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Entrepreneur's Journal: Stamp prices rising again, so what to do?

Posted May 17th 2009 5:00PM by **Tom Taulli**
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This week the U.S. Postal Service hiked the rates on postage, covering a majority of the mail services like first-class mail, first-class international, postcards, and special services. So, the price for a one-ounce first-class stamp has gone from \$0.42 to \$0.44.

And, I'm sure we'll continue to see more increases.

Unfortunately, this is yet more bad news for small businesses, which are trying to deal with the recession.

OK, so what can be done? Well, it's a good idea to check out a mail service like **Stamps.com**. In fact, this company focuses on the needs of small businesses.

Using the Stamps.com PC Postage software, you can calculate the exact postage -- and print it on a label. There is no special hardware needed.

Keep in mind that the software will find all discounts (up to 11% on domestic Priority mail). Stamps.com also has postage cleansing (that is, it makes sure that an address is valid). Actually, you can save more than 80% when compared to using a traditional postage meter.

The postage will look professional as well (yes, it's important to find any way to stand out).

Now, let's suppose you have lots of inventory and using a stamp service probably would be impractical. In this case, you can use an outsourced storage and shipping service. And, one that has a good small business focus is **Shipwire.com**.

The company handles fulfillment, and even returns. And, there is cost-optimization.

No doubt, storage and shipping costs can eat up your margins. But, the good news is that -- with web technologies and outsourcing -- there are certainly options to help manage things better. More importantly, they are fairly easy to implement and use.

*Tom Taulli is the author of various books, including **The Complete M&A Handbook** and the founder of **BizEquity**, a free online **business valuation** tool for small businesses. You can reach him at his personal **blog**.*

Tags: Inventory, outsourcing, postage software, Shipping Costs, Shipwire, Stamps.com