



Despatch Special Edition - Part II April 2011

Welcome to the second edition of our 'Despatch Special'.

From the very high response to the first edition, it is obvious that despatch is of critical concern to all our clients. In this issue you will find more information on despatch options and some of the new services we are bringing on line to try and help you control your costs.

We will continue to update you with developments in this area as they arise. Our next bulletin will cover the account customer price increases from the Royal Mail effective from 9th May 2011.

So watch this space and if you have any colleagues who you feel would benefit from the information in our bulletins, please do share it with them.

Extending our In-house Despatch Optimisation

For many years we have offered clients free access to our bespoke despatch optimisation systems. Not all clients have always wanted to use this facility; some preferring to specify a carrier of their own choosing. Now times have changed and we have extended our service in response to that.



In the boom years up until 2008, when clients were pre-occupied with techno-centricity and the customer 'journey', we saw many of our clients focusing on non-cost despatch issues like speed, service and visibility of tracking stages.

The austerity of the last couple of years has seen a return to the major focus on saving pennies on every parcel. As a result we have upgraded and extended the range of options covered on our despatch optimisation software. Our clients and our production/despatch teams can select the service that will give them the best cost option regardless of carrier.

The software, developed to work in conjunction with our integrated sales order processing systems, gives us enhanced control over carrier selection so that we can choose the best option in any given set of circumstances. It retains the flexibility that is a key feature of the Ark-H Group systems whilst helping to improve the value element of the cost-service matrix. We would be very happy to demonstrate the system to any of our existing clients who have not yet seen this in action.

We will also talk clients through the relative merits of this system and the prestigious and market leading SaS option MetaPack which is also available at Ark-H for those clients who prefer to go down that route.

The Tortoise is Winning - Bringing Back Slower Services for Lower Costs

It does not seem so long ago that we were telling our clients not to bother about 48 hour services, let alone 72 hour. Now it seems you can slow down and save.



The carriers, all of whom actually do want to move the parcels through their networks p.d.q. were all offering next day services at the same price as 48 hour. Most of the main carriers (and Ark-H has contracts with most of them) are now offering a two or even three tier service to help their customers save money.

It is not so much about slowing the service as managing the risk. So it is not necessarily the case that the parcel will take 48 or 72 hours to arrive. It is simply that by reducing their promises the carriers can improve their delivery reliability statistics and thus minimise the claims for late delivery. They can also, just like the rest of us, improve the forward planning of their requirements. In their case this means that they can cut down on extra lorries and contingency drivers and save cost in the process.

So, where next day delivery is a nice to have rather than a must have, there are some attractive savings on offer at present. Here at Ark-H our despatch and procurement teams have re-negotiated many of our delivery contracts (we're working our way through them all!!) in order to extend the services, and hence the savings, we can offer.

It may not last. If economic recovery reasserts itself and growth gets going it is likely that some of these low cost options may go away again. So our advice, at the risk of sounding confusing is, if you can afford to slow down then hurry up and grab the savings while the going is good.

Do U want to B1 of R SMS Beta Testers?

Clients who are keen to move with the mobile market will be pleased to hear that Ark-H has now added an SMS notification option to our order status messages. You may be an account that could benefit so talk to us to find out more.



Our clients who already use the Ark-H system (or web service links to the system) to provide status messages to their customers will, in the very near future, be able offer SMS messages as well. This new service means that we can notify customers via text message that their order has been despatched and even give them a hyperlink to the relevant tracking data (subject to which carrier is used).

We have been trialling the service in-house for several months and we would now like to roll it out to a small number of our ecommerce clients on a beta test basis.

So, if you think your systems/requirements are suitable for this service and you would like to try it for free for a three month period, please talk to your Ark-H Group Account team. They will be happy to discuss the issues with you and advise as to whether we can provide this service for you. If you become part of our beta test team on this service we will bring along one of our in-house IT team to talk about how it can be integrated into the systems elements of the service we provide.

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