Product first glance:
After taking the product and some competitors for a trial run, Updater does provide a few **advantages** for the consumer:

- Unlike USPS change of address service (status quo), saves (minimal) time and the user from entering credit card information for $1 charge
- Has aggregated 'network' of companies to easily notify for change of address
- Has obviously focused on user acquisition – getting top ad slots in Google searches for "change of address" and related queries
    - However, they might need to work on SEO to get their site to the first page
- $10 seemed like a hefty sum to pay for junk-mail protection for 3yrs, but is less than $35/yr charged by https://www.catalogchoice.org/

However, the product shows many **glaring weaknesses**:

- Disappointed after viewing deck to find only one established referral partner: (ADT)
- Compare this to the dozen seen on USPS site
- USPS has already partnered with MyMove.com, which generates another dozen ads / referrals
- MyMove.com doesn't show any sign of partnership with Updater.com (did they ditch the iFrame integration referenced in presentation for a USPS link?)
- http://changeofaddressform.com/ is also free, and it works directly with WhiteFence to help movers compare prices of utility/service providers – a feature Updater lacks (though they mention WhiteFence in the deck – *we need to check the progression of their partnerships* – not many of the references in the deck are reflected in their product yet)
- It's tough to remember all mailers/subscriptions to notify, and the interface is hard to use
- The junk mail blocking service is helpful, but Updater is limiting customers to those moving

The business can bring in good margins if CAC is kept low, but maintaining/expanding the backend to notify mailers might be labor intensive. It'd be good to know what their operating costs look like as far as acquiring partners.

Team
I'm not sure if Greenberg's background is necessary suited (an M&A lawyer turned "Leading expert in the relocation industry"?) He has been at this since 11/2009 - he should have been able to make more progress or get more traction by now. He got a good amount of press attention in late 2011(NYT Blog, TheNextWeb), with much of the attention focusing on the ability to block junk mail. Since then, he has dropped the $2 change of address fee and reduced the junk-mail blocking service from $15 to $10. The price drop could signal a lower-than-expected demand or a lowering of costs, but I suspect the first. He has made some hires since 2012, but the team seems to be making very little progress in terms of implementing partnerships or developing a visually appealing site.

Data Value:
The data generated by Updater is tough to compare to the richer relocation data set in the hands of the USPS. This seems to be the high-value data for serving moving/settling-related service ads. There is little differentiation here when compared to the USPS.
Lower value data can be collected from the subscriptions and affiliations that the user wants to notify. It seems like an engine to gather all of these would be helpful, since without one, it's tough to remember everything I need to notify.

Competition:
The competition seems to be leaving Updater in the dust. MyMove.com (shown in the "beta" stage in the pitch deck) is now a well-developed site that provides rich features and content (from many writers, videos, resources) throughout the moving verticals (planning, packing, moving, change of address, deals). These were

verticals that Updater sought to capture, but I'm highly skeptical of their ability to gain the partnerships quickly enough to catch up. [WhiteFence](#) is also a rich shopping tool for new movers that has incorporated an address change feature.

Moving is a great industry to tap into given customers' willingness to spend. But at this point, Updater's product might be too niche to compete against such one-stop-shop models in the moving space – especially if convenience is to be emphasized.

There is little intrinsic value in terms of IP or technology. Right now, most of the value appears to be locked in the integration of change-of-address notifications with mailers. The data itself is good for advertising (where the real money is), but the question is can they get enough users and advertisers? The market is there if they can draw a critical mass of users away from the default USPS system, but it seems like Updater can't compete with comparison engines or vertically integrated moving solutions.

Exits:

I think their best bet was to partner with a growing site like MyMove to focus on providing a smoother, more integrated change of address / junk mail blocking service. But it looks like MyMove has already dumped Updater after including them in their beta version. The USPS could also acquire Updater for their ability to notify mailers not covered by the mail forwarding service, but this also seems unlikely given the USPS's financial condition.

Recommendation:

Updater does not feel mature enough as a service. It's hard to tell without user statistics, but given the lack of press and referral partners, it might be having trouble gaining traction after over a year in the market. Without enough active partners to validate its ability to attract advertisers, the company might struggle to bring in revenue. The business seems too niche, undifferentiated, and unable to generate novel or high-value data that defines IA's Portfolio.

I think there is too much risk in the company's ability to grow and maintain a competitive advantage in this space. Its upside and disruptive power feels limited, so unless it can demonstrate significant improvements in user acquisition and ability to attract advertisers, I would recommend we **pass**.