



Postage Meters

The latest in an evolving technology



Hasler's PowerPost

Over the last few years, there have been significant advances in the technology and design of mailing equipment to meet the needs of mail center operations. Productivity, speed and error-proof operations are vital to the success of the mail center, and with advances in technology, mailing equipment has grown from mail machines that automatically weigh, seal and meter stacks of mixed mail to digital information-based indicia program (IBIP) meters that generate unique indicia for each mailpiece for improved security. These latest developments are a far cry from the old mechanical meters of the past few years.

Four manufacturers, Francotyp-Postalia, Hasler, Neopost and Pitney Bowes, are leading the way for the improvements to the mail center by offering distinctive equipment that will improve your mail center operations. The following is a synopsis of the latest offerings of these four industry leaders.

Hasler

Drew Casey, responsible for Hasler's product education programs, sees 2003 as a "Year of Execution" following a transitional 2002. As more and more mail center managers turn to the Internet to facilitate their jobs and improve connectivity outside of the mail center, he sees a suite of PC-based products that will address a number of needs. These include sophisticated accounting and mail management systems such as Hasler's iMCM, System 36 and 77; Web browser-based products that permit greater decentralization of mail processing within the company; and more emphasis on inbound mail security including voice-activated tracking.

"A lot of people used to think their responsibility ended once a mailpiece was out the door, but they're discovering that's just not so," Casey explains. "Today, they are trying to complete the circle — there is an emphasis on seeing what's coming into the mail center, what's going out and what's happening to everything in between. With that in

mind, we are now entering a new age where our products are working together to provide total end-to-end tracking — from shipment to signature — with the integration of DMC and Smart Track."

Drew sees technology tools finding a permanent home in the mail center in three main areas:

Internet Connectivity — "Though this technology has been available in higher-end products such as iMCM for quite some time, it is now gaining broader appeal. At one time, it was cost-prohibitive for all but the largest users, but now this functionality has found its way into smaller products such as scales and mailing machines that make it available to mail centers of every size."

Information Management — "More and more companies are calling for cost-cutting measures across the board, in every department — including the mail center. But if a directive comes down to cut costs by 10% and you have no idea where those costs are coming from, where do you begin? Mail center managers are realizing that they need a way to account for postage costs in every part of the organization, maximize every dollar they spend and consolidate all mailing costs in order to comply with these directives."

PC-Based Products — "Just two years ago, we felt like we were waving the flag all by ourselves when it came to PC-based products. But finally, things are changing. People are no longer intimidated by PCs — they see their value. And the beauty of PC-based products is that they are evolutionary. Upgrades enable users to continually keep up with changing and improving technology without the high costs that equipment replacement brings with it."

Casey admits that 2002 was a difficult year for the mailing industry as it was for just about everyone, with a shaky economy, changing technology and job insecurity. But he is facing 2003 with a renewed sense of optimism. "We've made it through a tumultuous transitional year," he says, "and now there's only one thing left to do — do the work!"