

# Case study: Pacific Northwest Ballet

QAS Choreographs  
a Data Solution for PNB



## Situation

Pacific Northwest Ballet (PNB) had a database riddled with bad addresses and out-of-date information, resulting in a lack of ongoing communication with key members and a waste in budget from large amounts of returned mail.

## Solution

Experian QAS has been integrated with PNB's database, allowing them to maintain more accurate records and increase their marketing mailings to new audiences.

## Results

Experian QAS has enabled PNB to save up to 16% of postage on marketing mailings, simply by getting addresses right and reducing returned mail. The marketing team is now willing to spend more money on campaigns, because they have more confidence that pieces will reach recipients. The team also saves time on record entry, and makes more intelligent decisions regarding marketing initiatives.

Founded in 1972, Pacific Northwest Ballet (PNB) is one of the most highly respected dance institutions in the world, and is known for its artistic excellence, innovation, and superb company of dancers.

Currently, PNB maintains a constituency of approximately 260,000 records with over 11,000 subscribers in a Tessitura Arts Enterprise Software database – a CRM database system specifically designed to meet the needs of artistic and theatrical organizations.

PNB had a database riddled with bad addresses. Data from outside mailing lists, such as Ticketmaster, were missing apartment numbers and had incorrectly spelled street names. In addition, the high-stress Nutcracker season – where the volume of ticket sales is the heaviest – provided an environment ripe for inaccurate and incomplete records.

Returned mail was expensive, and a waste of time for PNB's marketing team, who operate on a fixed budget. For example, a mailing of

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approximately 75,000 pieces resulted in 12,000 returned pieces. At a cost of 70 cents per piece, PNB was losing a stunning \$8,400, or more than 16%, on each typical mailing.

#### An Ensemble Cast is Formed: PNB Turns to Experian QAS

PNB turned to Experian QAS products that validate addresses against official U.S. Postal Service® records during entry into a database. QAS Batch validates already existing records. Together, the products cleanse existing databases, and make sure they stay clean going forward.

PNB installed Experian QAS products and integrated them with the Tessitura database in one day. "Support has been great," said Jim Mitchell, PNB's IT Manager. "QAS helped us with our installation and, since then, we've had no problems whatsoever. QAS is a pretty straight forward product and is very easy to use."

#### A Negligible Return Rate

With a more accurate member and donor database, PNB is now saving money on marketing campaigns, and is better prepared to target new audiences.

"We know for a fact from past experience that QAS has provided more cost-effective mailings,"

Mitchell added. "Marketing gets very expensive if you don't have good information in the first place. Prior to QAS, we had a return rate of over 16%. Our current return rate is almost negligible."

"I've been the most impressed with fact that I can guarantee nearly 100% accuracy for our core constituency," said Mitchell. "This has allowed our marketing folks to go to the next level by widening their mailings. They are now more willing to spend money on a larger mailing if they know they are getting a greater percentage of correct addresses and can pull in people lost due to incorrect information. Experian QAS software has allowed us to make more intelligent decisions on the number of mailings we send out. Before, we were shooting in the dark with our level of accuracy."

PNB's data entry and box office staff now have fewer key strokes to make when entering records and can accurately create complete addresses. "In general, our administrative staff thinks it works wonderfully. In addition to the fact that it is incredibly accurate for U.S. addresses, it makes the process of building a new constituent record much faster," continued Mitchell. "Our people are all using it."

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