



you create, we print, we post

# Case Study: Podington Garden Centre

*iMail has surpassed our expectations in its delivery of cost savings, efficiency improvements and increased sales activity, proving itself to be an invaluable tool in the implementation of our direct mail campaigns. With green considerations high on our agenda, we were thrilled to find a solution that cuts the carbon footprint of our DM activity by reducing a letter's delivery mileage and, thus, its environmental impact.*

## Introduction

Located in the heart of the Northamptonshire countryside, Podington Garden Centre is an independent, family-run business. It offers a wide range of flowers, foliage and garden accessories for purchase in-store or online, from water features and wild bird equipment to barbecues and al fresco furniture.

## The Challenge

The company prides itself on its expert team of trained horticulturists who are on hand to provide advice on any flora- or fauna-related topic, be it alpine plant or herbaceous perennial. As a village-based business, Podington Garden Centre relies heavily on direct mail to promote its services to a wider audience. Direct mail is a key part of its ongoing marketing, with increased activity during peak seasonal times. Previously, all direct mail campaigns were conducted in-house and Podington was facing problems relating to expense and efficiency. The campaigns were not only costly but also extremely time-

consuming and tedious. Valuable resources were squandered, as skilled staff carried out manual mail merges, printing, stuffing envelopes, franking and posting mailers.

## The Solution

An automated direct mail solution was required which allowed the business to retain the commercial benefits while reducing outgoings and inefficiencies – and iMail seemed the obvious answer. Of all the hybrid mail products on the market, iMail stood out as superior in terms of technology, cost savings and creative control. The solution was implemented in January 2010. An electronic-to-physical mail solution, iMail is accessed via the internet using a simple, step-by-step browser. It allows Podington to submit large-volume runs of multi-page direct mail pieces to a geographically-dispersed audience, with minimal hassle. The business can also upload its own pictures, logos and artwork, for increased customer engagement and branding exposure.

Owner, Podington Garden Centre

**Key facts:**

- Sector: Retail-Garden & Gifts
- Mailing Frequency: Monthly
- Mailing Type: Marketing & Transactional Mail
- Mail Benefit: 12% increase in sales targeted mailshots
- Saving: Operational costs cut by 33%





## Benefits

The switchover from a manual mail merge system to imail has led to significant benefits that affect the whole business.

Eliminating printing, franking and stationery requirements has led to a massive 33% cut in mailing costs. What's more, a 12% increase in sales has arisen from the enhanced quality of the campaigns. Just as importantly, automating the mailing process has freed up staff to dedicate their time to revenue-generating activities.

imail's two-day definite delivery timescales means Podington knows exactly when mailers will land on prospects' doorsteps, enabling it to synchronise its call-response centre. This has resulted in a higher pay back for each campaign, as all incoming sales opportunities are effectively managed.

Data quality is also a key determining factor in the success of any direct marketing campaign. imail's postcode checking software, which isolates and identifies inaccurate postcodes, has reduced the volume of returned mail. This allows

Podington to target its audience more precisely, while ensuring that its marketing budget is being spent where it should.

## Summary

This busy garden centre gained 33% savings on mailing costs and a 12% increase in sales, by switching from manual mail merges to imail for its direct mail campaigns.

## About imail

imail was launched in 2008 by UK Mail as the only alternative to the first class postal service. It enables users to send letters and postcards with just a click of the mouse from as late as 3pm for next-day delivery, or 6pm for two-day delivery. The mail documents are sent electronically to the UK Mail sorting centre closest to the destination, where they are printed, enveloped and sorted for onward delivery.

imail is ideal for all sizes of business, from SMEs to large corporations, offering a dynamic desktop-to-delivery service at a keystroke that provides a host of cost, time and environmental benefits.

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