



# Helping the direct marketing industry reduce waste, avoid new legislation and save costs

## At a glance...

- The Direct Marketing Association (DMA), on behalf of the direct marketing industry, signed a voluntary agreement with DEFRA to reduce the amount of direct marketing materials ending up in landfill.
- The DMA engaged BSI to develop a Publicly Available Specification (PAS) to set definitive requirements for the industry, helping to spread best practice on reducing waste and negative impacts on the environment.
- The PAS, which forms the basis of a third-party certification scheme, is helping prevent legislation directed solely at the direct marketing industry because it shows the Government that the industry is changing.
- The PAS has helped bring a step-change increase in direct mail material diverted from landfill to recycling: from 13% in 2002 to over 76% at the end of 2009.

“The credibility of BSI’s name adds instantly to the weight of the standard, but the great thing is it tells people exactly what is expected of them. It is an unambiguous statement of what you’ve got to do to be environmentally responsible.”



**Alex Walsh**  
Associate Director  
– Membership  
Services  
Direct Marketing  
Association

# BSI British Standards Solutions Case Study

## Key benefits of PAS 2020:

- helped the direct marketing industry post a 76.5% rate of recycling, against the Government's target of 55%
- protected the industry from new and likely adverse legislation
- provided a tool for users to reduce costs by eliminating wasteful practices
- achieved consensus across the industry on complex issues that were difficult to resolve
- brought significant cost savings for companies that have applied the PAS (e.g. Sun Life Direct is saving £150k per year through discounts from Royal Mail and from reducing mail volumes through better targeting)
- helped the DMA to deliver on two of its central objectives – to protect the direct marketing industry and guide it to better practices.

## Why did the DMA approach BSI to develop a PAS?

The Direct Marketing Association (DMA) required a PAS to address several key issues it was facing. First the DMA's members were increasingly asking for clear information on how to reduce their environmental impacts, and the DMA wanted to give sound advice. At the same time the public and government saw the industry as wasting limited resources – especially paper – a view the DMA wanted to tackle.

Additionally, the DMA had signed a voluntary agreement with DEFRA to increase the amount of direct marketing material being recycled but missed the 2005 target. With no significant improvement by 2007, the DMA needed to act quickly and decisively to meet the 2009 target. Without a demonstrable change, the industry would probably face legislation that restricted direct marketing activities – e.g. limits on the volume of promotional mail being sent.

The DMA saw the value a PAS could deliver. Through its rigorous consensus-building process, a PAS would have the support of both the Government and the direct marketing industry. This, coupled with the weight of BSI's brand and management of the process, would ensure credibility with all major stakeholders.

## Developing the PAS

When developing the PAS the DMA needed the involvement of the whole industry. Alex Walsh, Associate Director of Membership Services at the DMA says, "BSI was brilliant in terms of contacting all the stakeholders to ensure we had as wide a representation as possible." This included not only industry representatives, but environmental experts, consumer groups and local and national government (local government because of its role in collecting waste from households).

At the start of the PAS development process the BSI Project Manager identified key technical information through research and worked with the DMA to prepare an initial draft. Additional input was provided by a small number of other key experts with specialist knowledge in direct marketing and environmental management.

BSI then facilitated a number of meetings with a 20-strong Steering Group, made up of experts and stakeholders representing a variety of Direct Marketing (DM) activities, to gain initial consensus around the requirements in the PAS. Subsequently BSI put the document out for public consultation, worked with the DMA and the Steering Group to address all comments, then published the PAS in January 2009.



## What is 'direct marketing'?

Direct marketing covers things like promotional mail, door-to-door leaflets, inserts in magazines and newspapers, telemarketing and email marketing – anything where the marketing message is sent directly to the consumer. A good rule of thumb is that if the person advertising has to 'buy space' from someone else – a TV channel or a magazine publisher for instance – then it's not direct marketing.

## What is a PAS?

A Publicly Available Specification (PAS) is a fast-track standard developed by BSI through sponsorship from organizations wishing to create credible public standards.

These standards are driven by the needs of the sponsoring organization or industry, while still being controlled by BSI's rigorous consensus-building processes to ensure credibility.

## Creating change

It was essential to the DMA that the PAS contained information that was clear, accurate and up-to-date. For instance, it's not widely understood that FSC grade paper produced in the Nordic countries has a lower carbon footprint than recycled paper produced in the UK. As a consequence of such clarifications, WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme) has actually changed its advice on paper use in the UK.



The PAS sets out requirements for reducing the impact of DM by addressing 10 key aspects, including targeting, recyclability and “unsubscribe”. Since publication the DMA is leading the awareness building across the industry through road-shows, presentations and PR, and is now working towards building consumer awareness.

### **How the PAS is helping**

In the year after launching the PAS, the environment has already benefitted: the direct marketing industry posted a 76 per cent rate of recycling, against the Government’s target of 55 per cent.

This in turn is bringing an important benefit to the direct marketing industry. Because the 2009 result actually exceeded the 2013 target (70 per cent), Walsh explains, “Use of PAS 2020 is likely to become the measure for our industry in terms of reporting back to government.” This matters because PAS 2020 makes it clear that enhancing environmental

performance is not only about reducing activity, but can also include better targeting and execution. Future legislation is likely to meet the industry’s needs as well as the Government’s.

**“The PAS is also already giving the organizations which use it a market advantage. It gives access to Royal Mail discounts and shows prospective customers which companies care about the environment.”**

The PAS is also already giving the organizations which use it a market advantage. It gives access to Royal Mail discounts and shows prospective customers which companies care about the environment. In addition, organizations that are already certified say they see process improvements and costs savings from using the PAS. Sun Life Direct, for instance, is

saving £150k per year – partly from Royal Mail discounts but also from reducing mail volumes through better targeting.

COI (the Government’s Central Office of Information) is also now specifying PAS 2020 certification in its procurement process, as are some other DMA members. In due course this will raise the overall sustainability of the industry.

Finally, the DMA has raised its profile and extended its influence both with the industry and legislators. It has demonstrated to its members and the industry that it is working hard on their behalf; and in producing PAS 2020 it has made a significant contribution to the long term sustainability of direct marketing in the UK.

## The sponsor

With more than 800 corporate members, the Direct Marketing Association (DMA) is the biggest marketing trade association of its kind in Europe. It exists to protect members' interests; to generate and spread market insight to members and to help grow the direct marketing industry. In producing PAS 2020 the DMA worked in partnership with Acxiom, ISBA (The Incorporated Society of British Advertisers), Royal Mail and the Telephone Preference Service.

## About BSI Group

BSI Group is a global independent business services organization that develops standards-based solutions to improve management practices and promote innovation. BSI can help businesses, governments and other organizations around the world to raise quality and performance in a sustainable and socially responsible way. From its origins as the world's first National Standards Body, BSI Group draws upon over 100 years' experience to work with 69,000 organizations in 147 countries from its 50 offices. To learn more, please visit [www.bsigroup.com](http://www.bsigroup.com)

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Founded in 2001, the BSI Standards Solutions team provides tailored standardization services to businesses, governments, trade associations and non-governmental organizations to tackle the strategic and operational challenges they face. With a portfolio of proven solutions and services, our clients use standardization to engage, influence and deliver value.

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