



SubCARE

SUBSCRIPTION FULFILMENT MANAGEMENT

“A complete department at every level, taking responsibility for all aspects of subscriptions fulfilment and management with the confidence and trust of our publishers and their subscribers”

SubCARE Mission Statement



As a publisher, it is important to you to have a growing subscriber base and the subsequent benefits it can offer. The SubCARE subscription fulfilment service takes total care of your subscribers and the development of your subscription sales leaving you more time and resources to meet your publishing deadlines.

The SubCARE solution includes a complete fulfilment operation whilst our promotional programs increase your subscriptions revenue. We are also ideally placed to assist publishers with subscriptions marketing, direct mail and reader analysis.

The functions detailed in this specification covers the subscription process from beginning to end and are carried out by a fulfilment team with vast experience in subscription management.

Incoming Orders

New and renewing subscribers have six methods of placing their order.

By telephone: our offices are open to incoming calls between 9 and 5 Monday to Friday and every member of staff is trained to receive telephone orders. We have no automated menu system and calls are taken promptly and efficiently. In addition, we have an out of hours answering phone. Telephone orders are accompanied by a credit card or direct debit payment.

By post: new subscribers can use the traditional method of filling in the subscription coupon in the publication or sending us correspondence with the relevant information. For renewing subscribers, they can also send their renewal payment by post usually accompanied with our renewal notice. We allow for credit/debit cards, direct debits, cheques, postal orders, International Money Orders and cash (though we do not advise it). We can also produce pro-forma invoices on request. Foreign currency payments can be received for publishers with the appropriate banking facility.

Via mysubcare.com: our website, mysubcare.com, allows subscription, back issue and merchandise orders to be taken through the Internet. All orders are purchased online with secure credit card or direct debit authorisation. The orders are then automatically processed through our database and a confirmation email is sent as standard. Every subscriber, however they order, are given access to their account via mysubcare.com and from here, we provide the subscriber with the facility to renew their subscription online.

Via your site: every fulfilment publisher is given the facility to take orders through their web presence. By inserting a line of Java script, a 'subscribe' and a 'renew' button can be linked to our subscription order pages. The visitor does not feel that they have left your site and they are also sent an email confirmation detailing the facilities available to them at mysubcare.com.

Providing the online function has been essential to growing the subscriber base of many of our fulfilment publications and it has helped to increase our renewal rates to 78% overall.

Via email: using your existing subscription ordering service, online orders can be received into our office via email. Orders received by this method will be entered manually within the usual time scale.

Via SMS: readers can register their interest in purchasing a subscription using their mobile phone. A specified text message will generate an email to our office and we will contact the prospect to take their order.

Order Processing

Internet orders are processed directly into our system continuously 24 hours a day however, postal and telephone orders have to be entered manually.

Data Entry is done daily, currently same day but never more than next day. Acknowledgements are sent on request as well as an introduction letter for gift subscriptions (often with personalised messages) however, acknowledgement letters can be set as standard if required.



Wherever possible, payments are banked directly into your own bank account. We bank cheques and credit card payments weekly and direct debits are run monthly. Direct Debit and Internet payments are credited to our bank account and we pass the monies on accordingly.

Direct Debit

The benefits of taking payments by Direct Debit are across the board with the most prominent effect being on percentage renewal rates.

It has been shown that the percentage rate of renewal of special interest publications that allow for payment by Direct Debit increased by 10% and this is due mainly to the inertia factor. Once a customer has signed up to pay by this method and the price is held until cancellation, the subscription will just run and run. The subscriber doesn't have to do anything - the subscription is renewed automatically, the magazine keeps coming and all without lifting a finger. Plus there's the added bonus of not having to post out a renewal letter.

But many small independent publishers find that on their own, they would not generate sufficient transactions to be eligible to take payment by this method so we are able to provide access to these benefits to all our titles as a group under our umbrella.

We offer Direct Debit payment taken monthly, quarterly, six-monthly and annually. Monies are received by Webscribe Ltd and transferred accordingly.

MySubCare.com

All subscribers, however they order, have access to their account on mysubcare.com and we actively encourage existing subscribers to use it.

Using their subscription ID number and a password, they can find out the status of their account; when the next issue is due for despatch; when the last was sent and the expiry date of their subscription including the issues left remaining. There are also interactive features such as the renewal function mentioned previously and the 'Change of Address' facility, which updates our database accordingly.

This facility has become an integral part of our customer service function reducing our incoming call rates and delivering a subscription department that is open 24-7, appealing greatly to overseas subscribers.

Along with subscriptions, visitors can order back issues and merchandise online. Access to these areas is through the magazine page for new visitors and/or through their account screen for existing subscribers, providing cross selling on both new and renewal subscription orders.

And we have plans in place for new developments to mysubcare.com. We are investigating a PDF download facility for selling archive articles and other material. We are also looking at a bulk-emailing service so that you can keep in regular touch with your subscribers via their email address.

Finally, current plans include the introduction of yoursubcare.com. From this site, you will have access to your subscriber list online and that will lead to downloading data and reports when you need it.

The PPA & the Royal Mail commissioned a report outlining the opinions of consumers with regards to magazine subscriptions. They found that consumers want purchasing subscriptions to be more exciting, more like the impulse that they get to buy magazines 'off the shelf'. Subscribers also want convenience, flexibility and more control. They both see the Internet as a means to gain the 'subscription experience' that they are looking for and mysubcare.com and the functions it provides goes a long way to achieving that.

Special Offers, Gift Subscriptions & Promotions

We can provide for any amount of special offers and subscription promotions through all our incoming order methods including discounts, extra issues and promotional gifts. Each rate or offer is issued with a source code, which allows us to collect the response data and report on the success of the offers as well as on marketing campaigns and yearly trends.



Gift subscriptions are becoming more popular in the consumer market and again all of our order channels have the facility to take donor gifts.

Back-Issue and Merchandise Orders

We also provide the facility for back-issue and merchandise fulfilment including picking, packing and despatching. New subscribers can request their subscription to start with any issue, previous, current or forward and the back-issues required for a late-start subscription or late renewals are sent directly from our fulfilment office.

In order to maintain good customer service, we operate a 'no-quibble' replacement policy. However, if the magazine is constantly being 'lost in the post', we will try to prevent it at no extra cost to the publisher or subscriber.

Customer Service

For many readers, the call to our team is the first connection that they have made with the publication and we understand the responsibility that gives us. Our fulfilment team is trained to deal with queries politely, efficiently and effectively; they are answered in the format that they are received (unless requested otherwise) and are dealt with within the same day wherever possible.

Suspending: as well as the subscriber suspending their subscription on request, we also use this feature when copies have been continuously returned or the payment given was invalid and new payment is pending. For subscribers that spend a proportion of the year overseas, we encourage them to suspend their account until their return rather than cancelling it altogether.

Deletions: deletions to the database can be made when the magazine is no longer required and a refund is given or when a subscriber advises us that they wish their names to be removed. If a 'no refunds' policy is in operation, the subscriber may leave the subscription running until it expires and we will ensure that the subscriber is not bothered with renewal notices.

Renewals: the first renewal notice is sent out one issue before expiry of the subscription; the second on expiry and the third and final request when it has lapsed by one issue. This is our standard schedule for renewals and it is automated so that all subscribers are contacted without fail. The schedule can be altered to the publisher's specification if required.

Publisher Information and Reports

At the end of every month, we provide our publishers with a standard set of month end reports that can be adapted to suit. Standard monthly reports include an issue analysis, renewal statistics, a deferred income report, activity audits and a media/source code report.

Despatch

Methods of posting mailings are very much regulated by Royal Mail guidelines for address layout, bagging and tagging requirements and collection procedures for both regular and bulk despatches. However, with smaller titles using large mailing machine is inefficient and uneconomical.

To keep costs to a minimum, short-run despatches are done internally whilst using an approved mailing house for larger despatches.

For despatches under 3,000 items, we have set up internal systems that meet all Royal Mail regulations as well as our publisher individual timeframes for posting out. For larger despatches, our approved mailing house has proved themselves to be extremely capable, providing an excellent value-for-money service.



Subscription Marketing

Putting together subscription marketing campaigns and promotions gives us the opportunity to come up with new and innovative ways to get our publishers more subscribers. We have run a number of programs designed specifically for a publication along side campaigns that have benefited all our publishers.

Case 1: a fulfilment customer publishing a trade publication, wanted a dramatic increase in registered readers to assist them with advertising sales and ABC rating. We are running a continuous reader registration campaign targeting a specified quantity of businesses each month. The response has been overwhelming and their subscriber base has increased by 73% in the last three months alone.

Case 2: of all our fulfilment publications, one of our consumer titles has benefited the most from our online services. Through mysubcare.com and their own website, the publication's renewal rate has increased by 8% and they have gained a 13% increase in subscribers within 2006/7. 10% of their subscriber base use the online service regularly to check their account and renew their subscription.

Customer Information

Subscriber Information can assist a publication in so many areas and the capture of that information is becoming a new role for fulfilment bureaux. It is not enough simply to collect the order and send out the magazine, subscription management must have the capability to extract and analyse subscriber information to the advantage of the publisher.

We are constantly developing new functions within our fulfilment operation to gain more and more information about your readers for you to use in marketing campaigns, content, merchandise sales and advertising sales.

As part of the SubCARE service, each of our fulfilment publishers has one free insert per year for a subscriber questionnaire. The questionnaire can include a maximum of 25 questions, which we then created into a questionnaire form and insert it in each copy of a standard issue run. The responses are then collated in a standard format including an analysis of the results based on experience of the magazine and its subscribers. Our publishers can use this service to collate subscriber demographics and opinions and use it in the future planning of the publications and marketing campaigns.

Transferring your subscriber base

Prior to a live transfer, a test run is completed to make sure that the existing database's record structure and field names are mapped correctly on to ours. We also verify the transfer with a variety of control data extracted from the original file. Both the data received from the outgoing fulfilment operation and subsequent live transfer is backed up and given to the publisher for safekeeping.

We also request a liaison be established between the outgoing operation and our fulfilment staff to make sure that any queries can be answered promptly during the transfer and immediately after the database is downloaded, any subsequent instructions from subscribers are passed to us within a reasonable time frame.

**If you are interested in talking to us further about
SubCARE - Subscription Fulfilment Management,
contact us on 01442 876000 or via
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