



Have you no sense of decency, sir?

A CEO is responsible for the success or failure of a company. Postmaster General John E. Potter, appointed to the position in June 2001, is the longest-serving postal head/CEO since the 1820s. On five occasions, Potter told Congress that reducing service to the American citizens and businesses would be the necessary silver bullet to save an imperiled USPS.

On April 22, 2010, he testified before the Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management in the Senate: "Regarding our request to change the frequency of the number of mail delivery days each week, the statutory requirement for six-day mail delivery has been in existence since 1983. It imposes a very large financial burden, and is inconsistent with the overall mandate of the law requiring the Postal Service to operate like a business."

On April 15, 2010, before the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform in the House of Representatives: "Delivery Frequency—we request the ability to adjust permanently the number of mail delivery days."

On March 18, 2010, before the Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government in the U.S. Senate: "Reducing the frequency of delivery is the single most effective way for the Postal Service to substantially reduce operational costs."

On August 6, 2009, before the Subcommittee on Federal Management, U.S. Senate: "We have concluded that reducing the frequency of mail delivery from six to five days a week can provide the financial relief that is necessary to restore the fiscal health of the Postal Service."

On January 28, 2009, after talking about the state of business at the USPS, our CEO read the following to the Senate: "First...it could become necessary to temporarily reduce mail delivery to only five days a week. We would do this by suspending delivery on the lightest volume days."

What will be the effects of the campaign to reduce service?

Strategy: The previous strategy of meeting the needs of mailers was replaced by a self-destructive knee-jerk reaction restricting growth opportunities. USPS had sought to create "value-added products" such as Priority Mail Guaranteed; however, without Saturday delivery, mail

that is shipped Thursday or Friday could not be delivered on time without a costly surcharge, eliminating any advantage USPS had over competitors.

Creation of company culture: While interacting with customers on their routes, letter carriers are faced with answering questions based upon a premise that is transparently false, which is that a postal worker (PMG) can decide to reduce service, while the truth is that it takes an act of the U.S. Congress. The USPS website further perpetuates the falsehood.

Marketing, sales and public relations: *The Detroit Free Press* and the *Detroit News* announced home delivery will be moved to independent newspaper carriers because USPS is seeking "to stop mail delivery on Saturdays."

The Washington Post announced its plans to launch a paid subscription magazine that will bypass the USPS

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delivery network.

The Economist has told some of its Washington-area subscribers that, for the next three months, they would be receiving the magazine by a hand-delivery service. Why? Because "it has been widely publicized that the U.S. Postal Service is considering eliminating Saturday mail delivery."

Mr. Potter did not always posit for service reduction. On March 5, 2008, he did report to the Subcommittee on Federal Management, U.S. Senate: "Our mission is to provide uniform service at a uniform price to everyone, everywhere, every day. The mission does not change, whether the economy is growing or declining.

"Cost-cutting alone will not help us achieve prosperity. Rather, it risks undermining service levels. This, in turn, would diminish confidence in our brand, not only limiting growth opportunities but driving customers to other channels and competitors."

On February 28, 2008, before the Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, House of Representatives: "(The USPS) network that is—and must remain—capable of reaching 148 million delivery addresses every day." ☒