

Mail or email monthly bills?

Hi all,

Currently I mail all my monthly bills to my clients. I do this piece because I think that a paper bill seems more important and noticed than an emailed bill.

Am I just wasting money with snail mail? Should I be emailing my clients their bills to save the \$.49 stamp for each bill? Thanks.

I have been emailing bills for years. No problems. Of course, I represent businesses and business people so YMMV.

Fredric Gruder

We email PDFs of bills and reminder statements. Never had an issue with it.

Kevin Grierson, Virginia

I actually don't think I've ever sent a paper invoice, it's always been by e-mail. The only potential downside I could see is the risk that it will get stuck in a spam filter, which has happened with exactly one invoice. If a client wanted a paper invoice I'd oblige, but I've never had anyone ask!

Personally, I'd prefer to never send or receive another piece of snail mail again, though i realize we aren't quite there yet.

Noel French, Michigan

Email it is....plus this way you can see when they opened it. ;)

Dave Rakowski, Pennsylvania

Good point. We actually recently changed from a PDF of a bill to a link to the bill in Bill4Time. We can track third-party access to those links, though to my knowledge we've not had a need to do so.

Kevin Grierson

My cpa sends me a QuickBooks invoice link. I just click click click and the invoice is paid. I like the convenience.

Gene Lee, California

I switched from paper invoicing to email billing through Clio and Lawpay about 6 months ago. It has been a huge timesaver for me (as I do all my own billing despite having staff), and clients clearly like the convenience of paying online. I can also send requests for retainer deposits, which are paid online as well.

Out of the 30-50 invoices I prepare each month, only about 5 of those are sent snail mail, to older or non tech-savvy clients.

Marshall D. Chriswell, Pennsylvania

Even my lawn guy sends me a Quickbooks invoice!

I like that can pay everything whenever/wherever I find the time, without needing to find paper bills that I tucked away somewhere.

Meg Tebo, Illinois

We switched to emailing bills about 5 years ago, except for those clients who tell us to send paper copies. I get paid faster and have fewer issues with billing. We use Timeslips and it was easy to switch on the "E-mail bills" option.

Robert "Robby" W. Hughes, Jr., Georgia

Why don't you do both for a couple of months and see what your results are? If you can get paid online, I'd definitely include a link for payment there for emailed bills.

You can send your paper bills out on something like light yellow paper, to see for mailed payment whether they are responding to the mailed bill or printing out the emailed bill. Of course that won't help you much if they don't return the bill, such as if paying through a bank's BillPay system.

My law firm does both, and we ask at intake how they'd prefer to receive bills. I have some corporate clients, but the majority of the firm's work is individuals, so we probably have a high percentage of clients than most who would prefer paper bills. If a bill is unpaid, regardless of the client's election, we send the next bill both email and snail mail.

Cynthia V. Hall, Florida

We send both. We set up our billing month to end on the 20th years ago when we were in a more manual system but the idea was that we would get the bills out by the 25th and thus be in line for payment before those who billed at the end of the month.

We started e-mailing the bills in addition to snail mail several years ago. No one has complained about receiving two bills for the same thing.

They know better than to pay it twice just because it came by two media.

I do have one client who continually says he has an on-going battle with the post office over the delivery of his mail and thus he hasn't gotten our bill so he hasn't paid it yet. Unfortunately for him, I can see where he did open the e-mail copy of the bill. Fortunately for me, his bills are usually very small as he does not produce large quantities of work for us, in fact it is mostly the dribs and drabs of closing up the file. Anyway, any future work will be accompanied by a substantial retainer. This will probably scare him off but if I am not going to be paid, I would rather be on the golf course than slaving for an ungrateful client.

John Martin Miles, Georgia

Email. Mail would be redundant and I fail to see the point.

Sterling L. DeRamus, Alabama

My engagement letter states it is the practice of my office to send electronic invoices unless the client prefers USPS mail. Then there are lines to provide email and mailing address. I do that, in part, because clients, inspite of good counsel, use their work email for personal matters and when that goes haywire I want to be able to demonstrate I used the designated email.

Like Robby, I use the billing component of Time Matters to keep time and send invoices. More than once I've billed early on a Saturday and Monday's mail brought a check.

Deborah Matthews, Virginia
