

The EDDM mailing reached the wrong city. The list missed thousands in the right one.

A client preparing a legally sensitive residential notice for one Southern California city had previously mailed through another mail house using EDDM, and a significant portion of that mailing landed in an adjacent city where the notice did not apply. Plavidian advised against EDDM, then found the second problem: the client's own lists were missing thousands of residents in apartments, condos, and other multi-unit properties. Plavidian rebuilt the universe to the individual unit level and validated every address against the legal city boundary: 26,662 unique residential delivery addresses, roughly 96.9% of the city's estimated housing units.

CLIENT TYPE

Municipality-specific residential outreach organization

GEOGRAPHY

Confidential Southern California city

CORE SERVICES

EDDM analysis, unit-level expansion, boundary validation

FINAL UNIVERSE

26,662 addresses, ~96.9% of housing units

The outcome

The prior EDDM mailing through another provider had delivered a notice to residents of a neighboring city, and the client's addressed lists were simultaneously missing thousands of qualified households inside the target city. Plavidian corrected both failures at once: the final universe of 26,662 validated residential delivery points recovered thousands of previously omitted multi-family units, preserved the client's valid legacy records, contained no duplicate addresses, and excluded every address physically located outside the legal city boundary.

WHAT WENT WRONG BEFORE

EDDM caused the problem it was supposed to solve

The client's previous mail house recommended Every Door Direct Mail as a simple way to reach residential households, and the client mailed with it. EDDM selects USPS carrier routes, and carrier routes are postal delivery constructs: they cross municipal lines, mix incorporated and unincorporated areas, and serve more than one postal city. A significant portion of that mailing was delivered to households in an adjacent city, recipients the notice did not apply to, which produced confusion, complaints, and questions about the accuracy of the outreach program.

When the project came to Plavidian, the first recommendation was to reject carrier-route saturation entirely. A notice restricted to residents of one municipality requires an addressed mailing built from individually validated delivery points, because only individual addresses can be tested against a legal boundary. EDDM is a reasonable tool for neighborhood or trade-area saturation where exact boundaries are not controlling; it was the wrong tool here, and it had already proven it.

THE HIDDEN GAP

The buildings were on the list. The residents were not.

Rejecting EDDM solved overreach but not completeness. The client's residential and multi-family lists often carried a single base property address, 100 Civic Center Drive, where postal delivery actually requires each unit as its own delivery point: Unit 101, Unit 102, Unit 103. A list can appear to include an apartment community while omitting most of the households inside it. The deficiencies concentrated exactly where they matter for a residential notice: apartment communities, condominiums, townhomes, and senior housing.

The client was therefore failing in two opposite directions at once, mailing to households outside the city while missing thousands of legitimate residents inside it.

THE REBUILD

Suppression, acquisition, and unit-level expansion

Plavidian did not discard the client's data and buy a replacement file. The legacy lists were normalized, street elements, unit designators, ZIP and ZIP+4 formats, and became the suppression and reconciliation universe: every newly identified address was compared against what the client already had, so the coverage gap could be measured rather than assumed. Missing unit-level delivery points were identified and acquired in a targeted way, subjected to the same normalization and quality standards, then merged with source lineage preserved and deduplicated at the individual delivery-point level, keeping two valid units at one street address separate while consolidating duplicate versions of the same unit.

The step EDDM could never provide came last: every address in the merged universe was geocoded and tested against the legal boundary of the target city, not its postal city name, ZIP, or carrier route. Records physically located in neighboring municipalities were removed, boundary-edge cases were reviewed individually, and final counts were reconciled from source records through exclusions to the deliverable.

WHY IT GENERALIZES

Postal geography is not municipal geography

This case applies to any geographically restricted residential outreach: local governments, school and utility districts, public agencies, community associations, ballot-measure organizations, and campaigns. A large list is not necessarily complete, a carrier route is not necessarily contained within a city, a postal city name is not necessarily a municipal boundary, and a building address is not necessarily a household address. Reliable municipal outreach requires source reconciliation, unit-level coverage, and geographic validation against the actual jurisdiction.

RESULTS

By the numbers

26,662validated unique residential
delivery addresses**96.9%**of the city's estimated housing
units covered**1000s**of previously missing
multi-family units recovered**0**duplicate delivery addresses
in the final universe

A mailing method can reach too far while a mailing list does not reach far enough. Plavidian corrected both: thousands of previously omitted residential units were recovered, addresses outside the intended city were excluded, and the client received a defensible, auditable municipal mailing universe suitable for a jurisdiction-specific notice.

Complex data should not become production risk.

Request a data & mailing consultation: www.plavidian.com/request-a-quote · (760) 666-3130