

## Market & Industry



It seems like I start each of my end-of-year articles by saying - "I can't believe we are at the end of the year!" Well, I can't believe we are at the end of the year!

2014 was both a challenging and successful year for Merkle RMG. Challenging from the perspective of having to address ever changing mail cycles and mail volumes and successful due to the fact that we added 29 new clients!

I am optimistic about 2015. Our value proposition continues to resonate with our Fundraising clients and our Healthcare vertical is starting to gain traction. We will be launching additional value-added services such as remote deposit capture and 2D barcode software recognition.

Our employees continue to be our biggest market differentiator. They are deeply committed and extremely passionate about the work they do and the clients that they support. I am proud of our team.

Here's to a great 2014 and an optimistic look ahead to 2015 with all of you, our valued clients!

Happy Holidays!

## Customer Service News

### "Howdy Partner!"

My name is Brandon Marks. I joined the Merkle Response team in November of 2013 as the Manager of Client Services. In this role, I am responsible for supporting the team of Account Managers that service your account and ultimately, I am responsible for your happiness with the Merkle relationship. I live and breathe customer service and fully understand how critical it is to an organization's success.

Merkle and your organization are in a partnership. There are other remittance firms out there, but you chose us and we thank you for the opportunity! Maybe it's because we offer more value added services than other caging firms. Perhaps it was our reputation in the non-profit sector that led you to choose Merkle Response. Whatever the reason, I recognize that you are entrusting us to act as ambassadors for your organization. That is not a responsibility we take lightly. I want this relationship to feel

like a partnership and not to be viewed as just another vendor.

There are many distinguishers that set Merkle apart from the competition, but the one that I feel is the most important to this partnership is our dedication to providing you exceptional Customer Service. Our Account Management strategy provides you with a single point of contact. This delivers to you a person on the ground at Merkle who is looking out for what is best for your organization. Your Account Manager is much more than a name on a distribution list, they are an advocate for your mission and a processing facilitator- ensuring that our operational teams are performing as you intend and as you expect. One of the most important things that companies need to survive is to be referencable in the eyes of those they serve. It does no good to win over a client with a shiny sales pitch only to fail at delivering as promised. In order to succeed, organiza-

tions need to be reputable. Loyal clients and a good reputation are the foundation for a strong business. We at Merkle Response are fortunate to have both. It validates our Customer Service based strategy and has allowed us to become the largest and fastest growing remittance firm in the industry.

So I encourage you to view your Account Manager as an extension of your organization and as a partner. If it's been a while, I would also encourage you to come for a site visit and a tour to see what is new at Merkle Response. Let's work together to grow the partnership and see what we can do to better serve your organization's needs!



## Merkle Response in the News

<http://www.fundraisingsuccessmag.com/blog/bill-sayre-its-time-rethink-your-donor-engagement-strategies>

Subscribe to Bill Sayre's blog: <http://merkleresponse.com/blog>

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## Best Practices - The Benefits of Using Business Reply

The current costs for paying the donor's postage (business reply mail) include annual fees of \$220 for permit and \$685 for maintenance fees in addition to the per piece rates. The basic qualified business reply rate (QBRM) is \$0.537 per envelope provided samples have been approved by the USPS. The high volume QBRM rate is \$0.483 per envelope provided samples have been approved by the USPS, 42,037 or more envelopes are received per quarter, and an additional quarterly fee of \$2,270 is assessed.

In addition to the above fee structure, sufficient monetary balances

must be maintained in the business reply account. Several times a month, we are impacted by mail being held at the Post Office due to the business reply account not being sufficiently funded.

If you are currently using postage paid business reply mail, have you tested the return rates recently comparing non-postage paid return addressed envelopes (RAE) versus postage paid business reply mail? As postal costs continue to rise possibly again in January, it may be worthwhile to examine the cost-benefit of using business reply.

## A Note from Merkle RMG's IT Team

Recently, while cleaning out some old stuff I found a 56k modem. My 30-something brother and sister-in-law didn't know what it was. Once the king of communication, it was relegated to the trash bag. It is hard to think that not so long ago, if you wanted to communicate with anyone on your computer, you needed a modem and a phone line.

Today, Wi-Fi is everywhere. You can have Wi-Fi in your house or your hotel. There is even a car manufacturer advertising Wi-Fi in all new models. Unfortunately, Wi-Fi isn't always secure.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, one of the biggest commodities is information. Almost everything we see, do, hear, or buy, is recorded somewhere. We can do most of our

shopping on line. We tell retailers what we want, give them payment information and it shows up at our doorstep. The payment information is the key. That information is valuable to many people.

When you configure Wi-Fi for your residence, you should make sure you are using a secure wireless. There are several steps you should take to make sure the Wi-Fi in your home is as secure as your home. Just like the front door lock on your home, none of these are completely foolproof. You can easily search the internet for several ways to set up your home wireless securely. But, basically, change the default Administrator password and username that come with the router you buy.

Use WPA/WEP Encryption to scramble your

information, making it harder to hack.

Position the router safely. Place your router or access point closer to the center of the house, rather than near a window or wall to minimize how much signal leakage is outside the house.

Cyber hacking is not limited to laptops. Almost everyone you know has a Smartphone or tablet. Each of these devices works like a computer. They all have personally identifiable information on them. People use them to do everything – from social media to online purchasing to banking. If the network they are on is not secure, the information on them is not secure either.

By Chuck Pierpont

## New Clients



## Business Growth at Merkle Response

2014 was a record-setting year for new business development and growth at Merkle Response. The logos to the left represent the new clients that joined us since the last newsletter in late September. For the year we had 28 new clients sign on with us, our most ever, to add to the already impressive roster of organizations that we are proud to serve.

While we've stepped up our marketing efforts over the past several years, many of our new clients are direct referrals from current clients, and all make the decision to come to us based on our strong reputation that you as our clients help foster...and for that we say "Thank You!" As we grow, our ability to reinvest in our business grows as well, and that benefits our business, our staff, and all of the great organizations that we serve.

We're geared up for another great year of business and learning growth in 2015. Toward that end, Merkle Response staff will be at the DMA Nonprofit Federation Conference in Washington, DC, February 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. Let us know if you'll be attending as we'd love to get together with you there. Here's to a great 2015 for all of you and your organizations!

## Merkle RMG Holidays

New Years Day—January 1, 2015

Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday—January 19, 2015

President's Day—February 16, 2015