

# Streamline Your Marketing

The following excerpt represents 1% of the content of *“Winning Clients in a Wired World: Seven Strategies for Growing Your Business Using Technology and the Web,”* Kip Gregory’s new book.

Systemization is the foundation of long-term marketing success. How many times has a really good idea for connecting with an audience occurred to you, only to slip through your fingers because you can’t figure out how to execute it with limited resources? This section outlines inexpensive ways to act on those opportunities when you find them, so you can get the word out.

## Learn to Do Mail Merges

Mail merging allows you to turn a mass mailing into personal correspondence. It combines information about intended recipients (e.g., names, addresses) with the contents of a template to create an individualized end product for each reader. If you’re not familiar with how the process works, take a few minutes to explore Word’s mail merge capabilities using a step-by-step set of Wizard screens. Here’s how it works in a nutshell:

1. Select Tools from the main menu, then choose Letters and Mailings, and then Mail Merge Wizard.
2. Following the Wizard, select the document type and set up.
3. Select the “Recipients.” You can create a recipient list from an existing list (including Excel files), by incorporating your contacts from Outlook or by typing a new list from scratch.
4. Select or create the document content to be merged.

To add content from your list of contacts, place your cursor on the screen where you wish to enter the information and then click on the appropriate item to be merged from the contact file (address book information, a greeting line, electronic postage, postal bar codes, or the like.)

5. Preview and print.

Preview your merged documents and make any changes necessary. Finally, complete the merge and print.

## Outsource Fulfillment

If you work alone or with a small staff, processing marketing campaigns, seminar flyers, or annual statement mailings can bring everything else to a standstill. Here are five resources that can reduce the burden so you don’t get sidetracked stuffing and stamping envelopes.

NetPost Services (<http://www.usps.com/netpost/>). Surprisingly few people are aware that the U.S. Postal Service entered the Internet age several years ago. Today they offer automated fulfillment for mailings of all sizes through NetPost. With it, you can have letters, booklets, flyers, and postcards mail-merged and delivered to one or thousands without ever touching a piece of paper. Your pieces are processed and mailed the next business day from one of four mailing centers nearest each recipient: either California, Illinois, Florida, or New York.

The site offers step-by-step guidance to completing a mailing in five steps:

1. Selecting your document.
2. Selecting a mailing list.
3. Adding a return address.
4. Choosing your mailing options.
5. Paying for your order.

Once you are familiar with how to set up a mailing, NetPost’s Express option gives you a dashboard of choices that let you quickly select which options you want to employ.

**TIP:** The site’s Help section includes tutorials on creating documents, mail lists and address books, uploading files, reviewing mailing information, and deleting documents and mailing lists that you’ve stored. Review these and the Getting Started section if you want to better understand how the process works.

You can find additional authorized providers of NetPost’s online direct-mail fulfillment services at <http://www.usps.com/directmail/>.

**TIP:** You can request samples of five different mailers: one-page personalized letter, one-page flyer or self-mailer, full-color postcard or black-and-white postcard. Order one of each to gauge which would be most appropriate for your audience.

**TIP:** Check out Microsoft’s Office Marketplace (<http://office.microsoft.com/marketplace/>) for a listing of third-party vendors that offer automated fulfillment programs that integrate with Word and Outlook.

Kinko’s (<http://www.kinkos.com>). Kinko’s maintains more than 900 stores across the United States. If you have print needs for seminars, sales calls, client-appreciation events, or other meetings, it’s likely you can transmit what you want printed electronically and then pick it up or have it delivered. Kinko’s will accept files created in portable document format (PDF), or if you don’t own Adobe Acrobat, you can use their File Prep Tool.

*Excerpt courtesy of Kip Gregory.*

