

New Mailboxes Address Identity Theft

Mail theft can often be the first step in an identity theft. Many new mailboxes are designed to prevent that initial loss of personal information.

Epoch Design, LLC's line of Mail Boss locking, high-security mailboxes are designed to protect sensitive personal and financial information that comes in the mail, says president David Bolles.

"The Mail Boss line provides consumers with a truly secure and affordable solution to mail and identity theft prevention," Bolles says. "Mail Boss mailboxes feature heavy-duty construction, innovative locking mechanisms, and patented security features that allow consumers to have peace of mind."

The PostMaster Big Easy post & mailbox combination is one of several new mailboxes from Gibraltar Mailboxes, says Derek Paulsen, group vp marketing Air Vent & Solar Group at Gibraltar Industries, Inc. The product was designed with "customization, capacity,

and security" in mind.

This year, Architectural Mailboxes, LLC is launching a wide array of locking mailboxes, says Vanessa Troyer, ceo. "Locking mailboxes continue to be the fastest growing segment. In addition, we have launched a locking residential parcel drop. The elephantrunk parcel drop is the first of its kind to be able to receive and send multiple parcels. It is a great solution for online shoppers because The elephantrunk is always home."

Design Responsive to Modern Demands

As the focus of what consumers are searching for in mailboxes progresses, product development must keep pace.

Consumers are searching for "customization, new colors, and post-and-mailbox combination units," Paulsen says, in addition to "new and improved security features."

While "incorporating good quality design and aesthetics," Troyer says Architectural Mailboxes also "keeps close

tabs on mail trends. Letter mail is becoming more infrequent, while parcel shipments have become the fastest growing revenue segment for the U.S. Postal Service. We have expanded our entire product line to support this growth."

The market for curbside mailboxes is increasing as the U.S. Postal Service eliminates walk-up mail delivery and begins mandating conversion to curbside mailboxes, Bolles says. "In addition to the closure of 3,700 post offices nationwide, this change is forcing consumers to install curbside mailboxes. These consumers are more likely than average to be concerned with mail security, increasing demand for locking mailboxes."

Shifting Consumer Behavior to Impact Boxes

Evolving consumer trends will create future openings for sales gains, manufacturers say.

Expanding the mailbox set to answer all the newest trends in mail delivery and also incorporate parcel drops is vital, Troyer says. "Online shopping is estimated to reach over \$250 billion this year. The majority of the parcels are delivered while consumers are at work. Architectural Mailboxes is first to market with the elephantrunk parcel drop; we believe it is the next home appliance."

Paulsen says that improved "capacity and security" will represent avenues for potential growth for the category going forward.

Identity theft continues to be the fastest growing crime in the nation, and stolen mail is a leading cause of identity theft, Bolles says. "The opportunities moving forward continue to be increasing consumer awareness of mail theft as a cause of identity fraud, and key prevention strategies, namely the use of high-security locking mailboxes."

"As more consumers switch to locking mailboxes, thieves are increasingly prying open or fishing from low or faux-security locking mailboxes," Bolles adds. "Moving forward, differentiation of the Mail Boss locking mailbox line on security will be increasingly relevant."

Promotions Communicate Aesthetic, Security Benefits

Getting consumers to view mailboxes as an aesthetic enhancement to homes creates trade-up opportunities.

With a philosophy of promoting mailboxes as a "lifestyle item," Architectural Mailboxes, LLC provides "POP displays and packaging with large images showing the mailbox in use on nice homes, which helps consumers imagine how the mailbox would look on their homes," says ceo Vanessa Troyer. "Mailboxes are no longer viewed as just a utility item; they are a curb appeal item. The mailbox is the first thing visitors will see."

Gibraltar Mailboxes is using both online and in-store promotions to support its mailboxes, including the PostMaster Big Easy post & mailbox combination, according to Derek Paulsen, group vp marketing Air Vent & Solar group at Gibraltar Industries, Inc.

Epoch Design, LLC has received two Golden Hammer Awards at The National Hardware Show for merchandising, including POP displays, packaging, and endcap banners, says David Bolles, president. "These exceptional POP merchandising materials are available free of charge for all retailers. Epoch Design also provides endcap posters, customer flyers, and LCD video players for all retailers."

The Mail Boss loop videos are embedded on the players allowing for a quick plug-and-play setup, Bolles adds. "These retail loops are informative regarding product features and mail identity theft trends."

Print, radio, and television advertising continues to play an important role in branding for Epoch, Bolles says. "Promoting mail theft awareness to retailers via recent local mail-theft articles has also been helping retailers increase mail-identity theft awareness among customers and drive Mail Boss sales."