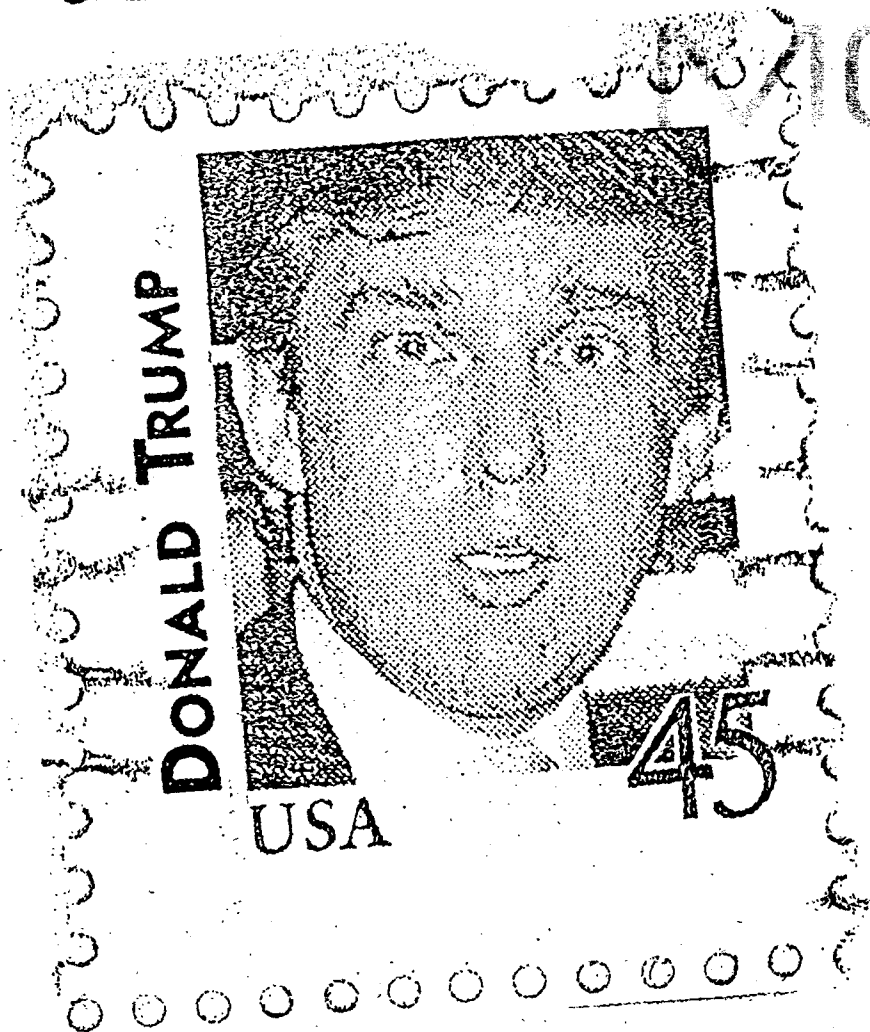


POSTAGE



Dear Postmaster General Frank,

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I noted with interest your recent decision to team the U.S. Postal Service up with MCA Home Video to promote MCA's video release of the animated dinosaur film *The Land Before Time*. The designs for the dinosaur stamps look great! I especially like the running stegosaurus and your idea of selling a postal-service dinosaur T-shirt for only \$6.95. (I just hope you deliver it faster than you do letters these days!) And you couldn't have picked a cuter film to promote. My 10-year-old daughter liked it a lot, though I must admit that its nuclear-winter subtext took me aback. But I guess that's just me.

Anyway, I commend your foresight! It's about time the post office stopped simply delivering ads and started making them! I recently read that you want the postal service to be more aggressive marketing in the area of high-profit stamp collecting. Well, this is where I can really be of help. As something of an expert in the field of philatelic tie-ins—after all, I was an avid stamp collector in my youth—I can only second your desire to market the U.S. Postal Service a little more seriously, and I'd like to make a serious connection with you (maybe, roughly speaking, along HUD lines) to do exactly that!

To begin with, I gather MCA approached you for the present tie-in campaign. Well, don't be so passive! You should approach the major corporations with your marketing ideas. For instance, why not contact the Campbell Soup Company? It's a perfect match. They're always putting out new soups, and you're

always putting out new stamps. Only the other day I noticed they were introducing Homestyle Bean Soup. So why not do a 60-stamp set geared to their next soup launch? Naturally, the look should be Warhol-esque. Imagine the T-shirt possibilities in that one. ("Collect them all! 60 cans, 60 stamps, 60 T-shirts!") We're talking multimillions here! Or you could extend the concept of the commemorative stamp and let various corporate CEOs and celebrities commemorate themselves! ("Trump! The Stamp!")

But that's not half of it. Don't just think "selling product." Think "selling the corporate image" (à la PBS). Your institution is ideally suited for this sort of image-repair work. For instance, you could get Union Carbide to underwrite a tasteful six-stamp series on ancient India (sights of Moghul Bhopal, etc.), or McDonald's to sponsor a Before-the-Hamburger Rainforest nostalgia set with lots of butterflies and bugs set against lush backgrounds, like those stamps Portugal used to issue for its African colonies in the good old days. And wouldn't Exxon jump aboard if you offered them an Exxon Ecology of the Seas commemorative series?

Let's face it, Postmaster Frank, we're in a new ad world. If you just open your mind to them, new marketing and tie-in possibilities will appear almost magically! But first you've got to stop thinking of the postal service as mainly a stamp window. Take that dinosaur T-shirt. I didn't want to say it at the beginning, but let's be honest. Do you really want the U.S. Postal Service linked with dinosaurs in the public mind? I know, I know. Modern paleontological studies have changed our image of the creatures. But not that much. To most people, dinosaurs are still lumbering, overweight dolts. So leave the dinosaur T-shirts to the natural history museums and take stock of the clothing resources readily available to you!

Take the mail bag. You have a potential marketing gem there, and you don't even seem to know it! ("Genuine U.S. Postal Service Delivery Pouch. Twice the volume of any competing bookbag or backpack! All-weather, tested canvas material! Cowhide leather strap! Ten-year warranty. \$99.95.") After all, if they could turn the Danish Bookbag, an untested item from a little-known country, into a national craze, how could you miss with such a proven winner?

Once you start thinking this way, you won't be able to stop. The mail hat ("100 years of protective service"), the all-weather postal poncho. It's endless. My advice is to take the mail-order route, initially. Produce a snazzy catalogue. Call it "Sun, Rain and Snow: Styles of the U.S. Postal Service." As soon as product begins to move, offer your corporate-stamp sponsors apparel-logo rights (for a price, of course). What shoe company, for instance, wouldn't want their name on Postal Express sneakers?

The corporate cross-fertilization potential is limitless. I don't think it's far-fetched to imagine that a few years down the line, Postmaster General Frank, you'll be able to subcontract out your mail delivery responsibilities and concentrate on managing your real profit centers—Rain 'n' Shine Postal Boutiques on malls across America!

Well, when it comes to money-making ideas, let me assure you, this is just the tip of the iceberg. I suggest we meet in the coming weeks to iron out a mutually satisfactory consultation agreement. After all, when the ideas are flowing, there's no time like the present to get started!

Sincerely,

Tom Engelhardt
Philatelic Licensing Consultant