



Insight: Complete guide to hybrid mail



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What is hybrid mail?

Traditional hybrid mail is a simple tool that allows you to outsource your printing needs to another facility. A print driver is installed on your PC which enables you to send mailings to an outsourced post-room. There, your mail will be printed, enclosed and posted with no input from you. You can do this with any volume of mailings: there isn't a minimum order. You can send one piece of post or thousands. Hybrid mail gives organisations much greater control of their mailings while simultaneously driving down costs. However, not all hybrid mails are the same, meaning there are other benefits in addition to an outsourced post-room that will vary across providers.

How does hybrid mail work?

The process of getting your mailings to your recipients is streamlined via hybrid mail. Most of the work in-between you preparing the mailing and it being sent is taken on via a third party. The set-up of the functionality is also streamlined and should be set up for you by the hybrid mail provider, having first discussed your particular needs.

Drafting the document

The user, which can be any member of your organisation, drafts the piece of mail they want to send. Via the hybrid mail provider, they will have access to headed stationery and pre-sets to make the process simpler. They then submit this mailing to the print driver – just as they would if printing locally by pressing print.

Transmission

The document is encrypted and sent securely to the facility where the mailing will be handled. This is done online, via the cloud.

Processing

The document will then be set up in precisely the way the original user intended: correct size, single or double-sided, colour or black and white, headed or non-headed paper.

Download

This completed document is downloaded by the print provider, securely, to be processed.

Processing

The print provider does the rest: printing, enclosing and sending the mail to the recipient.

What are the benefits of hybrid mail?

The benefits of an outsourced post-room may seem obvious, but there are far more benefits than people would expect when examined closely. In this section, we break down the benefits of hybrid mail and explain in detail how they can be of use to businesses and organisations, whether they already have a post room or if other methods are used to process and handle post.

Contactless

A feature that has come into its own during social distancing is that hybrid mail is completely contactless. All mail is processed through an encrypted data centre, then into a remote post-room, usually via cloud technology. There, your mailings are printed, machine-enclosed, stamped and sent out to be delivered by your provider. None of your staff need to touch the mail – everything happens at a distance via a command on your PC. This means that any of your staff, whether they are based in your offices or working remotely, can take control of your mailings.

Fast

Your mailings are sent straight to your hybrid mail provider at the touch of a button, and the rest of the process is completed by the provider. Your mail can be printed, enclosed and sent out on the same day.

Easy to use

While hybrid mail is an incredibly powerful tool, it should also make sending mail easier. A good hybrid mail tool is intuitive, easy to understand and easy to use, which means your staff won't have any difficulties learning to use the new tool. By keeping a simple interface, making the tool easy to understand and to use, and providing easy access to guidance from the provider, a good hybrid mail system will ensure staff make the most of this powerful new tool provided to them and make their jobs easier.

Advanced reporting

Many organisations will want a breakdown of which mail they have sent, how many copies and what type of mailings they are sending. Some providers can track each piece of mail you send, allowing you to report in detail on exactly what mail your organisation is sending. This allows you to gain control over departmental spend, and gives you complete control over the document output, making the use activity transparent. This has obvious benefits for budgeting.

Cost-effective

Hybrid mail is always far more cost-effective than maintaining your own post room. The letter, stamp, enclosing and sending of a piece of mail will usually cost less than a second class stamp. Due to the volume of mail handled by a hybrid mail provider, you can take advantage of the fact that they have access to discounts that your organisation wouldn't be able to access on their own. Most hybrid mail providers will not require a minimum order: each piece of mail will cost the same whether you're sending one or 1000. You don't have to worry about only using your provider for large volume mailing, meaning all of your post requirements can be taken on board by your provider.

Streamlined

By outsourcing your post-room your staff are free to work on other tasks. You will not need to retain expensive equipment like printers and franking machines, and you will use less energy and less stationery. This can represent a massive saving for organisations that are spending a significant amount on labour, machinery, stationery and energy in-house to process their mail.

Secure

A reputable hybrid mail provider will have several accreditations that ensure the security and integrity of their data handling. By using a secure post-room, your communications will be guaranteed to be completely regulatory compliant. Using an outsourced post-room should be even more secure than processing your mail in-house, due to the high levels of security mail-processing facilities need to demonstrate for accreditation.

Convenient

Hybrid mail providers will usually work 24/7, even if your organisation doesn't. Your organisation should have 24/7 post-room access, meaning you can send letters not just from any location, but at any time of day.

Improved quality assurance

By sending your mail through a hybrid mail provider, you should have the ability to centralise the options available for printing, such as letterheads, stationery and attachments. This ensures consistency in the look, feel and quality of your mailings. Some hybrid mail providers can act as a second quality assurance department, picking up on mailings that are non-standard, such as using letterheads or imagery out of proportion, and feed that back to you, so you can prevent sub-standard mail from being sent out.

Configurable

Not all hybrid mails are configurable, but this ability is hugely powerful. If you send out the same type of mailing very frequently, some providers can preconfigure this for you, so you don't need to set up your mailing every time. Options like colour, double/single siding can be set up for you, meaning your staff can send these types of frequent mailings very quickly and easily. This bespoke model of hybrid mail will require a small amount of set-up by the provider at the beginning, but guarantees a seamless, user-friendly process for the end-user.

Conclusion

Not all hybrid mails are created equal. They will differ in their capabilities, pricing, quality, ease of use and sector-specific knowledge. Outsourcing your post will be of benefit to any organisation, but by ensuring your hybrid mail partner is the right fit for your organisation, can prevent headaches down the road. By consulting this guide, you can make an informed choice about what to look for in a hybrid mail partner.

Contact us to find out more...

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