

New Services offered at Nieuwe Post

The delivery of communications from one place to another has probably been around as long as man. The first documented use of an organized courier service originated in Egypt as far back as 2400 BC. The days of delivering mail by pigeon, oxen and horse are long gone.

While these methods seem ancient, even the mail delivery methods we have all experienced in our lifetime are starting to become obsolete. In our technological age, we may even see complete antiquation of the mail system as we know it today in the lifetime of our children or even our own lifetime.

Franklin Sluis, CEO of Post NV is aware of the changes to the mail system and is working to stay ahead of the game. He realized that the postal system could not continue on as it had been and has introduced some innovations to Curaçao's mail system that will keep it competitive now and in the future. Sluis has been CEO of Nieuwe Post since November 2008 and, without wasting any time, implemented a new business plan and image for the company in 2009.

Sluis recognized that the postal service must look into new ventures to maintain the business needed to pay salaries and keep the company afloat. A post office is no longer able to survive on transporting letters from point A to point B; today it's more about moving things and packages. It's also no longer acceptable to order something and receive it in two weeks' time; customers want to receive their items today, requiring the shortening of time between purchasing and receiving. This demand changes the logistics of the postal system and requires that it take on a whole new role.

Boosting business is not only about the act of transport, but also about creating more of a need

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for transport. In 2010, the Post started creating a web portal, a sort of "Amazon" for Curaçao. The first web portal was called Bbuyzzz, but it is being replaced by Punto Mio, which gives more options.

Many are familiar with Ezone, which was literally just an address in Miami in the United States (US). Some shortcomings of Ezone were that many online stores from the US require a US credit card and shipments were sent to Curaçao only twice a week. The beauty of Punto Mio is that for most websites, when you enter your Punto Mio address, your items are tax-exempt because the system recognizes the address as a tax-free zone. Also, if you don't have a US credit card, you can come down to the post office with a printout of your shopping cart and can pay with cash or with a local credit card. Unlike Ezone, the Punto Mio service has the advantage of flights arriving on Curaçao every day, except weekends, so you should receive your items



within a week of them arriving in Miami. The Nieuwe Post has the advantage of Customs being in the building, so clearing customs is quicker, expediting the delivery time of your items.

If you are a person who dislikes going down to the post office and waiting in line for your packages, you can also sign up for home delivery service. When your item arrives, the Nieuwe Post will notify you and set up a day and time to deliver your items. The driver will come with a swipe machine so you can pay on the spot (no cash accepted for the security of the drivers). You need to sign up for home delivery in person at the post office.

What if you want to order a large item, like a whole kitchen or bedroom set? If an item weighs over 75 kilograms, Nieuwe Post will offer the option to ship by sea, which would

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be much less expensive, via OC Cargo. OC Cargo leaves Miami every Friday and arrives to Curaçao on Wednesdays.

As of right now, the Punto Mio service is only available for items ordered from the US, but

soon, the service will be available from the United Kingdom and Holland, two shopping hotspots for Curaçao residents.

According to Sluis, there's a big future for online web shops. In a short amount of time, Nieuwe Post will launch a web shop where local products can be sold to local markets. Nieuwe Post has relationships with local companies where you can order online and have your item delivered to your house within 24 hours. A good example is if you want to order a large item like an appliance or television. If you don't have a car big enough to transport the item, it can be brought to your doorstep.

Another service that will be available on the local web shop is the purchasing of stamps. Especially for philatelists, the web shop will contain photos of stamps, year collections, first day envelopes and other collectables. It will be

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easy to find the stamp you want thanks to the extended search possibilities. When stamps are sold online you don't have to depend on different agents to sell them. This also allows for consistency in sales; how the stamps are sold, the fees collected for each stamp, etc. Stamps are used to pay all the fees necessary to mail a letter or package, including transportation costs, not only in Curaçao, but also the postal agency in the destination country. Offering the stamps in this way allows Nieuwe Post to have more control over the stamps and how they are sold.

On the subject of stamps, Nieuwe Post offers personalized stamps. For special occasions like Mother's Day, Christmas, a birthday or for a business logo, Nieuwe Post will work with you to design a personalized stamp to suit your needs.

Printed mail is a new service that allows companies with bulk mailings to let Nieuwe Post

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do the work for them. Send the digital file to Nieuwe Post and they will print, envelope and deliver what the respective business requires. This allows for outsourcing that gives companies the opportunity to focus on their core business. This service is starting on Curaçao and will eventually reach out into the region. Business is changing, and so is the way people

view mail delivery. People aren't sending as many cards and letters as in the past, so the postal industry has to change. Express delivery companies like FedEx and DHL are taking over the delivery industry, so national postal services, like Nieuwe Post, must change with the times to keep up with consumer demand. Eventually, Nieuwe Post wants to be the logistical hub between the Caribbean, Europe, the United States, South America and beyond. Punto Mio and OC Cargo are part of that vision. The idea is one shipping point, one shipping fee.

If you would like to sign up for the Punto Mio service, you can go to www.puntomio.com or to one of the Nieuwe Post branches. ■