



Digital mailroom: reducing the impact of Coronavirus

Amy Wright of Storetec examines the potential impact of Coronavirus on global mail delivery, and explores how digital mailroom technologies could help

Over recent months the media has been inundated with reports of Covid-19 or Coronavirus, a new virus which has spread to 30 countries and affected 80,000 people globally at the time of writing. With tens of millions of people quarantined inside their cities and thousands of flights cancelled, it is already clear that the Coronavirus is having a significant impact on the global economy.

Businesses with offices and links to mainland China are already experiencing significant issues accessing their business-critical information transported via mail. The US Postal Service has informed its counterparts around the world that it is 'experiencing significant difficulties' in dispatching letters, parcels and express mail to China, including Hong Kong and Macau. This is 'because most of its supplier airlines have suspended their flights' to those destinations.

The United Postal Union has also said that the suspension of flights because of the virus is 'going to impact the delivery of mail for the foreseeable future.'

As for mail items travelling from China to other countries, strict disinfection processes are in place to ensure the virus doesn't travel via mail to processing centres and postal offices abroad. This in turn is drastically impacting the delivery time of mail items to and from their destination.

For international businesses with links with China, ambiguity over whether critical

documentation has reached its destination securely and on time is a significant cause for concern. Daily correspondence such as contracts, offers and letters may not have been delivered, causing a breakdown of communication. This could lead to major supply chain issues resulting in businesses being unable to deliver services/products to their customers.

Furthermore, the delayed shipment of bulk mail items such as invoices and customer account statements could lead to critical accounting errors. Another cause for concern is the security implications of documentation which is confidential and sensitive in nature. Are such documents being stored in a secure centre while awaiting transportation? What security provisions are in place at these centres? These are just some of the questions international businesses must ask themselves.

A DIGITAL APPROACH

Digital mailroom is a modern solution businesses are beginning to adopt in order to access their mail items securely and on time. Digital mailroom gives businesses the ability to access their mail in a digital format, rather than on paper.

All mail items are directed to a central PO box location where documents can be securely received, scanned and digitally uploaded for instant access. Benefits include:

Auditing - Digital mailroom offers a fully traceable and auditable mailroom management/tracking solution with faster mail delivery. This means that employees can access digitised mail items via a secure cloud-based system on a daily basis.

Instant Access - With same-day upload of their scanned records, businesses can benefit from instant access to their mail items without the headache of manually opening and sorting such paper documents. Furthermore, contracts and general agreements can be e-signed, resulting in a fast, seamless exchange.

Confidentiality - Letters addressed to senior management and directors may hold private information regarding shares, investments, employee information and more. Digital mailroom eradicates confidentiality concerns which arise from manual post opening. Digital mail can be forwarded onto the correct addressee at first instance, meaning confidential records remain confidential.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The spread of Coronavirus isn't showing any signs of slowing down. Businesses must address mail delivery concerns and make appropriate internal changes, whether that means utilising a digital mailroom service or requesting suppliers and other global offices to switch digital communication methods.

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