



Trends in Address Management

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What is Address Management?

Simply put, address management is the ongoing process of ensuring that addresses in your customer database are up-to-date and accurate. But the practice of good address management is much more complex than the basic theory, as the following statistics illustrate. Consider that, according to the United States Postal Service (USPS), 26 percent of all the addresses on United States mail are incorrectly addressed. A full 2.7 percent of all U.S. mail is completely undeliverable as addressed.

Companies that do high volume direct mail and ship goods to customers need to ensure accuracy of their customer address data. This can mean a direct impact on the bottom line and the difference between a satisfied customer and an irate one. It is also often the customer's first impression of the business relationship.

Companies operate multi-million dollar call centers and host elaborate, interactive websites in order to capture customer addresses and other crucial data. So why are there still so many incorrect addresses entered into the databases of world-class companies? Beyond the obvious inputting errors on the company's side, much of the information supplied by customers themselves is inaccurate or incomplete.

- Seventeen percent of the U.S. population moves each year from one location to another. That's 44 million people, many of whom are unsure of their full address.
- One-and-a-half million new addresses are created each year and added to the USPS national address database. Many of these addresses carry new and unfamiliar directional or suffix information, such as North Main Street or Peachtree Street, NW.
- Human nature often prompts people to state that they live in one town, while giving the street address and zip code of another – especially if the next town over is a more “prestigious” address.
- America is “the great melting pot” and it's reflected in street names. Customers may not always have a handle on the correct spelling of their own street name. Would a call center employee in Minnesota know how to spell the Spanish-style street name of a customer calling from New Mexico?
- Consider that a large company can send over 1 billion pieces of direct mail each year. With an average 10% return rate, that's 100 million undeliverable pieces of mail. The expense is enormous. Additionally, the same principle holds true for smaller operations with smaller budgets. Returned mail costs money.

Cleansing Dirty Data

Solutions to these problems have been developed over time, such as CASS-certified cleanse products that take a list of “dirty” data and clean it. In this “batch” environment, an address list is taken and processed in one sequence of operations. The entire list goes through a collective cleansing environment. Yet, amazingly, as much as 30 percent of all batch addresses still have inaccuracies after the cleansing process. Why? The cleansing product cannot prompt during entry for directional information such as a North or South prefix to a Main Street address, for example. Nor can the cleansing product alert a data input employee on sub-premise information such as apartment numbers, since the cleansing takes place long after the employee was on the phone with the customer. Even when a cleansing solution is implemented at point of entry, the operator is still required to key in all the address information. The solution is not designed to provide correct information where inaccuracies exist. Without a better solution, misdelivered or undeliverable mail rates may never improve at a company.

Rapid Addressing: The Better Solution

Rather than fixing an address after it is input, QuickAddress Pro is a unique rapid addressing product that accesses the USPS national data file representing over 150 million addresses with lightening speed at the exact time when a call representative is on the phone with a customer.

QuickAddress Pro is a breakthrough technology for several compelling reasons:

1. **TypeDown Search:** With the QuickAddress TypeDown technology, a data input or call center employee can access any address in an average of 15 keystrokes or less. The system literally zeros in on address information, ruling out all but the most likely matches until the exact address is located, usually within a matter of seconds. Additionally, if any part of the address is missing or inaccurate, the system prompts the employee to clarify information with the customer for the complete and correct address. This is a proprietary search engine developed by QAS over a decade. There is nothing else comparable to it on the market today. In simple terms, QuickAddress Pro will eliminate incorrect address entry.
2. **Pasting Technology:** Using QuickAddress Pro’s Plug & Go option, once the address is verified it is put into the company’s existing database at the press of a button – in the company’s format of choice. QuickAddress Pro’s configuration tools make this process amazingly simple.
3. **The Definitive Data Source:** QuickAddress is offered all around the world using data from national postal authorities. Here in the United States, that means the data is provided by The United States Postal Service and is updated every 8 weeks.

4. **Compression and Indexing:** QuickAddress allows large amounts of address data to be easily loaded and run on any desktop while still enabling the fastest possible searching capabilities. For the U.S. data set, 6.2 gigabytes of raw USPS data is compressed to just 865 megabytes representing all of the 150 million United States addresses.
5. **Integration:** The product integrates into any application and is available on a broad range of platforms and for Web and client server environments. QuickAddress is compatible with leading business applications including Oracle, SAP and Siebel. It offers a choice of integration options that can sit on top of the application in Plug & Go form or be built into your application at a low level with Application & Programmer's Interface (API).
6. **Picklist Handling:** Due to the interactive nature of QuickAddress, the way search results are presented to users is key to ensuring fast and intuitive use of the product. The "picklist" selections are presented to prompt the user at every stage, enabling quick and accurate access to the required address. For example, if suite or apartment information exists for an address, the user will be automatically prompted for it.

Ease of Use

The QuickAddress range of products can be installed in as little as 20 minutes, when using Plug & Go, into any application for order entry, customer service, finance, administration or human resources. In other words, anyone taking down an address can use QuickAddress software with their preferred applications.

Practical Deployment of Rapid Addressing

Any company that cares about accurate address information benefits from rapid addressing as does the company's customers. If a company currently uses a cleanse product, QuickAddress Pro is the perfect complement.

Think of an existing database as a polluted lake. A cleanse product will simply clean the lake but cannot ensure that the "rivers" of information feeding into the lake are clean. QuickAddress Pro, however, will ensure that all new incoming addresses are accurate because they are verified when the data is being entered. This builds a persuasive case for using QuickAddress Pro for real-time, rapid address entry because it guarantees correct information in the first place. Your cleanse product can then be used every two months to ensure that routine changes from the USPS are accurately reflected. Once data has been cleansed, QuickAddress Pro can flag a customer service representative to update address information the next time a customer record is accessed, usually when they are interacting with that customer on the phone. QuickAddress Pro and a cleanse tool used together, quite simply, will give a company the competitive edge to ensure the best, most accurate customer data is used *in every* customer-facing function of a company.

360 Degree View of the Customer

The first priority in Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is to achieve one view of the customer – one record that shows a complete customer profile. An accurate customer database is the foundation of that concept. The address information is the one common thread across multiple customer databases.

QuickAddress interfaces with enterprise-wide solutions to ensure that one address in one consistent format appears in a wrapped-up customer profile. Address information is therefore correct in a single database and not fragmented in every different department within a company. With a standardized address, and with QuickAddress providing the same standardized address format for new record entry, a company can avoid duplicate entries and the associated costs.

Productivity Increases; Cost Savings

While accuracy is the primary objective, QuickAddress has some powerful secondary benefits, not the least of which is *increased productivity* in busy call centers or anywhere address information is taken directly from the customer. Specifically, QuickAddress's TypeDown and pasting technology can greatly increase data input productivity, offering access to an address in 15 keystrokes or less. Call duration can also be significantly reduced by an average of 15 seconds per call or more. What could a company do with that extra 15 seconds? Offer more customer service and advice? Make sales suggestions? Increase overall call volume? Reduce call queues and abandon rates? More effectively manage call center resources? All options become possible with the efficiency gains QuickAddress Pro makes possible.

Bertelsmann Services Inc., a QuickAddress customer, recently installed the software for customer call representatives in one of its North American call centers with noticeable results:

- The average call length was reduced by 15 seconds in Order Management Operations. On that basis alone, the system paid for itself in five months.

Reduced Mailing Costs

QuickAddress Pro can help ensure that large direct mailings and product shipments are accurate enough to garner the highest possible bulk postal discounts while deterring the need for returned mail that costs both the company and the postal service. CASS-certified products that run in tandem with QuickAddress Pro will run faster, more accurately and return fewer residue or “non-matches.” That helps companies maximize postal discounts. Additionally, items are certain to reach their final destination, thus ensuring customer satisfaction and a good company reputation. Address error fees on returned items from UPS, FedEx, etc, can be altogether avoided.

How QuickAddress Improves The Accuracy and Productivity of Business Processes

1. Many companies use the USPS's National Change of Address (NCOA) service to enable reliable forwarding of mail. In these cases, QuickAddress ensures that the full and correct address is sent to the NCOA service, resulting in a higher hit rate.
2. Similarly, where third party credit rating services are used to assess risk, a full and accurate address helps ensure the correct rating is retrieved the first time, every time.

The Demographic Impact of Address Accuracy

Once the basics of accuracy, productivity and cost savings are realized, QuickAddress offers another level of marketing savvy to any organization. You may not realize the impact an address has on the life of your customer. Addresses determine where your customers vote, their car insurance rates, sales and property tax, license requirements and even regulatory checks on vehicles.

Summary

An organization is only as good as its data. The customer name and address is the common thread across multiple databases and is important when creating a CRM-based single database. A customer's address is also the most direct line to market share and mind share. QuickAddress provides a rapid addressing solution that takes care of six major objectives:

- ✓ It ensures data integrity
- ✓ It speeds up the entry process
- ✓ It reduces cost and prevents waste
- ✓ It facilitates good customer service
- ✓ It provides a fast return on investment
- ✓ It gives your company a competitive advantage

How To Become A Data Integrity Champion At Your Company

Is it part of your job to help save your company money and increase customer service? Become a champion of data quality by ensuring your customer database is all that it can be. QuickAddress can provide a free, no obligation health check of any customer database that can identify cost savings and opportunities for enhanced address accuracy. Please ask for evaluation software to assess the impact of QuickAddress Pro on your organization.

Compare Cleanse Versus Rapid Addressing

Address Entered	Error	Business Impact	Flaws In Overnight Batch Processing	How QuickAddress Prevents Error
100 Congress Ave. Delray Beach, FL 33445	Missing predirectional. Address does not exist	Undeliverable. Impacts customer service and cash flow.	Cannot resolve error. Rejected as non-match.	User prompted to add either N or S at entry . Correct address is: 100 S. Congress Ave. Delray Beach 33445-3436
1900 Main St. Atlanta, GA 30318	Missing postdirectional. Address does not exist. There are 6 Main Streets in Atlanta including pre- and post-directionals	Undeliverable. Impacts Customer service and cash flow.	Cannot resolve error. Rejected as non-match.	User prompted to add NW at entry . Correct address is: 1900 Main St. NW Atlanta, GA 30318-1851
1001 Bayhill Drive San Bruno, CA 94066	Correct Address but suite information is missing.	Deliverable but to incorrect recipient. More likely to be returned to sender.	Dependent on settings, will accept as correct address, though it is incomplete.	User prompted to add Suite or Apartment number information at entry . Correct address is: 1001 Bayhill Dr., Ste. 200 San Bruno, CA 94066
678 Tremont St. Boston, MA 01218	Transposed characters in ZIP. Should be 02118. ZIP as entered does not exist. Missing Apartment data.	Undeliverable. Returned to sender.	Cannot resolve error. Missing Apt. data prevents absolute match on street, city, state to correct the ZIP. Rejected as non-match.	User prevented from entering incorrect ZIP in the first place. If ZIP unclear, user can still search via Boston or MA as search criteria.

Glossary of Terms

CASS: Coding Accuracy Support System. A service offered by the USPS to mailers, service bureaus, and software vendors that improves the accuracy of matching to delivery point codes, ZIP+4 codes, 5-digit Zip codes and carrier route codes on mail pieces. CASS provides a common platform to measure the quality of address matching software.

NCOA: National Change Of Address. An address correction service that the USPS provides to mailers through USPS licensees. The licensees match mailing lists provided to them on tape or disk against change of address information submitted to the USPS by moving customers. If a match is made, NCOA can correct the address before it is printed on a mail piece.

Cleanse Products: Address cleansing is the process of correcting spelling and layout errors in an address database. This is essential for any company that has an existing database of inaccurate addresses and wants to clean them up.

Rapid Addressing: Rapid addressing is a solution that enables address data to be entered more accurately and quickly and stored consistently in a database, allowing companies to maximize the use of their most important asset - the data on their customers and prospects. Effective rapid addressing opens the door to more productive and efficient business operations.

Address Error Charges: A courier company will make a charge to customers where an incorrect address has caused delivery problems/non delivery in an attempt to cover their increased costs. Also referred to as Reroute Fees or Error Correction Charges.

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