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U.S. Postal Service Convenes Direct Marketing Industry Leaders to Collaborate on New Product Sampling Revenue Strategies

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Postal Service recently hosted the 2012 USPS Sampling Innovation Symposium, an information forum featuring consumer packaged goods (CPGs) and advertising agency leaders from across the nation to develop creative strategies on growing a home-delivery product sampling program. Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe made introductory remarks calling on the group to come up with great ideas to do great things with the Postal Service as it seeks new revenue sources.

“Product sampling is big business and an opportunity for the USPS to utilize its expansive network to reach millions of potential customers,” said the Postmaster General. “Both retailers and brands are constantly seeking new and exciting ways to impact consumers—and the U.S. Postal Service has the best infrastructure to deliver those products.”

The opportunity to energize USPS’s relationship with its customers through product sampling with a comprehensive, end-to-end solution led to the first-ever symposium. Key leaders in consumer-packaged goods and advertising agencies participated in group brain-storming sessions, developed business growing opportunities and collaborated in crafting innovative new ideas. The fast-paced event was planned and facilitated by Lisa Kent of the innovation, strategy and marketing firm, The Luminations Group.

“CPGs are always seeking out cost-effective, creative sampling solutions to introduce consumers to a product in the right place, inside the consumer’s home,” said Mike Head, partner at the Fearless Group and former worldwide vice president at Johnson & Johnson. “The forum was a refreshing opportunity to sit down with USPS and generate potential turnkey solutions to enhance our businesses and the customer experience.”

Eighty-one percent of consumers will buy a product after they receive a free sample, and most prefer to sample products at home, according to a recent study by Opinion Research Corp. Recently, USPS conducted a successful pilot product sampling program nationally delivering about 500,000 co-op sample boxes to homes in several key markets to test the idea of a sample co-op box, Sample Showcase. This pilot has since invigorated shared sampling as various other companies have launched similar programs.

“Mail is the only medium that really enables marketers to do this,” said Marc McCrery, USPS executive manager for the sampling program. “It provides access to people’s homes, and it can be tracked to determine if the samples actually convert to sales.”

The Postal Service will launch sampling opportunities inspired by the symposium over the next year, leveraging the aspects of cost effectiveness, simplicity and connectivity points that were shared throughout the event.

For more information on how you can send samples using the mail send an email to samples@usps.com.

Please Note: For broadcast quality video and audio, photo stills and other media resources, visit the USPS Newsroom at <http://about.usps.com/news/welcome.htm>.

For reporters interested in speaking with a regional Postal Service public relations professional, please go to <http://about.usps.com/news/media-contacts/usps-local-media-contacts.pdf>.

A self-supporting government enterprise, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation — 151 million residences, businesses and Post Office™ Boxes. The Postal Service™ receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations. With 32,000 retail locations and the most frequently visited website in the federal government, *usps.com*®, the Postal Service has annual revenue of more than \$65 billion and delivers nearly 40 percent of the world's mail. If it were a private sector company, the U.S. Postal Service would rank 35th in the 2011 Fortune 500. In 2011, Oxford Strategic Consulting ranked the U.S. Postal Service number one in overall service performance of the posts in the top 20 wealthiest nations in the world. *Black Enterprise* and *Hispanic Business* magazines ranked the Postal Service as a leader in workforce diversity. The Postal Service has been named the Most Trusted Government Agency for six years and the sixth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute.

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