



Resolution Statement: MTAC Workgroup # 165 – Improve MDA Support Process

Workgroup completed 12/31/2014.

Purpose of the Workgroup

Industry and USPS seek to improve the Mail Piece Design Analyst (MDA) support process. Specifically, industry is concerned with access to MDA support, localized knowledge of mailers and mail service providers' unique businesses, and how the MDA and Business Mail Entry Unit (BMEU) can provide complimentary support.

Participation and Discussion Format

The workgroup was composed of both Industry and USPS representatives, to include Mail Owners & Mail Service Providers from all mail classes from Industry and various representatives from both Headquarters and the field. Depending on the weekly discussion topics we reached out to MDA's, the Pricing and Classification Service Center (PCSC) and Industry members outside the workgroup for feedback. We started our communications with a bi-weekly call for one hour beginning in September and in November we increased the frequency to weekly. We had an opportunity to meet face to face with some workgroup members during the November MTAC week. The leadership reached out to members of the Industry as well as Industry Organizations and USPS to identify issues surrounding the MDA process and we worked our way through each of the 32 issues documenting them with notes and comments, recommendations and next steps. Many issues have overlapping comments and recommendations and we have created "buckets" of suggestions. On the last month of weekly calls we reached out with roll call of every participant to be sure we had covered their issues or concerns and addressed any recommendations they had. Notes were sent every week to the workgroup participants and we asked for any comments, concerns, feedback be communicated to either of the leadership team members.

Recommendations

Addressing two areas, communication and education, would be most impactful and beneficial to both the Industry and USPS with the MDA support process. Localized help was identified as a critical support requirement for a strong Industry and USPS partnership whether through MDA, Business Solutions Center, or Business Mail Entry Units.

1. MDA Training
 - a. Provide recommendations rather than just the requirements – explain the requirements that apply to the mailpiece in question.

- b. Remind MDAs to use the MDA Subject Matter Consultation (SMC) process – new MDAs or MDAs that do not have subject matter expertise should work with SMC and/or bring them in as a consult with customers.
 - c. Be aware of available mailing tools to recommend to customers (i.e. how customers can order a reflectance meter, Mailpiece Design course for customers, etc.).
 - d. Customer Service
 - Follow-up with customer prior to closing a ticket to ensure MDA response was understood and see if there are any additional questions.
 - Manage customer expectations:
 - Advise customer approximately how long it will take to provide answer
 - If mail-in sample is required, advise the customer of the turn-around time (i.e., service standard by class of mail – how long it may take for piece to arrive based on service used)
 - Advise customers of the limits of the MDA evaluation (aka: MDA disclaimer for PDF files, etc.)
 - Offer Enhanced Mailpiece Automation-Compatibility (EMAC) reviews as an option for large volume mailings and/or mailings that will be mailed at multiple locations.
 - Conduct MDA Customer Service Quality Reviews.
 - e. For newly hired MDAs, as they are going through their MDA training, provide overview of the Industry side of mailpiece design, creation, and mailing preparation to help MDAs understand the Industry and Postal “circle”. Possibly visit a mailer’s plant/facility.
2. External Education/Communication to Industry
- a. MDA program and process presentation, include EMAC and PCSC escalations and appeals, to MTAC membership at a quarterly meeting. Review the services provided by MDAs, scope, and the role of PCSC when there are mailing issues tied to mailpiece design.
 - b. MDA program and process presentation for NPF. Take the presentation from MTAC (item a) and do an NPF session.
 - c. Work with Postal Customer Council Advisory Committee (PCCAC) to create a series of webinars on the MDA program, process, and topics. Recommend quarterly MDA hosted webinars to cover hot topics and/or topics requested by the Industry (i.e., ABRM Tool, BRM process (SOP, electronic 6805, etc.), Folded Self-Mailers, etc.). First session should be the informational session and then selected topics and Q&As.
 - d. Work with PCCAC to create a workshop in a box for distribution to all PCCs.
 - e. Industry Alert to communicate upcoming MDA topic webinars.
 - f. Need to facilitate locating MDA information on RIBBS. Create a search engine on RIBBS website to easily locate MDA related information – defer to RIBBS Redevelopment workgroup.
 - g. Communicate process for MDA in-person meetings/requests.

- h. Host "Meet an MDA" meetings where customers can meet with an MDA in person, learn the process, learn the system. Possibly make them Area-wide, by geographical area, or combined PCCs into one event. Invite all permit holders from the BMEUs -- not just PCC members.
 - i. Where possible, use social media and/or explore the use of social media to communicate mailpiece design hot topics (i.e., video of folded self-mailer on YouTube).
3. Localized Support
- a. Every district should have a dedicated staff to assist with mailer questions and issues.
 - Local BMEU should be able to determine if MDA expertise is needed or if to refer the customer to the local Business Solutions Center (BSC)
 - DMM 101/201 and 102/202 Training should be included
 - Business Solutions Center Proposal -- Customers should be able to locate address, email and/or contact phone number for "local" resource (local BSC).
 - Business Solutions Centers should be identified differently than the BMEU on the District Business Mail Entry Locator look-up tool available on RIBBS at <https://ribbs.usps.gov/index.cfm?page=bma> to help distinguish to customers that this is a customer focused resource/service.
 - Business Solutions Centers should be customer solutions focused and be allocated the time to assist customers.
 - If there is an MDA in the district, the BMEU/BSC should work with local MDA for quickest turn-around for physical samples.
 - If no "local" MDA, the BMEU/BSC -- will need to work with MDA Help Desk -- can help customer with the process to open a ticket.
 - b. Refresher training for field and Business Service Network (BSN) on Business Reply Mail (BRM) SOP process.
 - c. Allow MDAs to attend PCC events.
 - d. Utilize PCC and BSN to help communicate to customers that still have a local MDA that MDAs can meet with them in person. Communicate to Industry that walk-ins are still available.
 - e. For better customer support, review the physical location of MDAs to align with Industry need (i.e., where there is a high number of MDA tickets, Eastern Area's process of where to domicile MDAs).
 - f. Take MDA troubleshooting process and replicate locally (BSC can adopt and use).
 - g. Create and distribute pocket cards with local contact information and phone numbers (without names), websites, and MDA Customer Service Help Desk Phone number. These can be handed out at PCC meetings, by Postmasters, and in meetings with customers to help them quickly locate local help and centralized help.
4. Resources
- a. Update and Post MDA commonly asked Q&As on RIBBS for customers
 - Include commonly asked questions/known issues for ABRM Tool

- b. Create a reference sheet for customers to quickly estimate how long it will take to mail a sample piece to an MDA (include Service Standards by service). Make it easy to locate online.
 - c. Update MDA request form (optional form that can be used by BMEUs to give to customers when MDA expertise needed and that customers can locate online).
 - d. Place a link to the Pub 25, *Designing Letter and Reply Mail*, on the MDA page on RIBBS.
 - e. Customer Facing Revised BRM/QBRM Process (lists steps for customers to follow to request/update BRM/QBRM).
5. Software/Tools
- a. Create a Wizard/self-help tool to assist customers with mailpiece design questions. The tool would be a web-based interactive a web-based interactive decision tree that will help alleviate questions that MDAs and postal employees handle. A wizard presents a series of questions that prompts a person to get information needed to produce an MDA Customer Service Help Desk ticket.
 - b. Recommend separate ABRM Tool workgroup or task team to work on ABRM Tool enhancements such as: Adding a disclaimer on ABRM Tool (what it does and what it doesn't, and known issues); Help direct customers to the MDA Help Desk if the tool cannot be used; Look at limitations, i.e., Corporate permits, validate zip+4s, to see if they can be addressed.
 - c. Automate ticket creation on line. For example, a customer should be able to open a ticket from the MDA page on RIBBS and/or MDA section on USPS.com (i.e. BRM sections and/or ABRM Tool Section). Possibly integrate with the wizard tool.

Conclusion

Having met the desired results, our recommendations support sun-setting this workgroup. The multiple recommendations identified have met the goals and objectives of the Workgroup Charter. MDA Workgroup 165 recommends consideration be given to forming a workgroup to address the ABRM Tool limitations and enhancements.