

BEFORE THE  
POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20268-0001

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PREMIUM FORWARDING SERVICE

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Docket No. MC2007-3

**NOTICE OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
OF FILING WITNESS HOPE'S RESPONSE TO INTERROGATORY  
FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CONSUMER ADVOCATE  
OCA/USPS-T1-7  
(September 21, 2007)**

The United States Postal Service hereby provides the response of witness Laraine Hope to the following interrogatory of the Postal Regulatory Commission's Office of the Consumer Advocate (OCA): OCA/USPS-T1-7, filed on September 7, 2007.

The interrogatory is stated verbatim and followed by the response:

Respectfully submitted,

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

By its attorneys:

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INTERROGATORY OF THE OFFICE OF THE CONSUMER ADVOCATE

**OCA/USPS-T1-7:** The following interrogatory refers to your response dated August 24, 2007, to OCA /USPS-T1-4(i), pages 1 to 20.

- a. There are several comments from survey respondents regarding the difficulty customers are having in understanding the directions for Premium Forwarding Service (PFS). For example, see "Q4" survey responses 22, 27, 28, 39, 49 and 83. Please explain what the Postal Service is doing to improve the clarity of the written instructions provided customers. If nothing is being done, please explain why.
- b. There are several comments from survey respondents to "Q4" and "Q8" regarding the lack of consistency in the number of days it takes for a PFS parcel to arrive at its destination. For example, see "Q4" survey responses 13, 16, 19, 21, 26, 81 and 107; for "Q8," see survey responses 2, 5, 6, 8, 16, 31 and 33. Please explain what steps are being taken to improve the reliability and consistency in the number of days it takes for a PFS parcel to be delivered. If no steps are being taken, please explain.
- c. There are several comments from survey respondents regarding the lack of postal personnel knowledge about the Premium Forwarding Service (PFS). For example, see "Q4" survey responses 4, 5, 6, 11, 15, 24, 28, 67, 110 and 115. Please explain what steps the Postal Service is taking to inform and train postal employees about PFS? If no steps are being taken, please explain.
- d. Several survey respondents to "Q4" request the Postal Service to offer PFS enrollment via the internet. For example, see "Q4" survey responses 9, 14, 17, 25, 33, 79, 82 and 132. What steps are being taken by the Postal Service to offer the following PFS services on-line: (1) enrollment, (2) change of PFS start and stop dates, (3) change of address and (4) payment options? If the Postal Service plans to offer any of these on-line services for PFS, please provide a time line of when and what services will be available to postal customers on-line. If the Postal Service does not plan on providing the above PFS-related services on-line, please explain why none will be offered.

**RESPONSE:**

My response to OCA/USPS-T1-3 explains the purpose – and limitations – of this qualitative survey's results. These follow up questions seemingly elevate every specific survey response to a matter of critical management focus. While I think such treatment is unwarranted, I would agree that the survey responses are one useful source of feedback to a product manager; this is why my department asked the Postal Service's Office of the Consumer Advocate to administer the

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survey under review here. I would also note that a number of customer responses use the exact same language when responding to different questions, so the apparent level of customer concern illustrated by your iterative cites to responses may also overstate the import of actual customer concern.

As PFS program manager, I field questions about PFS from postal employees on a regular basis. I also reach out to headquarters and field employees: those who are already involved in PFS, and those who have yet to be. (The scale of the Postal Service is so large and the PFS program so geographically concentrated to date that many or most facilities have little to no experience with PFS.) As program manager, I constantly evaluate feedback, looking for patterns, while watching for, initiating, and using opportunities to improve customer and employee involvement with PFS. Specific parts of this interrogatory inquire about responses to customer instructions, timeliness of PFS shipments' arrival, employee knowledge of PFS, and potential online access to PFS. I work on all of these.

I work with various departments at the Postal Service to clarify PFS instructions to employees across the country with a focus on enrollment procedures. Most applicants fill out an application, at least the first time, while working with an employee, so making sure employees fully understand the service also helps them clarify the instructions for customers.

The question about the timeliness with which PFS pieces are received has two major components, one that is somewhat under my control and one that is not. I work to make sure that employees understand PFS and how it operates;

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this includes the need to enter PFS mailpieces on Wednesdays. If reshipments are not entered in a timely fashion, customers are unlikely to get them when expected. Even if entered per Postal Service guidelines, there may be times when customers' Priority Mail shipments do not reach them in the number of days they wish or on the same day of the week every week. This is unfortunate, but not surprising.

In the role of Program Manager, I concentrate on educating Postal Service personnel about PFS. Reminding Postal Service employees about the details of PFS helps them be more effective in implementing it. Specific initiatives I have undertaken include dissemination of information through internal communications vehicles, including articles in electronic newsletters and magazines for Postmasters; Postal Bulletin information; preparation of signage at Postmaster conventions this summer; and preparation of general educational materials on PFS for postal service employees. I have worked closely with other Headquarters departments that may receive PFS queries to assure that they have the information they need.

I work closely with a team of Postal Service representatives from across the country who are responsible for PFS. Their feedback has helped to assure that the informational materials developed and disseminated meet the needs of employees who deal with PFS customers and potential customers.

A remote registration vehicle could allow for all of the capabilities identified in part (d) of this interrogatory, and perhaps other enhancements to PFS. See the second paragraph of the response to DBP/USPS-1(n).