

# RIGHT-SOURCING THE DATA PROCESSING FUNCTION

## A Fresh Approach to Improving Responsiveness and Customer Loyalty

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After calling on a prospect for two years, you finally received a rush order to print and mail a time sensitive marketing piece. You rearranged the production schedule and delivered on-time. Now the follow up mailer requires complex data processing services. You know your in-house team can do a passable job, but will it be good enough to create a long-term loyal customer?

If you're like 97% printers, lettershops and other mailing service providers, you have an outsource relationship for NCOALink processing. The same holds true for nearly 100% of companies with in-house list processing. So, how can you add value to this relationship, both for you and your clients? Can this relationship increase the capabilities of your company, help grow your profits, and reduce the cost of delivering data quality and postal compliance services?

Quite often, especially when deadlines are looming and the job just needs to get out, a "one-size-fits-all" approach — running every job through routine standard processes — is the way things get done. But it may not be the optimal choice. Depending on the situation, tailoring the job to the nature of the campaign, quality of data, and other variables can substantially improve the effectiveness and profitability of a mailing.

For many, the answer is a hybrid approach, or "right sourcing": blending in-house services with those of a data processing partner who provides a wider breadth of services. Under the hybrid model, you can offer clients a full spectrum of automated processing to address everyday needs, in addition to NCOALink. Right sourcing also means you're covered when demand exceeds capacity, when unexpected staff shortages arise, or when you need extended capabilities and expertise for special projects. In many cases, the transition from internal to external processing is completely transparent to the client.

### Choosing the Right Partner: a Strategic Decision

The potential benefits of right sourcing hinge on one critical factor: choosing the right partner. It's about more than simply finding a firm that can do NCOALink. A right-sourcing partner will have the personnel and technology to handle complex jobs, and will offer valuable intangibles, including education, consulting, and support.

Ideally, the partner will become an extension of your data processing operation: people you can call with your toughest assignments, even on short notice. When evaluating potential partners, look for key qualities, including:

- **A resource for peers** — The most capable firms serve not just mailers, but also other data processing providers, readily taking on projects that require a high level of expertise and/or technology.

- **Responsiveness** — Partners should be available and understand how client needs intersect with constantly changing technology and postal requirements. When deadlines are tight, they are nimble and meet your needs in a timely manner.
- **Flexibility** — Rather than dictating their requirements to you, a valuable partner will work with you to build a process that best fits your needs and preferences.
- **Commitment to improvement** — Strategic partners should be forward-thinking, continually striving for better results, greater efficiency, and quicker service.
- **Consultation and Education** — Partners should be market leaders, and educate their clients about industry products, services, regulations and events. They listen to clients and collaborate to ensure project goals are met.

In today's challenging economy, everyone needs to spend more wisely and seek a higher return on their investments. Doing what you do best, and right sourcing to a partner for the rest, is a key formula to success. This enables you to take advantage of the highest level of expertise and the top tools available, giving your clients excellent value, and a promising future for your business.

*For more information about Lorton Data, call (612) 362-0200.*