

MBC today

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Volume 21 Issue 2 | March/April 2019

The voice of the mail and business center industry since 1982

Event Preview:



April 26-28, 2019
St. Louis, Missouri

Featured Articles:

Words Are Like Weapons
#iamAMBC
The World of Wide Format
Ask Uncle Marty™: CBD Oil

Introducing:

Tech Talk with Tobe:
Mileage Apps
AMBC Member Spotlight
AMBC Trusted Supplier
Spotlight

As Always:

A Little Something Extra
MBC Funnies
#AMBC4ME Forum Posts
AMBC Trusted Supplier
Directory

What's Going On in the Industry:

Upcoming Events
Stamps.com / USPS Split
Amazon Air Expanding
And More!

MBC today

A Publication of

Association of Mail & Business Centers (AMBC)

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www.ambc.org

AMBC Mission:

As a member-run non-profit trade association, our mission is to provide a #MembersHelpingMembers community for businesses in the shipping, mail, and business center industry to connect, learn, and grow.

Building on decades of experience, we believe in always reaching for what's new and what's next, and strive to grow fresh content, programs, and trusted supplier connections that benefit our members ... and inspire them to reach their full potential.

Our industry is ever evolving, and we are here to keep you current, viable, and accessible so you grow and thrive in your communities, and in our unique industry. Join us!

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Questions?

Please contact us at:

hello@ambc.org

or call 815-316-8255



Letter from the Editor



Dear Readers,

I'm very excited about this issue of *MBC Today*, as I believe it really reflects the direction our organization continues in as the 2019 AMBC Board of Directors steers our collective group toward the future. I'm very proud of this team and so pleased to see our fellow AMBC Members stepping up to take charge, participate more, share, learn, and grow together. That's the whole point of why we do what we do ... and exactly what AMBC stands for.



We have some fantastic features in this issue, including *Words Are Like Weapons* by Seema and Fahim, *The World of Wide Format* by Steve, and *#iamAMBC* by Norman. We're also introducing a few new columns that will become regular fixtures in the magazine: *Tech Talk with Toby*, *AMBC Trusted Supplier Spotlight*, and *AMBC Member Spotlight*. Our goal is to bring you fresh, relevant content that can inspire you to take your business to the next level.

As always, we appreciate your submissions. We want as many voices as possible in *MBC Today* as the magazine continues to grow into what you—our fellow AMBC Members—want it to be. So, please continue to send in your thank you notes for *#MembersHelpingMembers Expressions of Gratitude*, stories for *A Little Something Extra*, letters to *Ask Uncle Marty™*, and funny client interactions for *MBC Funnies*. And be sure to let us know if there's something else you'd like to see in this publication.

I'm planning to be in St. Louis at the end of April for the AMBC Basic Training Weekend, along with many others from the AMBC team. So, hopefully I'll be able to see many of you face to face there and discuss any ideas that you may have. But in the meantime, please don't hesitate to contact me at marty@ambc.org with any questions, ideas, or submissions.

With care,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Marty'.

Marty Johnson
Editor, *MBC Today*

News from Headquarters



Dear Fellow AMBC Members,

AMBC's strength is in our members. It's the ideas you bring, diversifying our ever-changing industry, that make our collective so powerful. When one member shares their brilliant new system, process, or profit center, we all benefit and we're all strengthened.

Just take a look at the plethora of ideas in this issue of *MBC Today*, for example. Be sure to read the two store interviews in our new member spotlight section, take a lesson from Steve's article about adding wide-format printing to your stores, and read Norman's heartfelt expression about why #iamAMBC matters to all of us. What's more, take a look at Tobye's Tech Tips. I downloaded her suggested app, MileIQ, and I've already seen over \$50 worth of business miles in less than two days!

Sure, we can justify your AMBC membership monetarily. Savings from special programs and rates given to AMBC Members by our AMBC Trusted Suppliers easily covers the low \$299 cost of annual AMBC membership—like what you'll save by buying a new piece of equipment with our national account pricing with Pacific Office Automation, or the \$135 annual fee waived for AMBC Members by Ship and Insure.

So, the financial side is a no-brainer, but you're really going to see the benefit of membership when you start participating. Start meeting other members. Start mentoring and being mentored by other members. Start posting and responding to questions in the AMBC4ME user forum. Start coming to events, taking classes, visiting other stores, and learning how your business can be taken to the next level. Start diversifying your product and service offering and make the mentality at your business a mentality of flexibility, as the changes coming up in our industry will be even more rapid than what we've seen in years.

Finally, feel free to reach out to any of us on the board at any time. Remember, we are part of the #iamAMBC crew, just like you. Just like you, we own and run our stores every day; just like you, we face the daily incoming storm of drop-off clients; just like you, we have our good days and bad; just like you, we need to learn so many new things about our businesses to help them grow. However, we on the board realize that by serving others in our industry, we grow as well—not just as store owners, but as human beings. We realize that, through collaboration and empathy, we truly can build a vibrant and thriving community of well-run, unique retail operations across the country ... and the world.

So, thank you for joining us on this memorable journey, and we look forward to serving you soon.

With incessant gratitude and efficacious effervescence,

On behalf of Norman, Steve, Barry, Seema, MaryAnne, Tobye, Jeff, Marty, and Kim,

Fahim Mojawalla

AMBC Board Chair

Direct email: Fahim@ambc.org

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What's Going on in the Industry...

Space Is Limited! AMBC Basic Training Weekend April 26-28, 2019 – St. Louis, MO

The AMBC Basic Training Weekend, taking place April 26-28 in St. Louis, will be here before you know it! Have you registered yet? Have you made travel plans? If not, make sure to do so ASAP!

A number of AMBC certified courses will be taught there, including Shipping I, Shipping II, Packing I, Packing II, and Mailbox Rental I. We'll also have software training from both PC Synergy, the Makers of PostalMate®, and ShipRite Software.

With group accommodations right next to the St. Louis airport for easy in and out, it's a great opportunity to take a weekend to train, retrain, and get your staff and management team certified as International Shipping Specialists, Advanced Packing Specialists, and Commercial Mail Receiving Agents.

For more information, please see the feature on page 8 of this issue of *MBC Today*, or visit www.ambc.org/events.

2019 Retail Shippers Expo & Trade Show August 21-25, 2019 – Dallas, TX

This year's Retail Shippers Expo & Trade Show will be held at the Hyatt Regency Dallas. This annual convention is a must-attend for anyone in our industry. Last year, the event completely sold out, so be sure to make your plans now. Visit www.rscentral.org/Events/RS-Expo for more information and to register.

AMBC's *The Event* 2019: an annual workshop to network, train, and grow together November 1-3, 2019 – Phoenix, AZ

Please plan to join AMBC in Phoenix, November 1-3, 2019 for our annual fall weekend event: AMBC's *The Event* 2019.

While April's AMBC Basic Training Weekend in St. Louis will focus on certification and getting back to basics with training in packing, shipping, mailbox rental, and software, November's *The Event* 2019 in Phoenix will focus more on what's new and what's next in our industry.

AMBC has hosted very popular fall events for the past few years in different parts of the country. Now simply titled "*The Event*," these annual workshops are full of brainstorming sessions, networking, real-life scenarios, and presentations on where our industry is headed and how to make the most out of the incredible potential that's coming our way.

More details will be shared as they become available.

2019 Software Training Schedules for PC Synergy and ShipRite Software

PC Synergy, the Makers of PostalMate®, and ShipRite Software both have extensive training schedules across the United States for 2019.

If you think you know everything there is to know about the software you use, you're wrong. Discover new tools that will make operating your business much more efficient, save you time and money, and offer services to your clients that you already have at your fingertips but just don't know about yet ... and learn what's coming next!

For more information, visit www.pcsynergy.com/training and www.shipritesoftware.com/training.

Stamps.com No Longer Exclusive to the USPS

Stamps.com has announced that they will no longer be partnering with the USPS.

Stamps.com chairman and CEO Kenneth Thomas McBride said, "We will no longer be exclusive to the USPS and that's non-negotiable." He also said, "The USPS has not agreed to accept these terms or any other terms of our partnership proposal. So at this point we've decided to discontinue our partnership with the USPS so that we can fully embrace partnerships with other carriers who think we will be well-positioned to win in the shipping business in the next five years."

Shortly after the February 21, 2019 announcement, shares of Stamps.com dropped nearly 50%. According to MarketWatch, "McBride said in a conference call that the company hadn't entirely severed its relationship with the USPS, and will still sell stamps along with other ser-

vices. Stamps.com planned to continue to work with the post office 'in the segments of the market where they offer a solution that's in the best interest of the customer,' he said. As part of the plan, the company wants to work with carriers such as Amazon and others to build up a 'portfolio' of 40 U.S. carriers, and 450 carriers worldwide."

Amazon Air Expanding

Amazon Air is growing ... fast. Their newest expansion will include 50 new planes and a number of new regional hubs.

Ravi Shanker, Morgan Stanley's North American transportation analyst, said, "Amazon is looking to become a logistics company in their own right. We think that Amazon will be a top logistics provider, whether it's in trucking or in air, in the coming years. I think the question is just how quickly they will ramp that operation."

With Amazon Air planes currently operating out of 21 domestic airports, new regional hubs are planned for Wilmington, Ohio, Fort Worth, Texas, and expansion of one in Rockford, Illinois in 2019. In 2021, they plan to open a \$1.5 billion hub at the Cincinnati / Northern Kentucky International Airport.

Currently, 26 percent of online orders are handled by Amazon's own shipping means. Will this expansion be the next step toward Amazon becoming a full-fledged commercial shipping company, transporting not only Amazon packages but other commercial and private sector shipments as well? Time will tell, but it sure seems like it could be possible.

Changes Continue in "Final Mile" Delivery

As demand for residential deliveries driven by e-commerce increases, the demand for smaller, more agile "final mile" delivery vehicles is increasing, as well as other creative solutions to get packages to their final recipient quickly and efficiently.

As many of us learned from Satish Jindel during his keynote presentation at the 2018 Retail Shippers Expo & Trade Show, many areas around the world are using very small single-seater vehicles to reach the end cus-

tomers. Some of these areas are serviced by drones that drop off a bundle to a local distributor, who then take their small vehicles and deliver in their neighborhoods, sometimes multiple times per day. This practice of small-vehicle distribution will continue to grow in remote regions and in dense city blocks where large delivery vehicles are either impractical or impossible to use.

Please read more about this interesting movement and how trucking companies are entering the "final mile" delivery race at www.fleetowner.com/technology/e-commerce-transforms-trucking-equipment-labor-and-logistics.

AMBC To Start YouTube Channel

Coming soon: an AMBC YouTube channel where we'll share tips and tricks, take you on store tours, feature AMBC Members and AMBC Trusted Suppliers, and repost relevant videos for our industry. Stay tuned for more information!

Sign Up for Cayan CC Processing and Get \$100 Toward AMBC Renewal

Cayan, formerly known as Merchant Warehouse, offers our members tremendous rates on processing. AMBC will put \$100 toward AMBC membership renewal. Yes, that's a \$100 incentive just for trying Cayan! The Genius terminal scans the credit card and determines the best interchange rate for your store for each individual credit card. Store owners with the Cayan and Genius terminals are already reporting tremendous savings on their credit card processing rates.

The best part is that it is a risk free offer. They are so sure you will love it that there is no minimum contract time, you can cancel at any time. They have live tech support to help walk you through the transition. The new Apple Pay interface on the Genius terminal is a real winner for smart phone users, and these terminals are in compliance with the new technology required in October when the smart chips become a full time reality. Are you prepared? Call us today and we'll help you start saving money right away!



Please plan to join AMBC in St. Louis April 26-28, 2019 for an AMBC certified training weekend. We'll be teaching a number of our AMBC certified courses, including Packing I (Basic Packing Techniques), Packing II (Advanced Packing Techniques), Shipping I (Domestic Shipping), Shipping II (International Shipping), and CMRA (Commercial Mail Receiving Agent).

Special gratitude goes to Eliot and Kimberly Deters for their help in facilitating this training weekend, and their gracious offer to host at The Mail Box Stores in Bethalto and Highland, Illinois, just outside of St. Louis.

Schedule (subject to change):

Friday, April 26th

3:00 pm – Break and snack station *sponsored by Discount Labels*

3:00 – 7:00 pm - Mailbox Rental 1 (CMRA)

7:30 pm – Heavy hors d'oeuvres *sponsored by Jackson Marking* and full bar *sponsored by Pacific Office Automation*

Saturday, April 27th

7:45 am – All American full breakfast *sponsored by Identification Products*

9:00 am – AMBC Certified Training Classes *sponsored by FedEx*

9:45 am – 12:45 pm – Your choice of either Shipping 1 or Packing 2 *sponsored by FedEx*

1:00 pm – Lunch *sponsored by Discount Labels*

2:00 pm – 5:00 pm – Your choice of either Shipping 2 or Packing 1 *sponsored by FedEx*

5:15 pm – Bus leaves for tour, "The Mail Box Store Express, Powered by Pacific Office Automation."

We will leave on an epic adventure that will include stops at Eliot and Kimberly's Illinois store locations, their brand

new state of the art print production facility, as well as a stop for a very delicious dinner where attendees will hear the story of how cultivating relationships can help you grow an \$80 set of menus into a \$750,000 customer.

Upon Arrival – Fun and fellowship at the bar *sponsored by Pacific Office Automation*

Sunday, April 28th

8:30 am – All American full breakfast *sponsored by PC Synergy, the Makers of PostalMate®*

9:00 am – 11:45 am - Software training - Your choice of sessions from *PC Synergy, the Makers of PostalMate®* or *ShipRite Software*

12:00 pm – Lunch *sponsored by ShipRite Software*

12:30 – 4:30 pm - Mailbox Rental 1 (CMRA)

12:30 – 3:00 pm – Finishing Symposium *sponsored by Identification Products*

During all training all weekend, the break/snack station will be *sponsored by Discount Labels*

AMBC Certified Course Descriptions:

Mailbox Rental 1: Commercial Mail Receiving Agent (CMRA): Knowledge of security, compliance, enforcement, and mail processing is a must to operate as a successful CMRA location. In this in-depth course, we will discuss topics of how to become a CMRA, aviation security, customer standards and contracts, owner / manager requirements, and postal service requirements.

Shipping 1: This course will work to cover all aspects of basic domestic shipping. We will briefly talk about the carriers' histories and how they developed over the years. We'll review items to be aware of when you are shipping irregular packages and large packages and what liability you and the carriers have on the packages



that you ship. Other topics of discussion will include restricted and forbidden items, signature terminology and what it all means, maximum size and weight limits, and what to do when the inevitable claim happens.

Shipping 2: This course will work to discuss the general guidelines for shipping internationally in today's world marketplace. We will dive into the services and restrictions for each carrier, how to properly label your packages for the international shipping environment, and what documents you will need for each level of service and the commodities you are shipping. We will also explore APO/FPO shipping, NAFTA, shipper's export declaration (SED) and countries you can't ship to, and other basic regulations that you must know to have success with international shipping.

Packing 1: Our introduction to basic packing will strive to take the novice shipping center owner or staff member and give them an introduction into to the complete distribution environment and discuss and investigate environmental hazards. After completion of this course, they will understand the different levels of fragility and how to protect what they are shipping from any issues that might arise in the small package shipping environment. We will also discuss a wide range of packaging materials, tools, and a step-by-step process on evaluating the item before we pack it.

Packing 2: This course will be a continuation of our basic packing principals and lessons. In this course we will talk about specialty items like picture packing, packing large items, packing unusually sized or weighted items. We will also discuss the specific hazards that can happen in the shipping environment to these types of packages and special ways we can make custom cartons to hold these types of items.

Hotel Information:

Hilton Garden Inn St. Louis Airport

Special rate of \$109/night, including full breakfast, free parking, and free shuttle service to/from the STL airport.



Please visit www.ambc.org/events for more information, to register, and to find the hotel booking link.

AMBC Basic Training Weekend 2019 sponsored by:



KONICA MINOLTA



Words Are Like Weapons

by Seema and Fahim Mojawalla

For a short time, our son was an intern with a company that sells some of the best knives in the world. They're made here in the USA and, in the hands of a professional chef, these knives can slice and dice and create magical concoctions of extraordinary food from ordinary recipes. In the hands of someone who doesn't know how to use the knife, however, these knives could cut fingers and toes instead of potatoes or meat.

Similarly, the words that we use when speaking to people every day make a great deal of difference. If we just think about how the following statements cause pleasure in the first sense and pain in the second sense, we will easily understand that there are two ways to say the same thing, and we should always try to choose that way that gets our point across without sacrificing respect or kindness.

The first sentence looks like this: **"Look at these amazing young people here."**

The second sentence states this: **"Look at these pathetic troublemakers here."**

In the first instance, the listeners would more likely be responsive and take action to the person speaking, as well as be more positive and uplifted. In the second instance however, the listeners would be put on guard from the very beginning and would have a negative impression of the person speaking.

In the world of business, especially when we are placed in a role of employer, manager, or leader, we have a responsibility to use our words wisely.

If in fact we use our words to inspire, motivate, uplift, and rejuvenate, we can create a very happy workplace with an extremely efficient workforce—one that is willing to lend a hand in any task and is willing to work together.

Sometimes, however, we find upper management using derogatory language to their subordinates and as a result they create friction from the very beginning, causing chaos in the workplace. It starts with the words that are used when speaking to people every day. John Wooden, the late, great, award-winning UCLA basketball coach has stated so perfectly well, "You can't live a perfect day without doing something for someone who will never be able to repay you."

So, going forward, we urge you to reflect on your language and your word usage. Just think to yourself, "How would I feel if I was told the same thing in the same manner with the same words that I just used?" If the answer is positive, then by all means go ahead and give those instructions in that manner. If, however, the answer causes an uncomfortable feeling, then modify the words into a more positive sentence ... and notice the difference immediately.

And if you make a mistake, apologize. Be the bigger and better person. Your apology shows that you are willing to mend the relationship.

Wishing you much success.

...

Seema Mojawalla has a unique viewpoint that is always fresh, forward-thinking, and focused. She has an eye for merchandising and a passion for finding the perfect products to sell at Seema Boutique, located within the Spa of Shipping, Island Ship Center, an experience-based retail shipping spa located five miles south of Niagara Falls in Grand Island, New York, which she co-owns with her husband Fahim. Seema serves on the AMBC Board of Directors as Director of Innovation. #QueenofRetail



Fahim Mojawalla is a social media guru known for his love of hashtags. He uses them to explain his #FahimFix ideas—ideas which he shares as an instructor at industry events and at FahimFix.com. He serves on the AMBC Board of Directors as Director of Social Media and Board Chair and, along with his wife Seema, is an effervescent co-owner of Island Ship Center, the Spa of Shipping. Be sure to follow islandshipcenter.com and [@islandshipcenter](https://twitter.com/islandshipcenter) on your favorite social media channels. #FahimFix

Buttons Are Not Technology

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The World of Wide Format

by Steve Dick

I'm not from Texas, but the phrase "bigger is better" does ring true to my ears most of the time. Whether it's our paycheck, tacos, or cup of coffee, we all seem to like a little more. So, what can we do in the world of printing to make it true for our stores? Introducing: the world of wide format printing.

Most typical copiers run up to 12"x18" sheet sizes, with some of the better ones running 13"x19". You can accomplish a lot of printing on those. But when someone wants to say it big, you have to get a wide format printer. Wide format printers can run a wide variety of materials on widths starting at 24 inches and up. My first wide format printer was a 42 inch wide printer, but I mainly used 24 inch and 36 inch width materials. I started with simple materials: glossy photo paper, high quality premium matte paper, and scrim vinyl. With those materials, I was able to produce most basic posters, banners, and other wide format prints in sizes up to 36 inches wide by up to 10 feet long in house. My customers benefitted from me being able to not only do the larger sizes, but be able to do them with either a same day or next day turnaround time.

Who were my customers? At first it started simple: people who wanted a graduation poster or banner, event banners, or posters for other businesses in my shopping center advertising specials. Then came churches. A great many churches in my area started coming to me to get posters. They wanted to promote their upcoming series of sermons, missions, outreach goals, youth events, and more. Once I started working with one or two, they told other churches and that business snowballed. They needed gold glove treatment though—fast turnaround, fixing files for them that had setup issues, and the ability to be invoiced versus having to track down someone with a credit card or church check to pay for their project.

This business was good, but it only kept my machine running 3-5 times a week ... which was OK money, but not Texas sized money. So, I started adding additional materials and services. I added canvas for those seeking a painting style print, great for family portraits, framed prints for businesses, and gallery wraps. I got white film and sourced coroplast blanks to do short run yard signs for customers. Each addition helped generate a little more revenue out of a machine that only cost me \$70 a month leased.

My first machine lasted me almost 7 years. I had almost no service issues until the very end, so the cost of operating the machine was extremely low in my book. I just replaced the print heads as needed and materials for printing. When it died, I really wasn't even looking to upgrade, more just to replace what I had. However, when I was shown a machine that had the ability to have two different rolls of media loaded and ready to be used at all times, I knew I had to have it. My cost out the door was about \$4,500, which was not that much when it comes to a production printer. With this new feature, a new revenue stream was opened up as well: blueprints.

I had always preferred not to do blueprints due to the low selling price and the hassle of dealing with customers who brought in hard copies versus digital files. I was being asked consistently though as almost no one in my area did them. So, I got in some 20# engineering bond and agreed to start doing

blueprints. Man, did things take off then! I kept my pricing simple: 18x24 - \$3/sheet, 24x36 - \$4 sheet, 30x42 or 36x48 - \$5/sheet ... black and white only on the inexpensive engineering bond and printed from a digital file. If they brought in hard copies, I added a significant charge for scanning before the printing cost. I started working with one company, then another, and word spread quickly. I now do more blueprints than anything else. In the first three months of having the new machine and offering the blueprint service, I did enough sales just in blueprints to pay for my machine in full. That's Texas sized revenues!

If you haven't yet, consider taking the step of adding a wide format printer to your service offerings. For about 15 to 20 square feet of floor-space (or less if you are creative in storing your rolls of paper), you can have a serious revenue stream and lots of potential new customers. As always, I am here to answer any questions, or we have amazing suppliers in FotoZoomer and Pacific Office Automation who can answer your questions and help source both printers and materials.

Until the next issue, remember,
#print4profit

...



Steve Dick is a store owner, efficiency proponent, and food truck lover. He serves on the AMBC Board of Directors as Director of Print for Profit and Board Treasurer. When he's not spending his normal 50

hours per week at Box King - Pack, Ship, Print, he's probably looking for the next food truck gathering he can attend. #TacosBeware

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AMBC Trusted Supplier Spotlight

In this new feature in *MBC Today*, we'll feature two AMBC Trusted Suppliers in every issue so our members can get to know them better. These are people and companies that we admire and trust, and we know you'll find tremendous benefit from them.

Company Name:

Social Status Marketing



Contact:

Ryan McCarthy

Owner - Social Status Marketing, LLC.

1 (716) 773-2929

info@socialstatusmarketing.com



What products / services do you offer?

Social Status Marketing is dedicated to helping businesses maximize their branding potential business via stunning web design, social media management (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) and search engine optimization. Graphic design services are available upon request too!

What benefit(s) do you bring to AMBC Members?

Members: If you're looking to step up your website and get found online, now is the time to do it. Our tailored web design, social media, and SEO services boost traffic to your store online and in-person. Open doors that might have previously been closed to your customers, both new and old. A clean, custom branded design and an active online presence will help take your store to the next level!

What new or growing opportunities do you see for AMBC Members in the future, and what can you do to help them?

I see an incredible amount of potential for AMBC Members and their stores online. In today's world, when a customer wants to ship or print something, they're going to go to turn to their phone or computer and search "shipping store near me" or "printing services near me." Your store has the potential to show up with the right SEO settings in place, but that's only half the battle! The power of a good looking website, with honest reviews and an active social media base cannot be underestimated because that's what ultimately turns those quick Google searches into life long customers. Let us help get you there!

Where to follow:

www.socialstatusmarketing.com

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Company Name:
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Contact:
Elaine Lockard
VP Sales and Marketing | Managing Agent
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elaine@shipandinsure.com



What products / services do you offer?

We insure the full value of outbound and inbound shipments with no deductible. You will have peace of mind, knowing the items are fully covered for loss or damage. Our entire team understands packing and shipping stores ship various types of valuable items, including art, antiques, collectibles, coins and bullion, historical items, jewelry, sculpture, etc., and we are interested in serving your shipping insurance needs.

- Full coverage on shipments from \$100s to over a million (high limits)
- Overage on top of your existing coverage
- FedEx, UPS, USPS, freight, and your company owned vehicles
- Coverage on items other carriers won't cover (art, antiques, bullion, coins, hand-crafted collectibles, historical items, jewelry, loose stones, musical instruments, watches, etc.)
- Simple online processing to your credit card (takes about 30 seconds to process an order)
- Bulk uploading from your shipping software reporting available

Our insurance through shipandinsure.com will be able to save \$\$\$ on transit insurance requirements for domestic and international parcels. We cover FedEx, FedEx Freight, UPS, and USPS Registered, Priority Mail and Priority Mail Express as well as freight on approved carriers and pick-up and delivery using your company owned vehicles. The program is offered to members of the AMBC without a fee to join!

In addition to our extremely attractive rates (shipandinsure.com/rates.aspx), we offer the satisfaction of knowing packages are fully covered for loss or damage, no deductible, and that claims are usually paid within 30 days of filing our downloadable claim form with the supporting documentation. We specialize in high value items (\$500 + and can even cover up to \$500,000 or more)!

What benefit(s) do you bring to AMBC Members?

We offer coverage for items not covered under other insurance programs and at much higher values with extremely competitive rates. Bullion and coins are not covered by FedEx or UPS, for example, but we cover thousands of dollars' worth every day.

Non-AMBC Members pay \$135 per year to belong to our program, but that fee is waived for AMBC Members! AMBC members are welcome to use shipandinsure.com after opening an account.

What new or growing opportunities do you see for AMBC Members in the future, and what can you do to help them?

We are working on integration programs to make insuring shipments easier through your software programs, however, until these options are available, setting up your account couldn't be easier. It takes less than 30 seconds to insure a shipment! We do not require an appraisal or other documentation to insure your shipments. Please call us to find out how we can assist you in growing your business.

Where to follow:

www.ShipandInsure.com

If you would like to submit an industry related question to Ask Uncle Marty™, please email him at marty@ambc.org. Anonymity is guaranteed, and names are always changed.

Ask
Uncle
Marty™



Dear Readers,

We're going to skip the letters this month to address a question I've had at my own shop recently, and one that's starting to float around in our industry more and more: is it OK to ship CBD oil?

Cannabidiol (CBD) is one of many so-far identified cannabinoids, a diverse class of chemical compounds found in cannabis plants. It's a fascinating compound being studied to treat everything from anxiety and pain to memory, mood, and movement disorders, including preventing seizures in epileptic children. By itself, CBD does not get you high. Rather, the main psychoactive cannabinoid is tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). It's important to understand the difference between those two compounds.

In my town, CBD shops are popping up quickly, with one of their top products being CBD oil. However, not all CBD oil is pure CBD. Non-pure CBD oil may contain contaminants and other chemicals. And CBD oil can be derived from either hemp or marijuana, the two most commonly known plants in the cannabis family. Because hemp with less than 0.3% THC is now federally legalized (in contrast to degrees of marijuana legalization, which vary significantly by state), hemp CBD oil is much easier to get across state lines.

So, when a client came in the other day to mail a bottle of hemp CBD oil to her daughter, I questioned whether we could ship it. With my patient client waiting, I did some quick calling to the FedEx hotline. The initial rep I got didn't even know what CBD oil was, but I was transferred to a supervisor who told me that, as far as they're concerned, it's still classified as cannabis; because all cannabis isn't federally legalized across state lines, it's technically prohibited to be shipped by FASCs and at retail counters.

We wanted a more official answer though, so the AMBC team reached out to our contacts at DHL, FedEx, UPS, and the USPS to get definitive "yes" or "no" as to whether our members are permitted to ship CBD oil on our retail accounts. And I also talked to my sister Ingrid—a

brilliant (if I do say so myself) chemist focused on cannabis research—to clear up my own understanding of exactly what CBD oil is ... only to find that the cannabis world is quite complex. Even researching cannabis is significantly hindered across state lines due to mismatched regulations on state and federal levels.

UPS's answer explained their position well. According to UPS's Director of Regulated Goods, "UPS does not currently accept industrial hemp or CBD products. The federal definition of marijuana has been adjusted to exclude both industrial hemp and CBD, however there are still states with language prohibiting some or both. And the FDA came out with a position that creates issues for any food products containing hemp or CBD as well as any dietary supplements. We are currently evaluating the situation and expect to establish a new policy covering these products in the near future. Until then, we do not accept CBD or hemp products, especially through retail shipping locations."

So, it looks like we're not able to ship any CBD oil yet from our stores, regardless of whether it's hemp-derived or not. Yes, there are hemp CBD oils sold online and distributed to all 50 states, seemingly without incident. However, according to what we've learned, because of CBD oil's current general classification by many carriers under the cannabis umbrella, it may put you, your clients, and your business at risk if you try to ship it on your retail account before research, education, federal regulations, carrier regulations, and labeling standards catch up.

With care,
Marty

...

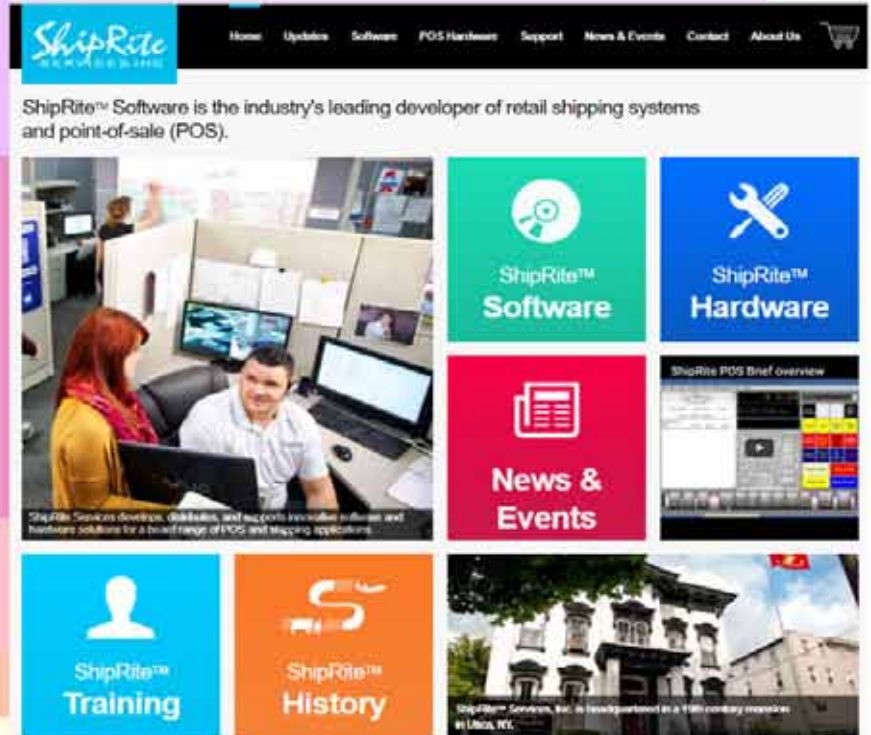
Marty Johnson is a shopkeeper, writer, and business coach. He serves as ex officio Director of Communication for AMBC, Editor of MBC Today, and is the owner of Uncle Marty's Shipping Office in Ithaca, NY, where he's also Co-Founder of the Collegetown Small Business Alliance. Please visit him at askunclemarty.com. #AskUncleMarty



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Tech Talk with Tobye

by Tobye McClanahan

Welcome to the first edition of Tech Talk with Tobye. In this series I will be highlighting ways to use technology to make your life easier, more productive, and/or more profitable. We're all in need of some extra help from time to time, and I'm on the hunt for ways to let technology step in and do some, or even better, all the work for us.

I'm going to start with a great little app that I found about a year ago called MileIQ. This app by Microsoft® may not be free on all devices (I'm an iPhone user and I think there was a cost, but Android appears to be free), so for those who might not want to spend any money, I have recently begun testing a similar free app called MileLogger by Dajax LLC. So far, the free app seems to work just as well, but it does have ads so just beware of that.

How the apps work: once installed, all you must do is drive and it tracks your trips. No remembering to start it or stop it. No remembering to reset a trip meter and then driving a bunch of personal trips in between. All you must do is classify your trips as business or personal at your leisure (which is done by simply swiping left or right) and then you can easily print monthly reports for your records.

If you think you don't need this because you don't make deliveries or pickups, I think you might be surprised how much money you are leaving on the table for Uncle Sam. If you make trips to the bank, Post Office, office supply store, etc., you are making deductible trips. A lot of people don't worry with these miles because of the difficulty of tracking or because it's not worth the work for just a couple of miles per day. Did you know that the 2019 business mileage rate is \$0.58 per mile? Did you know that if you travel just two miles per day for store errands at five days a week that is 520 miles per year and just over \$300 in deductions? This app does all the record keeping work! I would venture to guess that most of you travel a ton more than that—I know I do—and this app has made it way easy for me to keep up with.

Your tax professional will love your reports and you will love the deductions that you've been missing!

Stay tuned for more #tobyetips in the future, and if you have some great technology to share with me, please email me at tobye@ambc.org.

...



Tobye McClanahan is the owner of Mailboxes & Beyond in Blytheville, Arkansas and serves on the AMBC Board of Directors as Director of Technology. She has a passion for small business and loves to visit other stores for fresh perspective. She's a strong advocate for lifelong learning, so she's always looking for a new idea! #TobyeTips



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MBC Funnies

"Straight from the Customer's Mouth"

Do you actually pack and mail the stuff from here? (Our store's name is Pack & Mail.)

...

I've never actually figured out how stamps work. What do I do?

...

Customer: I have this painting on canvas and I want to ship it using a FedEx label my consignee emailed to me.

Me: The painting needs to be packed. We'll be happy to pack it professionally at our reasonable packaging rates.

Customer: My consignee told me that everything has been paid and taken care of.

Me: The shipping is covered with the FedEx label they sent, but the cost of packaging is something separate.

(Customer calls consignee in front of me and explains the situation.)

Customer: My consignee told me you are wrong. Everything has been taken care of.

Me: May I please speak to your consignee?

(She gave me the phone and I explained everything to the consignee.)

Consignee: My sender does not understand. She is wrong. She must pay for packing, but the shipping is billed to my FedEx account using the label I sent her. (I let the shipper know about his consignee's comments.)

Customer: My consignee is wrong, but I will pay for your packaging services anyway.

...

Customer: I'm going to do something very unusual and pay in cash.

Me: Wonderful, I love cash!

Customer: It's amazing how many places in the city don't take cash anymore.

Me: Well I prefer it because then I don't have to give a percentage of the sale to the credit card processing company.

Customer: But, wouldn't that be a business expense?

Me: Of course. But I prefer that my expenses be as low as possible.

Customer: Oh, interesting.

**Customers say the darndest things.
We all hear it, so let's share!
Send in yours to hello@ambc.org**

A Little Something Extra

"Dan, Dan, the FedEx Man" has been our regular FedEx Express pickup driver for a while now. We really, really enjoy him.

Yesterday, we were having our normal chit-chat while he was scanning our daily express shipments on his normal evening pickup routine. I mentioned to him that we were planning a company bowling night this coming weekend, including not only our entire team but also a few others who are part of our business family.

Dan reached into his wallet and pulled out a \$50, handed it to me and reached to shake my hand. I didn't know what was going on, so I said, "What's this about?"

He said, "Get a few pizzas and have a great evening."

I didn't know what to say. I insisted that it was too much; that we were supposed to give him thank you gifts and not the other way around because he's the one that does so much for us! But he insisted and wouldn't take no for an answer, saying that he appreciates our team a lot and that he's very grateful that we took good care of him with our Christmas gift to him.

On our to-do list for Monday after we have an amazing pizza and bowling team night is to create a very sincere thank you card for Dan, all sign it, and make sure he knows how much his gesture meant to us.

...

A Little Something Extra would love your stories! Please write to us at hello@ambc.org and share a brief paragraph or two about something extraordinary—or ordinary, with an extraordinary impact—that one of your clients has done for you. What prompted their generosity, and how has your business been brightened and strengthened by it in return?

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#iamAMBC

by Norman Froscher

While representing AMBC at PC Synergy's recent PostalMate® training event, I was discussing the benefits of being in the organization with Lisa, my co-owner and wife (it's usually in that order, although to be fair she's more the boss). In discussing our hashtags of #MembersHelpingMembers and #AMBC4ME, I said, "I am AMBC." I then said, "#iamAMBC." It resonated with us at that moment and the following afternoon, and when I said it while presenting to the people at the event, it seemed to resonate with them as well.

There are many benefits to being in the non-profit association for our industry. Many of these come from our AMBC Trusted Suppliers and programs with them that we are able to pass on to our members. You can find these on the website or ask one of the board members. We, as board members, are volunteers with our only mission to help you and your store succeed. AMBC is more than an organization, it's a community.

But the biggest benefit we offer as an organization is you. And you. And you. I am AMBC, but then so are you. Our biggest strength as an organization is you. Our biggest benefit is each other. I said it with pride at the training event; I say it with pride now. Whether it's on the message board, via email, in person at training events, or on the phone, our biggest asset is our members. It's you reaching out to us for help or questions. It's us reaching to you with questions about how we can best serve you. It is other members taking it upon themselves to assist each other. It's us, sharing our successes and failures.

Lisa and I just recently celebrated our fifth year in business. It's not a very long time. I know there are stores that have operated for decades. I also had the chance to talk to several new store owners. In an industry that is changing as quickly as ours is, this makes me optimistic. I want to see these new store owners succeed. I want to see our experienced owners continue to diversify their business and be willing to expand their offerings in their markets.

I know that we would not have succeeded if it hadn't been for AMBC. Not because of an organization; not because of vendors. But, because of the people. Even before I was elected to the AMBC Board of Directors, being able to connect with other store owners that had faced the same pitfalls was invaluable—people we could learn from, grow with, share a laugh with, or share a cry with. We **are** a community and together we **are** #ambcstrong. So, when you wonder about the benefits of AMBC and whether it's worth the money, know this: you are its biggest benefit. I am AMBC and if you're reading this, then so are you. Thank you. And say it with pride.

#iamAMBC

...



Norman Froscher and his wife Lisa co-own Espresso Mail in West Palm Beach, Florida and Norman serves on the AMBC Board of Directors as Director of Engagement and Board Vice Chair. When he's not packing, shipping, or printing, he's looking for a good cup of coffee or espresso, which makes it really convenient that he has a coffee bar in his store. #NormanKnows

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#iamAMBC AMBC Member Spotlight

In this new feature in *MBC Today*, we'll feature two AMBC Members in every issue so our other members can get to know them better. If you know a fellow AMBC Member who would be deserving of this feature, please let us know.



Kristen, Renee, Luke, Kara, and Julia at The Village Express
Missing from the photo: Kevin



AMBC Member name(s):

Kristen Vineyard

AMBC Member's business:

The Village Express Pack & Ship
1204 Main Street
Branford, CT 06405

How long have you been involved with this industry?

We purchased the store in 2012. We were a little hesitant to make the move, but are glad we did.

How long have you been a member of AMBC?

Since 2012 when we purchased the business.

Tell us a little bit about your team.

In addition to my husband Kevin and myself, we have four part time staff members: Renee, Luke, Kara, and Julia. We are eclectic group; each adds their own flair!

Tell us a little bit about your community.

We are located in a quaint New England shoreline town, with an urban feel.

What products / services do you offer?

We offer UPS, FedEx, DHL, USPS, fax, notary, copies,

private mailboxes, passport photos, etc. We carry a few lines of greeting card and have recently added some gift items.

What are your plans for the future?

We are considering moving to a bigger space within the same plaza. We've partnered with a couple of local auction houses and would love to expand on that too!

How has being an AMBC Member helped your business?

The networking has been extremely helpful when we have questions or just for new ideas. I love the workshops, they have been very insightful.

Where to follow:

villageexpressbranford.com

[Facebook.com/TheVillageExpress](https://www.facebook.com/TheVillageExpress)



Noelle and Anna at Pack & Ship Plus

AMBC Member name(s):

Noelle Wright

AMBC Member's business:

Pack & Ship Plus
3609 Austin Bluffs Parkway #31
Colorado Springs, CO 80918



How long have you been involved with this industry?

3 ½ Years

How long have you been a member of AMBC?

I've always had an account with AMBC, but I recently attended an AMBC event and was so impressed with the level of professionalism and the #MembersHelpingMembers philosophy that I became an official member in January 2019.

Tell us a little bit about your team.

My mom, Diana, and I officially opened Pack & Ship Plus in November of 2015 and have operated the business together since then. Diana is semi-retired and loves to travel so we have always tried to keep a part-time employee on staff to fill in on weekends and evenings. Anna comes to us from Texas with a smile that matches her personality. She primarily deals with the walk-in customers and any packaging that needs to be done on a daily basis. Jesse is still in high school and Pack & Ship Plus is his first job. His attention to detail and eye for displays is a much-needed quality within the store.

Tell us a little bit about your community.

Colorado Springs is home to the Air Force Academy, The Olympic Training Center, and America's Mountain, Pikes Peak. I was born and raised here and love the sense of patriotism that comes with our military families. Hiking, skiing, running ... it's all part of our everyday lives and with over 300 days of sunshine per year there's really no reason to stay inside.

What products/services do you offer?

We started by offering packaging, shipping, copying, and mailbox rentals but quickly learned to embrace the diversity that is our industry. Since we opened, we have added over 50 different services including wide-format and photo printing, freight shipping, digital mailboxes, gift wrapping, and notary services. #diversifyordie

What are your plans for the future?

Over the next year we are trying to increase our freight shipping and printing services. I'd also like to implement expedited passport services, live scan, and have every staff member certified as a notary. TSA Precheck services are on our radar for 2020, but will require some additional space and a build out for a privacy booth and public restroom.

How has being an AMBC Member helped your business?

AMBC provides an entire community that wants to see me succeed, that will help me when I have questions, get me in contact with the people I need to talk to, and pick me up when I am down. Running a business is much more than just showing up inside these four walls every. I've had to expand outside my comfort zone and learn to take risks, but AMBC is a space to share ideas, ask questions before making mistakes, and be more informed about the changes in our industry.

Where to follow:

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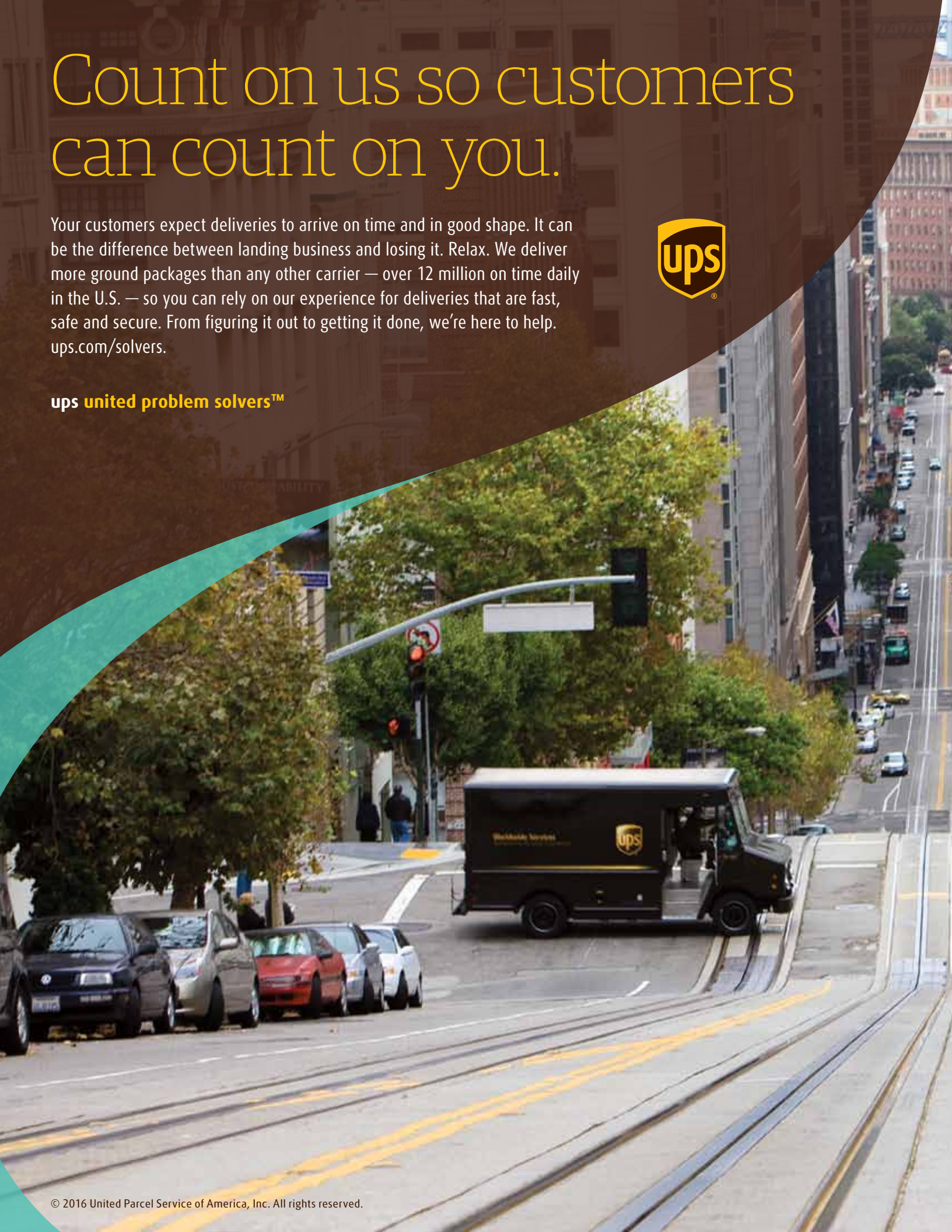
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AMBC4Me...

our online newsgroup



Are you taking advantage of instant access to decades worth of longtime mail & business center owners' experience? If you aren't on our online forum, contact the office at AMBC and we'll get you on board today!

I am shipping an antique gun to Sweden. Its value is more than \$2,500, so I am required to fill out Shipper's Export Declaration form. I'm having trouble downloading it. Does anybody have a link they can share? Our Post Office here said they ran out. I hope our shipping guru Jeff Ballantyne will come to rescue.

I don't believe you can ship it via mail. I am not sure you can send it with anyone. - JB

Here is a link to the online entry system from the government: www.cbp.gov/trade/automated - JKG

I would call your Postmaster, from memory no guns can go internationally. If it is a firearm that can still fire, my guess is no. A long time ago you didn't need to file the SED electronically, but now I believe all the carriers require it to be done electronically. - JB

...

I had some new boxes opened last week and they are receiving credit cards each day at the rate of two or three per day. I want to shut them down. Is there anything I need to do? Should I send the mail back? And would you suggest I contact any authorities?

We usually call the US Postal Inspector. We tried calling the credit card companies and they really don't seem to care at all. One time all they wanted was for me to go to their website and create this file for them asked all about my store and hardly anything about the possible fraud. I declined and called the Postal Inspector. 1-877-876-2455. - JB

Are they getting the cards in the same name they listed on the 1583? I'm 99% chance this is a scam. - BK

Document your conversation with the Postal Inspector and keep with this customer's 1583. If the paperwork or address/name isn't 100% perfect, I would send

back. Are these local or forwarding customers? We have virtual customers that got some cards: everything was perfect on their application and address labels with no valid reason to return except on the envelope the card company has a statement "do not forward." So, we refused "as unable to forward" and told the customer that and they disappeared. We never heard a word from the credit card company. - JB

We have a blanket policy for all virtual mailbox holders: no scanning or forwarding of credit cards, period. For physical mailbox holders, we will only forward if we know you for years. It's not worth the aggravation - DG

...

Can anyone tell me if the USPS still sends out dangerous goods certification materials each year? In going through my files, the latest I have is 2017.

I received mine for 2018 at the end of December. The form says that I needed to have it in to my HAO (Host Administrative Post Office) by January 6th. Unfortunately, I couldn't tell you who my HAO is—I just know that it's regional. - NF

I received mine from Washington, DC office they want me to mail back to them after all the employees and myself read and sign. It was some time on November 2018. - PP

Last year at the RSA Expo in Orlando, we learned that the process changed (if you are an approved shipper) to their online portal. You had to create an account with a CRID, etc. That is where we were supposed to do our training and upload our certificate. My Postmaster actually came to the store last week

(continued on next page)

AMBC4ME...

Continued from previous page

and had me sign a certificate from 2016 for 2019. He also made me do a new 1583A. I never received anything in the mail as N. mentioned. - LW

...
I just got a phone called from my Post Office asking me to send over 1583A form for the business. We have been here 17 years and I've never heard of or recalled this request. ???

It's the form that the store owner fills out in order to register as a CMRA. Maybe they never got one or maybe they can't find it. - TWS

Two weeks ago, my Postmaster asked us for a new 1583A too. He also gave me a copy of a letter that required it. I was upset because he was trying to get the info over the phone and I don't like giving any personal info over the phone. - LW

Our brand new Postmaster just asked for a copy of ours. We just thought it was because she was trying to get the records in order. - KS

Just curious: the letter that was requiring the updated 1583A was from whom? Was it from your local Postmaster or the district or headquarters in Washington? My local Post Office contact person requested the same info from us, however she just sent me a blank 1583A and asked that I complete it and send it back to her, which I did along with my original 1583A dated August 1998. - JB

#MembersHelpingMembers Expressions of Gratitude

Please submit your expressions of gratitude for something an AMBC Member has done for you to hello@ambc.org.

Thanks to MBC Today magazine, we learned about a book titled Leader of the Pack: Success Tips for the Mail and Parcel Center by David Shappee. We ordered it. We read it. And it helped us to improve the operation effectiveness of our two centers. We learned very much, even though we have been in this business since 1995.

Alphonse and Ariadna Munguia
Pack & Ship Hermosillo
Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico

In-Store Visit

*Have an experienced Mail Center Coach come to your store for 1-day and **GROW YOUR BUSINESS!***

Analyze - Assess - Discover - Unleash

During the In-Store Visit, these topics will be addressed

- * Profit Center analysis
- * Business Operations review
- * POS and Counter Procedures check
- * Store Design and Image ideas
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- * Social Media plan

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Bring Steve Merrick of the SRM Spirit Group in to your store for 1-day for a cost of \$1250. Get the personalized attention and professional assessment that you've been seeking. Steve has been a store owner and successful Mail Center coach for over 25 years. Take advantage of a coach that has visited hundreds of stores. The day-long visit will be totally focused on increasing profits and growing your business!

The two goals of the 1-day In-Store Visit are to increase profits and seek the best ways to combine the owner's style with the store's potential.



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Steve Merrick, SRM Spirit Group:
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The day-long visit will be totally focused on increasing profits and growing your business!

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AMBC Freight is a members only benefit that offers online and assisted quote options to help you quickly and easily find the best and lowest rates available. Once you have selected your price, you can purchase insurance coverage and process the shipment all on the same site!

- Not only can you get carrier discounts of 70% and more, you also get greatly reduced—sometimes free—liftgate service and greatly reduced residential service!
- Pass the savings on to your customers and make sure they know you can beat your competition on both price and service. Or, add the extra margin to your bottom line.
- With AMBC Freight, you can be sure you're not overpaying for freight services.

With AMBC, You're Not Alone

Every business owner has questions about day-to-day operations, technical approaches, profit strategies, and service enhancements. Get answers fast on AMBC's members only freight chat forum.

Help is only an email away. In most cases, you receive an answer within minutes ... not hours.

AMBC's #FreightGuru is here to help.

With AMBC Freight, you don't just get 70% discounts and greatly reduced accessorial fees, you also get assistance from an expert in the industry. Jeff Ballantyne of PackFreight will walk you through your freight shipments, guiding you safely to a profitable shipment. Jeff has learned the ins and outs of freight systems the hard way, and has promised to share his information with any AMBC member that asks.

Learning to do freight properly and profitably is as simple as sending an email asking for help. AMBC has an online freight quote system that allows users to access rates instantly. There is also an assisted quote form set up for the beginner in freight. Submit your information to Jeff, and he will research the items, find the best class, and send back rates and information. Then all you need to do is to package the item and Jeff can either finish the shipment for you or lead you through doing it yourself.

AMBC's goal is to allow its members access to the best rates and services available in the industry. The more stores that use the services, the better we stand with carriers in obtaining better rates.

Please login on ambc.org and click the freight program link in the members only section.

Call Jeff Ballantyne at AMBC Freight, 603-431-0718 (weekdays 8:30 AM – 6:00 PM EST), or email jeff@ambc.org

We're at your service!



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