

# Everything IMBC

With Kevin Conti  
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## Justifying the Investment in Full Service

In our last article, we wrote about the IMBC adoption rate and that there were several hundred mailers in production mode and several hundred in test mode to confirm their readiness for production. The main point was that mailers are moving at a faster pace to take advantage of the IMBC offerings. An interesting note to add is that the 2010 US Census contained the IMBC and was the largest full-service mailing at 500 million pieces, which gave unprecedented visibility into the mail stream. Another very exciting application announced at NPF with Hallmark using the IMBC on gift cards that, once scanned, initiates the billing to Hallmark for the postage due on the card. Very innovative!

Mailers are justifying the investment in Full-Service IMBC based on some or all of the following: free ACS; added visibility; a new value proposition (i.e. Hallmark); or the Full-Service discount.

The USPS is now focusing its efforts to ensure accuracy and completeness in Full-Service compliance. Effective with the November 7, 2010 PostalOne! software release, the USPS will have the capability of making "discount adjustments" (see sidebar) if a mailer fails to meet the Full-Service IMBC requirements.

The USPS feels that since the IMBC Full-Service was introduced in May of 2009 and Full-Service discounts were made available November of 2009, mailers will have had a year to work out the issues preventing accurate and complete full-service submissions.

As the USPS develops additional tools to ensure compliance to Full-Service, mailers using or now deploying Full-Service IMBC are encouraged to document and review their process for managing the IMBC elements. One of the biggest mailer challenges to date has been maintaining sequence number uniqueness across multiple jobs and mailings. Not managing uniqueness will affect discounts and, for some, create problems in mail tracking applications. Where possible, consider putting auditing applications in place to protect and validate IMBC uniqueness.

The USPS will ensure compliance of all requirements that result in mailers earning discounts as technology evolves and gives them the tools to do so. It can now easily be envisioned when the mailpiece will have its own license plate that will reflect its having been submitted to CASS, NCOA and Full-Service compliance. Mailers need to ensure that they are meeting these requirements as the USPS will likely charge back those claimed discounts for mailpieces that fail. There's no better time than now to understand the quality of your addresses. ■

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## Don't Be Caught Unawares

The following list of eDocumentation errors could cause a discount adjustment:

### Appointments

Electronic documentation (eDoc) must contain appointment ID information, and all applicable full-service containers must be associated to FAST appointments.

### By/For

The Mail Owner and Mail Preparer provided in the eDoc by MID, Customer Registration ID (CRID) or Permit must be valid in the USPS system.

### Customer Service Agreements (CSA)

The CSA ID provided in the eDoc must match a valid CSA from FAST, and the CSA template must match the type of mailing (e.g. class, specific days, processing codes, processing categories).

### Mailer ID

The MID used in the electronic documentation (eDoc) must be valid in the USPS system.

### Service Type Identifier

The Service Type Identifier must be valid for the mail class and service requested.

### Unique Container, Handling and Unique Barcodes

The barcodes provided in the eDoc for the container, handling units and mailpieces must remain unique within the job and across jobs for a 45-day period from the postage statement mailing date.