

U.S. International Trade Commission

Management Letter - Printing and Mailing



OIG-ML-14-12

June 9, 2014



Office of Inspector General

The U.S. International Trade Commission is an independent, nonpartisan, quasi-judicial federal agency that provides trade expertise to both the legislative and executive branches of government, determines the impact of imports on U.S. industries, and directs actions against certain unfair trade practices, such as patent, trademark, and copyright infringement. USITC analysts and economists investigate and publish reports on U.S. industries and the global trends that affect them. The agency also maintains and publishes the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States.

Commissioners

Irving A. Williamson, Chairman

Dean A. Pinkert, Vice Chairman

David S. Johanson

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UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, DC 20436

June 9, 2014

IG-14-011
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Chairman Williamson:

During the course of our audit of the Commission's methods for making cost estimates for reports, we identified an expensive practice that may not be necessary. We understand that the Commission, too, has recognized that the practice of printing and mailing work products and news releases may be excessive and is evaluating options to change its procedures. Our audit standards require that we issue this management letter since we are not discussing this issue in our audit report, as it was unrelated to the objective of the audit.

The internet has transformed the way the Commission communicates information to the public. The Commission has improved access to its work products and activities by providing the information on its public website. The website offers any internet user access to the U.S. Harmonized Tariff Schedule, Commission's voting results, news releases, publications, reports, and other work products developed by agency staff.

In addition to posting its work products on its website, the Commission has also continued with its current expensive practice of printing and mailing reports, news releases, and other work products through the mail to the general public. From January through mid-September of 2013, the Commission printed and mailed over 6,000 copies of 46 different reports and mailed over 2,500 news releases to external customers. The estimated cost to print these documents was over \$80,000, and does not include costs incurred for postage, supplies, and staff resources.

When this practice was initiated, mass reproduction of documents and delivery through the postal service may have been the most efficient option available to disseminate the results of Commission work. Today, the Commission can provide information more efficiently and at a reduced cost, through the use of electronic means.

We discussed the content of this Management Letter with Commission management and received verbal feedback. We are making two recommendations for corrective action.

Recommendation 1: The Commission stop the general printing and mailing of publications, reports, and news releases to the general public.

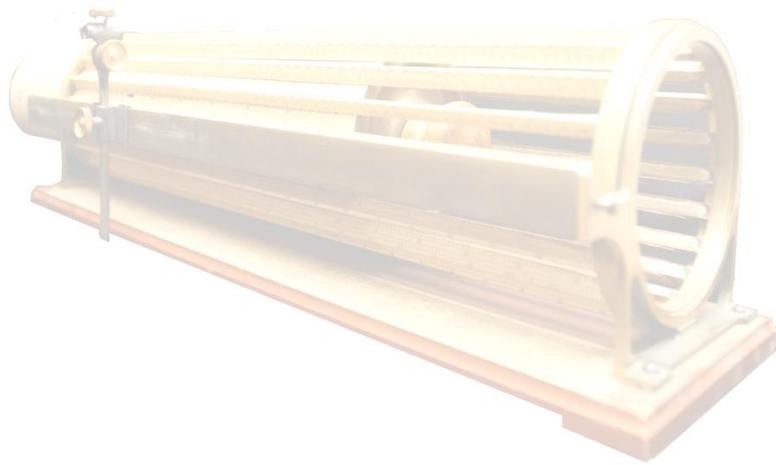
Recommendation 2: The Commission establish a process to use electronic means to provide notification of publications, reports, and news releases to the general public.

In the next 30 days, please provide me with your management decisions describing the actions you will take to implement the recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Philip M. Heneghan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Philip M. Heneghan
Inspector General



“Thacher’s Calculating Instrument” developed by Edwin Thacher in the late 1870s. It is a cylindrical, rotating slide rule able to quickly perform complex mathematical calculations involving roots and powers quickly. The instrument was used by architects, engineers, and actuaries as a measuring device.

To Promote and Preserve the Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Integrity of the U.S. International Trade Commission



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