

Creating a more sustainable marketing industry

Reducing the carbon footprint and cost of waste in marketing

At a glance...

- The Data & Marketing Association (DMA) (formerly The Direct Marketing Association UK), 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.

“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, Data & Marketing Association

Highlights of success

- 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.



Client challenge

The 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 with no significant improvement, the DMA needed to act quickly and decisively.

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.

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Alex Walsh,
Associate Director, Data & Marketing Association

BSI's approach

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.

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.

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.

“Use of PAS 2020 is likely to become the measure for our industry in terms of reporting back to government.”

Alex Walsh,
Associate Director, Data & Marketing Association

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.

The impact

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. 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.

In addition, organizations that are already certified say they see process improvements and cost 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.

Working towards success

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.



About the DMA

The Data & Marketing Association (formerly The Direct Marketing Association UK) is Europe's largest trade association in the marketing and communications sector. It was first founded in 1927 as the British Direct Mail Advertising Association (BDMAA).

* The DMA was originally known as the Direct Marketing Association and is now known as the Data Marketing Association. This case study is from 2009, when the DMA was known as the Direct Marketing Association.

Why BSI?

BSI lead the world in standards and our trademark Kitemark™ is recognized globally as a symbol of quality and safety. For a standard to be accepted and adopted by Governments, Industry, trade associations and businesses of all sizes it must be built on consensus and credibility. The PAS is developed through a rigorous consensus based process, evolved by BSI over more than 100 years.

Our aim

We aim to improve the quality and safety of products, services and systems by enabling the creation of standards and encouraging their use.

New standards are being developed all the time as new sectors, markets and business models emerge. The sooner these standards are in place, the faster and more efficiently growth occurs.

Take the lead in your sector

Learn more about what your business will gain by sponsoring a PAS, visit: bsigroup.com/pas

Or get in touch with us to discuss creating a PAS today!



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