

Question 1 Sample O

In this changing, modernizing world where the Internet and computers have dominated communications, the United States Postal Service has fought to sustain itself. The USPS, within the last decade, has been unable to regain a foothold in communications between Americans because of the introduction of convenient e-mail. There might not be a way for the USPS to become the dominant communications-delivery service so long as the Internet exists, but if it restructured the right way, it can cut its losses and maybe even start making some profit again.

The USPS should change its marketing strategy. In order to adapt to this modern world, in which the USPS sometimes seems archaic and out-of-date, the USPS must appeal to its customers' emotions and gain their confidence back. After all, "a company's brand is its most valuable too, or its biggest liability" (Sone, Source A). Currently, the USPS motto "Fly like an eagle" does not convey the message that it ought to be sending (Stone, Source A). In an age where e-mails help people keep up with each other instantly, a handwritten letter "gives the message a more intimate feeling" (Hawkins, Source D). Thus, the USPS should "find a new logo and slogan that actually convey what [the USPS does] and how [it does] it" (Stone, Source A). By appealing to people's longing for a sentimental message and personal touch in this present society that focuses on mechanical speed and technology, the USPS could inspire people to send more handwritten letters. This revamp of the USPS's marketing strategy could definitely help the USPS "turn back from the red to the black" (O'Keefe, Source C). A new campaign highlighting the benefits of handwritten messages can also have an effect on mail influx because there are millions more "delivery points" or people to send mail to, each year (graph, Source B). Inspiring people to send just "one piece of mail a month" can help (Hawkins, Source D).

Another way for the USPS to adapt to this changing world is to streamline its functions and make its functions most efficient. Because a "handwritten letter has value in this speed-obsessed world," the USPS ought to focus on making the transportation of these letters from their origin to their destination a top priority (Cullen, Source F). Closing down branches that are very close to each other would "cut down on staff size and service required to and from each," and the branches that stay open could have shorter hours (Stone, A). This would be coupled with a seven day schedule so that all branches are open for a few hours every day. This scheduling strategy would allow the USPS to be "the first carrier to reliably deliver all week" (Stone, Source A).

By opening post offices up every day, people would put more faith in the USPS after losing some faith "because of some spotty service" (Stone, Source A). Also, opening the post offices every day, for shorter hours, would allow people to focus on the satisfaction of writing "a real letter" and of service instead of worry about what day of the week the post office is open (Cullen, Source F).

These various changes to the USPS could very well usher in a new era of personalized communications within this modern, technologically-focused world. Add in that the postal service is cheap, and with the right marketing, the USPS could fight back from its dwindling status as "snail mail" of the last decade. Hopefully citizens of the United States will be encouraged to contribute to the USPS's mission to connect people with

one another through tangible paper letters in an age where words on a screen have become the most common form of communication.