifest is confirmed and submitted to Royal Mail. This needs to be by 6pm when sending directly with Royal Mail or 9pm if sending with downstream access providers.

Royal Mail Test Sample

7

Royal Mail will test your first 200 Live Mail Pieces
They are specifically testing for the readability of the barcode through their scanners. Providing your mail pieces scan correctly, you will be approved.

8 Begin Running Live Campaigns

Once approved Royal Mail will issue you with a live Participant ID and you can begin running live Mailmark campaigns with your clients.

THE SUPPLY CHAIN

With Mailmark, Royal Mail has introduced the concept of supply chains. A supply chain captures all the parties, or 'participants' involved in a mail campaign. Another way of thinking of a supply chain would be a mail 'project' containing everyone involved in deploying the project.

The concept of supply chains is central to interactions with the Mailmark service as every campaign sent using the service is part of a specific supply chain. Individual participants can perform multiple roles within the supply chain and can be involved in multiple supply chains at the same time.
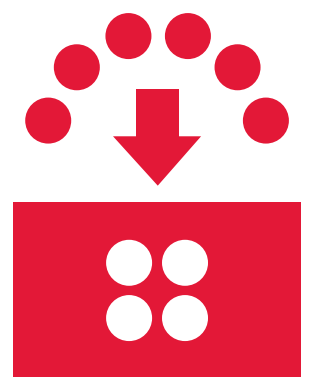
Participant Roles Within A Supply Chain

Participant	Role
Mail Originator	Usually the company commissioning the mailing. The company for which the mailing is being sent.
Mail Producer	The mail producer, which could be a printer, mail producer, fulfillment company.
Mail Carrier	Royal Mail or a downstream access provider
Bill Payer / Poster	The organisation paying Royal Mail for the postage.

STEP 4 - WE ARE MAILMARK READY, WHAT NOW?

Congratulations You are now officially a Mailmark enabled mail producer.

You may have been asked by some of your larger clients to provide a Mailmark service, however it is likely that many of your customers are not aware of it. It is now time to make the most of your investment by marketing the new capability to your customers.
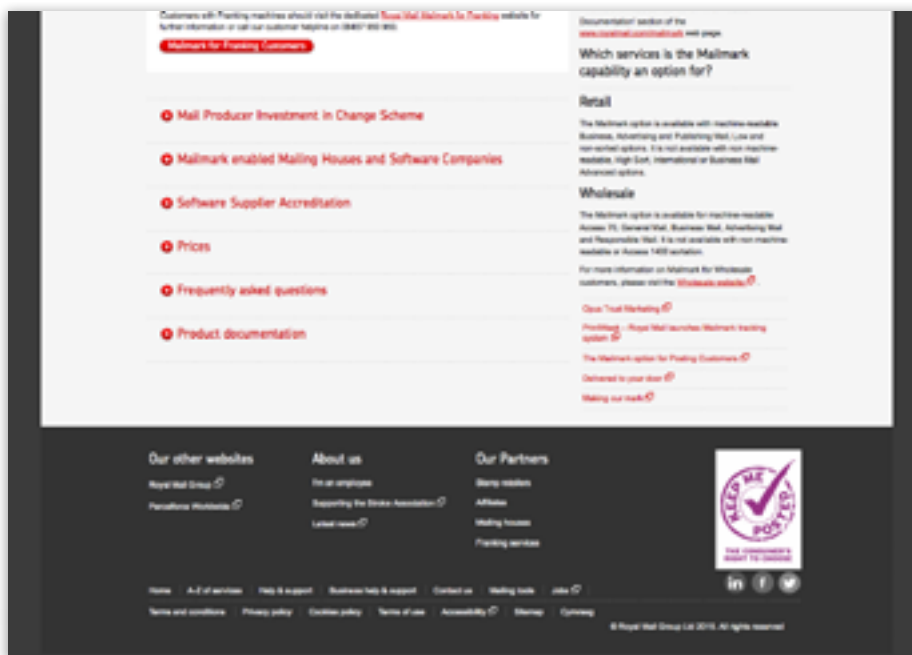
Just a few ways mail producers can raise awareness of the new service are:-

Join The List Of Mailmark Enabled Mailing Houses

Once Royal Mail have provided you with your live participant ID you can be added to the list of Mailmark enabled Mailing Houses. This list can be found at http://www.royalmail.com/mailmark and is a great way to generate awareness of your new capability.

Like any transformational technology the work doesn't stop there.

In addition to the obvious benefit of prospects searching Royal Mail for Mailmark providers, links to your website from high quality sources such as the Royal Mail website are great for search engine optimisation.

PRODUCE A FACT SHEET OR A MAIL CAMPAIGN OF YOUR OWN

Although the price differential is a simple to understand incentive for you and your customers to adopt Mailmark, the reporting benefits for your customers need some explaining. Consider producing a simple fact sheet illustrating what Mailmark means for your customers.

SPEAK
TO YOUR
CUSTOMERS

Predicted Delivery

Offer far more accurate information about when a mail piece will land with recipients. This allows your customer to plan their follow up activity and resourcing more accurately.

Cut Postage Costs

Not only is Mailmark offering a rising differential in cost for mail, but fees for mail not meeting specifications are reduced. Only pay for those pieces where the address was invalid or some other specification step was missed.

Supply Chain Visibility

See where mail is in the supply chain in and out of Royal Mail with live reporting and an audit trail. Guides and fact sheets are great ways of communicating the new concept en masse to all of your customers.

It sounds obvious but there is no substitute for picking up the phone or getting in the car and visiting customers to tell them about your new Mailmark service. This approach will allow you to gauge the understanding customers have about Mailmark and determine who might be a good fit for the offering. Those that educate customers about the service are likely to demonstrate greater value than those that wait for customers to find out for themselves.

MARKETING CHANNELS

Marketing the service online can be a simple and cost effective way to get the word out that you are Mailmark ready. Royal Mail have produced an explainer video that does a good job of articulating the Mailmark message for you so why not use it in your own marketing. Here are some more ideas about how to communicate your Mailmark service.

Your website
Add a page about the Mailmark service and be sure to articulate why your customers might benefit from the service.

Social Media
Get the conversation going with your customers on LinkedIn or Twitter with resources that will help them understand Mailmark

A Mail Campaign
Using mail to promote mail can be a more tangible way of raising awareness of the Mailmark format. The mail piece could include visuals of the reporting and barcode formats with explanation as to the benefits to the mail user.

Webinars
Another more personal marketing channel is to use a webinar facility to demonstrate the reporting available in Mailmark. Services like GoToMeeting are popular ways of inviting customers to view a presentation or demonstration and can involve 2-way interaction via conference call or web chat facilities.

Email
Send an email update to your customers inviting them to watch the Royal Mail video and talk to their account manager about the Mailmark service.

THE SOFTWARE BUREAU AND MAILMARK

The Software Bureau has been involved in the Mailmark project long before its introduction in March 2014. Having a large proportion of leading mail producers as customers, The Software Bureau was invited by Royal Mail to participate in early stage scoping of the offering. This close working relationship with Royal Mail has enabled the team to build a deep working knowledge of the scheme.

The Software Bureau has helped more than **30 companies** become Mailmark ready

GeMMA

The Generic eManifest Management Application (GeMMA), from The Software Bureau is designed specifically for the management of Mailmark eManifests. While many software providers consider the eManifest as an add-on step to a sort, The Software Bureau understands data processing and sortation activities often occur days or sometimes weeks ahead of a campaign and they might be managed by a different person or team to the eManifest. That is why it was recognised the process of sortation and eManifest submission should be separated which is exactly why GeMMA works independently. Working in tandem with their leading data processing software Cygnus, and sortation product SwiftSort, GeMMA provides a tailored solution for your eManifest management that isn't tied to your other data processes.

Free Mailmark Consultancy

Still have questions about how Mailmark will fit into your business? Why not contact The Software Bureau for a free one to one online or even face to face consultation. We can explore the concepts covered in this guide in greater depth and answer any questions you have about the service. To arrange your free Mailmark consultancy session just fill in the form on our website www.thesoftwarebureau.com/mailmark/consultation or call us on 0870 735 1322 and ask for Mark Dobson.

FREE MAIL MARK CONSULTATION

THE SOFTWARE BUREAU AND ONEPOST

The Software Bureau has been working closely with OnePost to ensure that the eManifest files provided by their sort solutions are GeMMA compatible. For those companies working with OnePost, these eManifest files supplied can be easily ingested into and managed by GeMMA.

This partnership shows a commitment to the Mailmark option, to our mutual customers, and to the mail production industry.

GeMMA is already recognised by the industry as the best Mailmark compliant software on the market so it makes perfect sense for us to integrate it into our systems to create a holistic solution for our clients. When Royal Mail transitions to Mailmark direct mailers that aren't using Mailmark compliant suppliers will find themselves significantly out of pocket.

"This is two **best of breed businesses** coming together to help organisations navigate the new Royal Mail changes"

Steve Roberts, Operations Development Manager, ONEPOST

THE**SOFTWARE**BUREAU.