

## Question 1 Sample Y

For over 200 years the United States Postal Service (USPS) has been an integral institution for both personal and public relations in our country. It has created hundreds of thousands of job opportunities, as well as facilitated communication throughout the country. Unfortunately, with the expansion of online technology and the rise of competitive delivery services, the USPS has witnessed a decline in business. As more and more people turn to the email or competitors such as UPS and Fed Ex, total mail volume has continued to decrease, resulting in a loss of revenue and an increase in debt. However, the USPS has been a vital part of our society and history and cannot be let go so easily. The USPS needs to restructure itself by cutting back on delivery days and strategically rebranding and closing unnecessary branches in order to adapt to the needs of a changing world.

The elimination of Saturday mail delivery would help to offset the continuing loss of revenue. In 2009 alone, "the Postal service experienced a 13 percent drop in mail volume...more than double any previous decline, and lost \$3.8 billion" (Source c). Unfortunately, the problem is projected to only get worse, with even "steeper drops in mail volume and revenue" anticipated over the next 10 years (Source C). Though some experts, such as Kellogg School Marketing professor Richard Honack, believe the solution is to actually increase service (Source A), "eliminating Saturday mail delivery would save \$40 billion over a decade" (Source f). Though Honack argues that "people have less faith in the system precisely because of spotty service" (Source A), the increase of service would not guarantee increased consumer mailing and thus carries inherent risks. On the other hand, cutting back on delivery days will guarantee the saving of billions. In a time when loss of revenue continues to be forecasted, this is the necessary solution.

Additionally, the USPS needs to conduct a re-evaluation of both its marketing strategy and its location strategy in order to attract customers and cut down on employment and delivery costs. Though the USPS has been a long-standing institution, "no one knows what the Postal Service stands for" (Source A). "A company's brand is the most valuable tool, or its biggest liability," and finding a new logo and slogan to represent the purpose the USPS would encourage consumers to support the company. Furthermore, they would feel a stronger connection to the brand and be potentially more willing to sue its services (Source A). Additionally, Postmaster General John Potter wants to close and consolidate 154 post offices, "cutting back on both employment and operating costs (Source F). This should be done strategically though, and offices closed should be those with the lowest revenue and necessity – "You don't need a full service post office every few blocks in New York, for example" (Source A).

The USPS is an institution that has become an intrinsic part of our social fabric and needs to employ certain strategies in order to preserve itself. The USPS provides many advantages for the average customer as it is cheaper than its competitors, allows people to reach those who may not have access to the internet or other technology and in addition, provides hundreds of thousands of jobs (Source D). "Emails is fast and simple," but for many "and old-fashioned, handwritten letter has value in this speed-obsessed world," and in order to continue this tradition, costs must be cut (Source F).