

CASE STUDY

National Federation of Independent Business

“WE HAD UNIQUE REQUIREMENTS, AND PITNEY BOWES FIGURED OUT A WAY TO MAKE IT WORK.”

Mike Clutts, Vice President, Information Technology
National Federation of Independent Business

WHEN IT COMES TO REACHING SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS, THE NFIB RELIES ON PITNEY BOWES BUSINESS INSIGHT TO CONNECT WITH NEW PROSPECTS AND EXISTING MEMBERS IN THE MOST EFFICIENT MANNER.



Challenge

As a non-profit, member-funded organization, NFIB wanted to spend as much money as possible on member programs and causes—and as little as possible on administrative tasks.

Solution

A suite of location intelligence and communication technologies created efficiencies for sales teams, IT departments and marketing groups—saving time and money across the organization.

SUMMARY

The National Federation of Independent Business is the leading small business association in America. A nonprofit, nonpartisan organization founded in 1943, NFIB represents the consensus views of its members in Washington and all 50 state capitals. Their mission is to promote and protect the right of its members to own, operate and grow their businesses. By pooling the purchasing power of its members, NFIB also gives members access to many business products and services at discounted costs.

“The men and women who own small businesses are following their passion,” notes Mike Clutts, Vice President of Information Technology. “But they rarely have a voice in Washington and the state capital to express their views as they relate to new policies or regulations. We fight for their interests—and for us to be successful, we need to reach business owners and understand their needs.”

Efficient communication is key to NFIB’s success. A team of over 300 membership representatives serve on the front lines to connect with small and independent businesses face to face. NFIB also keeps members informed through regular communications, including six million mail pieces a year.

“We want to put as much money as possible into supporting programs for our members and as little as possible into administrative tasks,” notes Clutts. “Pitney Bowes Business Insight provides tools that support mapping, address validation and mailing efficiency—tools that make us more efficient.”

Membership representatives meet with members and prospects every day. Prior to adding MapInfo Professional® membership reps relied on a highly manual process. Information on local members and prospects were printed out and sorted by hand, then reps had to prepare for their day—manually planning routes on paper maps.

The move to Pitney Bowes not only helped them automate mapping and route planning; they later integrated address validation tools that were customized for their specific needs. “We need to target our members in a variety of ways, and ZIP codes alone are insufficient,” Clutts explains. “Often issues deal with specific counties or Congressional districts. Now program managers throughout the organization can create customized mailing lists without having to involve IT.

RESULT

Over the years, the National Federation of Independent Business has increasingly turned to Pitney Bowes Business Insight for more efficient ways to connect with members and prospects.

NFIB has used Pitney Bowes Business Insight’s data visualization tool, MapInfo Professional® for almost a decade. While primarily a tool for creating maps, the functionality has become essential for sales reps. Every day, reps can identify what geographies they wish to cover and the system returns a map highlighting the location all of prospects and members in

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that territory.

Membership reps can easily mix in new business, renewals and courtesy calls—and have the information at hand needed to cite existing customers as references. They can even plot out directions and calculate the most efficient routes.

“These technologies provide us with a more efficient way to find members and prospects. Now our teams can spend more of their day sharing the benefits of membership—and more of their evenings with their families. “People using this tool can easily save four or five hours a week...when you multiply that by over 300 reps, you can see the impact it has on our organization.”

Address Validation

In 2009, NFIB migrated to a new association management system—a platform that manages the database functions that support their operations. As part of this transition, they also integrated address validation tools from Pitney Bowes Business Insight.

This database helps drive member communications, including news about legislative issues, upcoming meetings and events, and member benefits. Having an accurate address is critical, but NFIB's needs go beyond simple postal codes. They needed to append counties, congressional districts and geocodes for mapping—all in a single pass.

“We had unique requirements, and Pitney Bowes figured out a way to make it work,” Clutts notes. “I really appreciated that I could say here's my problem, and they came up with a solution. This is now fully integrated into our member management system—with the same look and feel—and any user

can access this functionality. It's given us the seamless ability to make an impact on end-user efficiency.”

Targeted Mail List Generation

In addition to standardizing, correcting and coding member addresses, the Pitney Bowes solution also helps create mail files, including the barcodes and postal forms required for postal discounts.

“We do use email, but a significant portion of our communications is sent by physical mail,” explains Clutts. “With this tool, we can make sure mail is deliverable, addresses are updated and that we can maximize postal discounts. Saving money on postage allows us to put more dollars into member programs.”

To make this even easier, NFIB takes advantage of a service where they can FTP files to a Pitney Bowes directory. Within minutes, the user receives a fully compliant mail file along with all postal documents. “Previously, IT was highly involved in address management and mailing lists—they maintained the service, loaded data files, coordinated tests and updates,” Clutts adds. “Now, end users can create mail files themselves without involving IT at all.”

Clutts and his team are looking forward to seeing what new ways Pitney Bowes can support their organization, with an eye on spatial information, better analytics and new Software-as-a-Service applications. “Our organization depends on better data to create and customize communications,” Clutts concludes, “and Pitney Bowes Business Insight has always been responsive to our needs.”



Every connection is a new opportunity™