

Customer Connect adds up for USPS

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Carrier's sharp eye key to scouting new businesses

Philadelphia, PA Branch 157 member **Joe Delmont** had been keeping an eye on the newest business on his route for a while. The 23-year carrier quickly struck up a rapport with his new customers, who turned out to be the owners of a startup e-commerce fulfillment company, IK Marketplace.

"After a few times [delivering to them], when I heard what they did, I said, 'Hey, can I get someone to talk to you?'" Delmont recalled.

After the owners agreed, the carrier passed their information along to his Customer Connect coordinator, who logged the lead and helped facilitate the sale.

Following further discussion, the sales team then closed a deal to handle



Joe Delmont

the company's shipping, generating an estimated \$6.9 million in new annualized revenue for the Postal Service.

Delmont has submitted several other leads for the Customer Connect program, and said that he always tries to keep a lookout for potential new customers.

"If I see anything on a loading dock, even if I don't go in [to deliver mail] myself because they have a P.O. box, I relay it to the Customer Connect coordinator," he said. "Sometimes, we strike gold."

Delmont added that his best advice to newer carriers would be to "keep your eyes and ears open," he said. "If you notice a couple of packages at a house or business, or you're seeing UPS or FedEx, just write down the address and give it to Customer Connect."

In Iowa, two carriers deliver big for the Postal Service

Two letter carriers from Central Iowa Merged Branch 352 recently struck big with sales leads for the Customer Connect program, generating almost \$200,000 in new estimated revenue for the Postal Service.

Branch 352 member **Travis McCray** said that as a T-6 working on mostly commercial routes, he keeps an eye out for possible leads while delivering—but his most recent lead came from a source closer to home.

The carrier's wife works for a law firm, and she asked McCray for assistance when the firm was swamped with an especially heavy mailing period.

"I've got my wife's boss asking me questions about postage," the six-year carrier said. "I was on vacation at the time, so I called the station."

Working together, McCray and his fellow carriers were able to satisfy the firm's needs and get everything mailed out. His lead generated more than \$125,000 in revenue for USPS.

McCray said that his strategy for finding leads was based on his previous employment. "I used to work at a place

that did a lot of shipping," he explained, "so I knew what's cheaper through us and what wasn't."

When he sees a business that he knows could save money through USPS, he said, "I look into getting them a better deal."

For his lead, Branch 352 member **Jason Berkley** found a slightly more unusual business: Crayfish Empire II, which sells all-natural food for shrimp aquariums.

"I'm a T-6, so I see a lot of routes and businesses," the carrier, who has also served as a steward for 14 years, said. "[I approach businesses] if I notice UPS stopping there quite a bit."

His approach to leads is straightforward, Berkley said: "I ask, 'Can I give your name and number to someone to lower your shipping costs?'"

Then, he passes their information along to the branch Customer Connect coordinator, fellow Branch 352 member **David Weaver**, who takes over the sale.

The key, Berkley said, is "to get to know your customer." He added, "I've been doing this 26 years, and you learn to speak friendly to people."

Both carriers were enthusiastic about Weaver's ability in his role as coordinator, and credited him with a lot of assistance in finding and generating leads.

The carriers also agreed that most businesses, if approached the correct way, are eager to hear ways to save with the Postal Service.

"People hear it will lower their costs, and they're interested," Berkley said. **PR**



Jason Berkley

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Carrier coordinator retires after one last lead

"I've been the Customer Connect coordinator ever since we started doing it," Hayward, CA Branch 1707 member **Oscar Dominguez** said, before his retirement in May. But the 35-year carrier went out on one final large sales lead.

After learning from the owner of a local paper products supply company that she was paying enormous shipping charges, Dominguez spoke to her about the advantages of shipping with USPS. One of the carrier's biggest selling



Oscar Dominguez holds his award recognizing his work with Customer Connect for the Bay District.

points? "Mention we don't charge for pick-ups," he said.

After returning to the post office, Dominguez passed on the information through a Customer Connect lead card. A sales team was able to follow up with the customer and convince her to make the switch. Dominguez's last sales pitch generated an estimated \$1 million in new annualized revenue for the Postal Service.

"Oscar really enjoys speaking with his customers," said Mary Anderson, the small-business engagement director for USPS Headquarters. "With this one conversation, he saved this customer thousands of dollars a month in surcharges and won new revenue for the Postal Service."

Dominguez says that his years of advising carriers about the Customer Connect program taught him a great deal about how to convince customers to make the switch.

"If you see a business, even a home business, where UPS or FedEx are picking up stuff, get the name of the person in charge of shipping," he said he told newer carriers. "Then get the name to me, and I'll start the ball rolling from there."

The carrier emphasized the importance of Customer Connect for the future of USPS. "The union and the Postal Service are working hand-in-hand on this to generate revenue," he said. "We get no taxpayer money. All of our wages, etc., come from what we can generate."

Dominguez's key tip for carriers who are hesitant to generate leads: "Don't be afraid to ask. If you don't ask, there's no chance [they'll switch]."

An alert California carrier seals the deal for USPS

Pasadena, CA Branch 2200 member **David Savillon** completes more than 400 deliveries on a daily basis. In addition to delivering the mail, however, he also keeps his eyes peeled for potential

new customers for USPS.

One such customer was Carpe Diem Trading, which sells high-quality second-hand clothing.

"I saw that [the business] was shipping a lot," the eight-year carrier said. "But they were using FedEx and UPS."

Savillon approached the owner, Art Simonian, and inquired if he would be interested in speaking with a USPS sales representative. Without hesitation, Simonian said, "Of course," and gave the carrier his business card. Savillon then went back to the post office and told his supervisor about the situation.

When a sales representative met with the owner a short time later, Simonian described the products he was selling and shipping; since his packages were lightweight, the representative explained that USPS First-Class Mail and Priority Mail would both be a better fit for the company, improving packages transit time and lowering costs for the company.

After Simonian shifted his business to the Postal Service, Savillon's lead generated more than \$99,000 of new revenue.

The carrier says that he sticks to the facts in order to persuade new customers to consider switching to USPS. "I tell them, we can offer you a great rate," he explained.

He also believes that a good attitude allows him to pick up leads wherever he can. "You never know what you're going to find," he added. "But if you're positive and open, things are going to follow." **PR**



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Pennsylvania carriers honored on Customer Connect Day

The Eagleville, PA, post office celebrated Customer Connect Day on Nov. 17, 2020, when the office honored two Norristown, PA Branch 542 members whose leads resulted in almost \$900,000 in new revenue for the Postal Service.

Drew Ritchie, a 26-year carrier, had recently submitted two leads through Customer Connect that brought in a combined revenue of more than \$600,000.

One lead was for a golf apparel company that was looking to eliminate surcharges and enhance customer delivery expectations. "I inquired with [the employees] at the place, 'Who does your shipping?'" Ritchie recalled, and then managed to get the store contact information to pass along to a USPS sales team.

Ritchie's second lead was for a cleaning supply company that was unhappy with the service provided by another shipper and looking for better rates and improved shipping times. "It was at the start of the pandemic, and they were overburdened" due to the demand for hand sanitizer and other cleaning products, he explained. "I said, 'I'll have someone talk to you.'"

The carrier said that if he sees packages from another shipping company sitting inside a store, he asks the owners if they would consider switching. "I'm not shy," he said. "Just don't be afraid to ask."

Meanwhile, 33-year carrier **Donald Felice Jr.** submitted a lead for a company that sells exfoliators and body sponges. The lead resulted in a shipping deal worth more than \$287,000.

The company, Clean Logic, had recently moved to a storefront on Felice's route. "I saw they had a huge warehouse in the back," the carrier recalled, and he wondered if USPS could pick up the company's shipping business. When the store opened, he went in and talked to one of the owners.

"I asked if they were interested in talking to the Postal Service," Felice said, "and she gave me her business card." He then passed the information to the sales team, who closed the deal.

"I have a great rapport with customers," the carrier explained about his sales tactics. "They see me in uniform, and I talk to them and make a personal contact." Once he has a familiarity with the store and its management, he asks them if they would be interested in saving money by shipping with USPS.

"It's really not that hard—everyone's interested in saving money," Felice added. "It's just a matter of making that initial contact."

The two carriers' achievement was celebrated in Washington, DC, as well. "Drew and Donald served their customers well by noticing that they could get better service from USPS," said Mary Anderson, the small-business engagement director at USPS Headquarters. "It is important that we recognize the efforts of all our carriers who help drive new revenue for the Postal Service."

At pizza restaurant, a carrier delivers for USPS

When San Diego, CA Branch 70 member **Daniel Galvan** saw a new pizza restaurant opening up on his route, he decided to use his tried-and-tested sales pitch to encourage the owner to use USPS to drum up attention for the store's opening.

While delivering mail, he talked to the owner, Sunil Gakhreja, and asked him if he had ever considered mailing out flyers through



Daniel Galvan (r) and store owner Sunil Gakhreja

the Postal Service's Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) program. Gakhreja was intrigued. "He was asking a lot of questions," the nine-year carrier recalled. "So, I gave him all the information and got his information" in return.

Galvan then took the information back to the office and submitted the lead. When the sales team followed up, they spoke to Gakhreja about the merits of the EDDM campaign; the restaurant has subsequently done two advertising campaigns, generating \$30,000 in revenue for USPS.

This is not the first lead that Galvan has found for the Postal Service. He says that he keeps an eye out on his route for any potential new customers. "I try to look out for everything: new businesses, [customers who] ship out packages every day, or have heavy outgoing mail."

Galvan says talking about the pluses of the EDDM program is a great way to convince business owners to speak to a sales representative. "You can tell them, 'Have you thought about advertising? We deliver flyers to every house in the area,'" the carrier explained. "'Whatever works best for your business,' I tell them, and they all seem very interested."

Most important of all, Galvan says, is knowing the details behind what USPS can offer. "You have to learn about the service we provide, and get informed," he said. "If [the customer] has the correct information, then most likely they will follow through." **PR**

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In Texas, a carrier perfects his sales pitch

"If I see a competitor in [a business on my route], I see if there is something we can ship instead," said Dallas, TX Branch 132 member **Mandell Moss**, describing his strategy for generating leads for Customer Connect.

Moss, who has worked as a carrier for more than 25 years, said that his sales pitch revolves around the customer's specific priorities. "You talk to the contact person [in the business]," he explained, "and figure out what they need."

The carrier said that if the business is using a competitor, he looks to see how much it is shipping, and then explains how USPS can serve its shipping needs better. "If they ship volumes with UPS, why can't they do that with the Post Office?" Moss added.

One customer that he approached said that "he always wanted to ship with USPS but never knew who to contact," Moss said. The carrier was able to take the customer's information and pass it onto the USPS sales team.

Recently, Moss was also able to assist a business that ships 3D LED products. The customer was looking for ways to save on cost while still meeting customer delivery expectations, and was convinced by the carrier's explanation of the Postal Ser-



Mandell Moss

vice's rates and delivery times. Moss then submitted the lead to a Dallas business development specialist, who persuaded the owner to switch to USPS for shipping.

Thanks to Moss's connection with the customer, the sale generated more than \$274,200 in estimated annualized revenue for USPS.

Ohio Customer Connect coordinator inspires by example

Lima, OH Branch 105 member **Ned DeLong** has twice been named the top Customer Connect carrier for his district—but reaching that accomplishment has only pushed him to work harder. In addition to working as his branch's health and safety officer, DeLong serves as the Lima Customer Connect coordinator, helping motivate and instruct his fellow carriers on how to generate potential sales leads.

"When it comes to finding a lead, make it simple," the 17-year carrier said he tells newer carriers. "It's a business. Get a business card." This strategy has produced many leads for carriers, including some that have generated millions in revenue for USPS.

For his own leads, DeLong says that he never misses an opportunity to bring business to the Postal Service, including reaching out to family members and even making connections while on vacation.

He encourages branch members to use their ties to local businesses as well.

"I know a good quality sale [lead] when I see it," DeLong said. "You just have to be knowledgeable on what we can offer them, and look for an opportunity."

One of DeLong's key tips is to reach out to customers in the beginning of the year. Many delivery services raise rates in January and February, he said, but USPS "has a competitive rate, with no surcharges." Once he's made his pitch, DeLong then passes the customer's specific needs along to the sales team to close the deal.

Despite his busy schedule, DeLong says that he views his work as essential for keeping USPS in business. "I'm driven to keep [the Post Office] going—I love this place," he said. "If you do nothing, then nothing's going to happen."

Carrier's attention keeps customer with USPS

"I had a collection route, and I kept watching the volumes [of shipping] go down" at one of the businesses on his route, Oklahoma City, OK Branch 458 member **Richard Holland** explained. The company, Esellsimple, regularly ships auto parts through USPS, but recently, the store's shipping volume had declined dramatically. Finally, the three-year carrier decided to inquire about the shift.

He approached the owners—"they're very friendly people"—and asked what had changed. The owners told Holland that they were switching to UPS as their store's shipping provider. During the discussion, the carrier discovered that the customers felt let down by the USPS claims process.

The next day, Holland had a chance encounter with the Oklahoma City postmaster, Mike Allision. He told Allision about his customers' decision to change providers, and their specific concerns.

The postmaster got in contact with Esellsimple and, along with the sales

team, figured out a way to address the owners' desire for improved customer service. The store ended up switching back to USPS, using Priority Mail with a consistent pick-up service and improved transit times. Holland's sales lead generated more than \$926,000 in revenue for the Postal Service.

Holland was modest about his contribution to the lead, saying, "It's just one of those things—this one happened to be a home run." But he strongly encouraged other carriers to follow in his footsteps and reach out to the customers on their route.

"As carriers, we are face-to-face with our customers daily; we have the op-

portunity to keep every customer a loyal USPS customer," he added. For carriers who are new to the Customer Connect program, Holland says to keep the sales pitch simple. "You say: 'How would you like to get a competitive bid [for shipping]?' And who is going to say, 'No, we don't want to save money?'" **PR**

Election Notices

Indiana

This is official notice of the nominations and elections of the officers of the Indiana State Association of Letter Carriers. Nominations and elections will be held June 28-29 at the 2021 state convention in Indianapolis. The officers being elected are president, executive vice president/director of education, recording secretary, treasurer, director of retirees and seven executive board members.

Catherine Bodnar, Rec. Sec., ISALC

Little Rock, Arkansas

This is official notice to members of Branch 35 that nominations for branch officers, one trustee and delegates to the state conventions will be held during the regular branch meeting on May 7. Candidates for branch officers and trustee must be present during the nominations to accept nomination for office or have, in the hand of the secretary, written certification of acceptance for a specific office.

Election of delegates to the state convention and trustee will be conducted during the regular branch meeting on June 4. If you have any questions, please contact me at P.O. Box 190872, Little Rock, AR 772219-0672, or call 501-565-8106.

Jackie Maddox, Pres., Br. 35

Martinsburg, West Virginia

Nominations for officers and delegates of Branch 1475 will be accepted at the regular October branch meeting. Elections for officers and delegates will be by secret ballot at the regular November branch meeting.

Chris Lindner, Sec.-Treas., Br. 1475

McAlester, Oklahoma

Branch 1166 will be holding a merger vote at the May regularly monthly meeting. The meeting will take place on May 18 at 6:30 p.m. at the VFW. The address is 1426 Morris St., Krebs. All members are encouraged to attend.

The merger agreement will be between McAlester, OK Branch 1166 and Muskogee, OK Branch 1042. If passed, the new branch will be Muskogee Merged Branch

1042. All McAlester assets would become Muskogee's. Muskogee's bylaws will be the surviving bylaws. If passed, the proposed agreement to be voted on will become effective on June 1, upon approval of NALC Headquarters.

Jacob Evans, Pres., Br. 1166

Ohio

This is an official notification to all members of the Ohio State Association of Letter Carriers that nominations and elections for the offices of president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, director of legislative and political affairs, director of retirees and board members will be held during the 70th state convention. The convention will be held at the Hilton Cleveland Downtown July 23-24. The term of each office shall be two years.

Dale M. Liptak, Sec., OSALC

Pawtucket, Rhode Island

This is official notice to all members in good standing of Branch 55 that nominations for all officers will take place on Wednesday, May 12. Our meeting and the nomination of officers will take place outdoors, rain or shine. We will meet in the rear parking lot of the Lincoln Post Office, located at 203 Front St., Lincoln. The meeting starts at 7 p.m.

Any member in good standing wishing to accept a nomination and unable to attend the May 12 meeting must submit a letter in writing to the recording secretary, Kenneth Cahoon, and signify the acceptance of the specific nomination by the same May 12 meeting. The following positions are up for nomination: president, executive vice president, vice president, financial secretary-treasurer, recording secretary, health benefit representative (must be enrolled in the NALC Health Benefit Plan), sergeant-at-arms and three trustee positions.

The officers/positions will be elected for two-year terms. The election results will be by secret mail ballot, and election results will be shared with the members in accordance with the Branch 55 bylaws.

Kenneth Cahoon, Rec. Sec., Br. 55

Santa Fe Springs, California

This is official notice to all members of Branch 4941 that nomination for officers will take place at the regular branch meeting on May 19. The election will be at the regular branch meeting on June 16.

Dave Donovan, Pres., Br. 4941

Tennessee

The Tennessee State Association of Letter Carriers will hold its state officers' nominations on May 2. They will be held via web after receiving a dispensation letter from President Fredric Rolando.

Laurie McLemore, Pres., TSALC

Texas

The nomination and election of officers for the Texas State Association of Letter Carriers shall be conducted by mail. The nomination form shall be mailed to all delegates, as well as to each branch in Texas. Any regular member, in good standing with their branch, shall be eligible for any office of this association, and candidates running for a district board member position must be a member of the branch for that specific district.

Candidates running for a district board member position shall be elected by delegates of their respective district. No person shall nominate themselves for more than one office. The nomination form must be acknowledged and signed by each candidate running for office. Every nominee must certify that he or she has not served in a supervisory capacity for the 24 months prior to being nominated.

Upon its completion, the nomination form must be received by May 31, and shall be mailed to: TSALC Secretary Julian Alvarez, 181 W. 87th St., Odessa, TX 79764-2326.

This election by mail shall include only duly elected delegates by and for their branch. All ballots shall be mailed to the delegates' address of record with NALC membership. Ballots must be received by Aug. 26 to be counted at their weighted value (weighted value=total number of branch members, divided by the total number of delegates voting).

A branch may choose to vote unit

rule for the entire membership, and this decision must be made in writing and received by TSALC by June 30.

All candidates running for TSALC office may contact Reilly Echols Printing Inc. (214-428-8385) to print and mail their campaign material to all delegates, at the candidates' expense.

Julian Alvarez, Sec., TSALC

Torrance, California

In accordance with Article 5 of the NALC Constitution, this is official notice to all members of Branch 2207 that nominations for the offices of president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, sergeant-at-arms, MBA officer, health benefit officer and three trustees will be taken to the floor at the October branch meeting. Any potential nominees who cannot be in attendance must submit a letter of acceptance at the October branch meeting.

The election of officers for Branch 2207 will be held at the November branch meeting. The election of delegates to the national and state conventions will also be elected.

All elected officers will serve from Jan. 13, 2022, to January 2024.

Joyce Cudanes, Sec., Br. 2207

Western Wayne Co., Michigan

This is official notice to all members of Branch 2184 that nominations for branch president, executive vice president, vice president, recording secretary, financial secretary-treasurer, health benefits representative, sergeant-at-arms, retirees' officer (who shall be a retired member), three trustees and all station stewards, as well as the state and national convention delegates for the 2021-2023 term, will be taken at a special meeting, to be held on Sunday, May 23, at 2 p.m. at the Branch 2184 office at 6969 Monroe St., Taylor. All branch officers, by virtue of their positions, are automatic delegates to the state and national conventions.

Elections will be conducted by mail and the results will be announced at the executive board meeting on July 26.

John Hite, Sec., Br. 2184

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A simple question seals the deal in South Carolina

Columbia, SC Branch 233 member **Chris Mullen** has found that the simplest way is best when it comes to reaching out to customers for Customer Connect. "If I run into someone [on the route], I tell them about it," the 18-year carrier said. "It" is Mullen's key question: "I ask if they want to see if we can save them money," he explained.

This persuasive line worked perfectly when it came to Carolina Clutches, a store that sells high-quality handbags and accessories. The customer came to Mullen's attention once he saw that she was receiving a lot of deliveries through competitors. "If I see they have a lot of UPS packages, I reach out and ask," he said.

After Mullen discovered that the customer was looking for affordable shipping rates, he offered to connect her with the USPS sales team. A representative followed up with the customer and was able to recommend Priority Mail shipping for her business.

Mullen says that he has seen Carolina Clutches grow from the ground up. "When [the business owner] started, she was working out of her garage," he said. Mullen added that it was not a question of convincing her, but about letting her know about USPS's capabilities. "I didn't

have to say much of anything," he said. "She was looking to expand."

Mullen's willingness to reach out to his customers resulted in \$50,830 in new annualized revenue for the Postal Service.

Texas carrier receives Million Dollar Lead award

On Sept. 9, Dallas, TX Branch 132 member **Kathy Brown** received a certificate signed by NALC President Fredric Rolando in recognition of her extraordinary feat. Brown, a 32-year letter carrier, had secured a sales lead that generated more than \$1 million for the Postal Service.

Brown said that when she saw a FedEx trailer parked in a company's lot, it piqued her interest. The business was a logistics company that she regularly delivered to on her route. "I saw the trailer, and I inquired, 'Can we get some of that business?'" Brown recalled.

The carrier knew one of the sales representatives, so after getting the company's information, she made sure to follow up on the lead. The sales representative met with the owners, and was able to convince them to switch some of their shipping. "[USPS] got their business for the smaller packages," Brown said. "We have better prices."

Though Brown has since left her business route for a residential route, the carrier said that her ability to generate leads was mainly based around the instincts she has built up over her years on the job.



Kathy Brown (l) holds her award alongside Branch 132 President Kim Lewis.

"It's an acquired ability," she said.

But she believes her personal connection also helps when it comes to convincing her customers to hear her sales pitch. "I show that I'm concerned, that I deliver," she added. "You have to show that you can walk the walk."

In California, a carrier comes through for his customer

Flair Boutique clothing store owner Starr Donati faced a problem. Due to the pandemic-caused shutdown in her state, she was having difficulty getting her packages out to her customers. Her letter carrier, Stockton, CA Branch 213 member **Richard Valles**, saw an opportunity.

"I always try to grab people when I see them switching [delivery services]," Valles said. "I tell them that [USPS] is more dependable than other services." The 34-year carrier took the lead back to the office. A sales representative spoke to Donati and informed her about the better surcharge rate and lower shipping prices. Donati ended up switching not only her regular mail business to USPS, but her website shipping as well.

Valles says that his ability to connect with his customers does not come from his own persuasive ability, but from his long-standing connection with the people at those businesses. "They know me for so long," he explained. "You build up trust, you build up a comfort level." He said that this comfort level allows him to approach his customers with ease to ask them about their shipping needs.

Valles said that he thinks of the Customer Connect program as achieving a win-win scenario. "I can see both sides," he said. "It's good for the future of the Post Office, but I really believe that it's also best for the customer."

The carrier's readiness to go the extra mile for his customers paid off: His lead resulted in \$50,000 in new revenue. **PR**

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A courteous carrier closes the deal in California

When Andrew Jang, the owner of Grand Co. Sandals, approached Santa Ana, CA Branch 737 member **Maria Vance** and asked her whether the USPS overnight service was competitive with his current shipping rates, he knew he was in good hands. "We see each other every day, and we say, 'Hi, how are you?'" the 26-year carrier explained. "[Our interactions] are always professional and courteous."

Vance explained that Priority Mail Express service was every bit as good as the competition's and did not have residential surcharges, and that Priority Mail and Priority Mail Express came with free insurance included in the price. She also told Jang that he could order free shipping boxes and USPS would deliver them directly to his business address. Vance then took his information to pass along to the local sales team.

When a sales representative reached out to the customer, Jang praised Vance's helpfulness, and told

the representative that her willingness to assist him had already sold him on the idea of switching to USPS. Jang committed to shipping all of his deliveries using the Postal Service's Priority Mail Express and First Class Packages. Within a month, he also began to use the Priority Mail and Priority Mail International services.

Vance says that she tries to emphasize how important the Customer Connect program is to the newer letter carriers. "I want them to think about the fact that this is our future," she said. "If we do not have customers, then we will not have a business."

Vance's personal touch with her customers resulted in \$38,408 in new annualized revenue for the Postal Service.

Asking a simple question generates a large sale

When she was delivering an Express package to customer David Blake, Austin, TX Branch 181 member **Kendra Lawson** "saw an opportunity," she said. The 16-year carrier knew that Blake was constantly sending and receiving packages—he runs a small business that creates beautiful, unique glass memorials and cremation jewelry (jewelry that is infused with ashes).

Lawson asked him if he had ever spoken with anyone at USPS to see if the Postal Service could give him better rates on shipping. When Blake said that he had not, but that he was interested, she passed his information along to the sales team.

A field representative met with Blake and discovered that he was looking for lower costs, tracking and insurance. Blake ended up choosing Priority Mail for the predictive pricing, lack of surcharges and the consistent delivery.

Lawson said that her strategy for getting leads is simple, but gets results.

"I just tell them that I see they have a lot of packages, and ask if they have a business," she said. "If they say yes, I ask them if they want better [shipping] rates." Lawson's lead from Blake resulted in revenue of \$90,750 for the Postal Service.

Driving toward a great sale lead

"I was coming back from our Customer Connect quarterly meeting," Langhorne, PA Branch 4931 member and Customer Connect Coordinator **Joseph Tangradi** recalled about landing his lead from Jon-Don, a janitorial shipping company. As he and his postmaster, Dominic Campellone, drove back to the office, Campellone saw the Jon-Don store out the window, and mentioned to Tangradi that he kept seeing a FedEx truck parked in the store's lot in the morning. Tangradi, who has worked for the Postal Service for 26 years, said, "Let's stop by there now!"

In the store, they asked to speak to the person in charge of shipping. When the manager came out, Tangradi asked him if the company would like a better deal on its shipping prices. "The gentleman agreed," Tangradi said, and when they went back to the office, Tangradi filed the lead with the sales team.

The sales team followed up with Jon-Don headquarters in Chicago, and was able to sell the company on using USPS to handle its shipping needs. Thanks to Tangradi's willingness to seize the opportunity, his lead generated more than \$990,250 in new estimated annualized revenue for USPS. **PR**



Joseph Tangradi

Customer Connect adds up for USPS

By touching every address in the United States at least six days a week, letter carriers naturally develop special relationships with their customers. Since USPS's Customer Connect program began in 2003, thousands of carriers have successfully leveraged their interactions with business customers to encourage them to use the Postal Service, rather than rely on private delivery and mailing services. Below are some recent stories about Customer Connect leads submitted by letter carriers that have helped USPS earn new revenue.

In New York, the connection makes the sales pitch

For the past 10 years, Flushing, NY Branch 294 member **Patrick Flynn** had been picking up more than 100 Priority Mail packages per day from National Battery. "They do all kinds of batteries: car, motorcycle, wheelchair, you name it," the carrier explained.



Patrick Flynn

However, over the past year, Flynn had noticed that the number of packages he was handling for the company was decreasing. He realized that the company had been shifting the package volume over to UPS and FedEx. The carrier, who had a friendly relationship with the owner after delivering there for so many years, decided to make his pitch. "I told him, we can give you a better deal," Flynn recalled.

Once he got back to the office, he filled out a lead and "sent the business agent down there," the carrier said. The business agent demonstrated how

USPS could help National Battery reduce its shipping costs, and the owner decided to switch back to using the Postal Service for the bulk of its packages. "Now I'm back to doing several pickups there a day," Flynn said.

The carrier explained that he thinks the clincher to making a successful sales pitch as a letter carrier is the personal connection. "We have a one-on-one relationship with [the store owners]," he said. "We can see what their needs are, and show that we can meet them." He added: "It doesn't matter if it's a mom-and-pop store or a big business—it's just all about the connection."

Thanks to Flynn's ability to foster those customer relationships, his lead retained and generated more than \$1.4 million in estimated revenue for the Postal Service.

A chatty carrier talks his way into a huge sale

For as long as he has been on his route, Hudson Valley Merged Branch 137 member **Stephen Sciarra** has loved to chat with his customers. "I go into all my businesses," the 34-year carrier said. "I talk to the owners and we build up a rapport."

One day, he was talking to a customer, Kevin Meehan, who always had a large number of packages he shipped out during the week. His online-based company sells a variety of health and beauty products, as well as vitamins and natural supplements. But Sciarra knew that Meehan was splitting his package volume between USPS and FedEx.

During this conversation, the carrier decided to finally make his shipping pitch. Sciarra told him, "I'm more reliable than FedEx." Meehan agreed to listen, so the carrier filled out a lead and sent over a business agent.

The agent explained how Meehan could save money and increase transit times using USPS. He was convinced, and switched more than 125,000 packages over to the Postal Service. Now, "I have to take half my route out, since there's so many packages on Monday," Sciarra laughed.



Stephen Sciarra

The carrier said that letter carriers are invaluable to the Postal Service when it comes to making sales pitches. "We see [the customers] every day," he explained. By putting a face to USPS's great service, carriers can show the customers just what they have to gain by switching. "Be nice, be yourself, be reliable," Sciarra concluded. "That's how I've gotten every lead."

The carrier's friendliness and reliability have certainly paid off: his lead generated more than \$970,000 in new estimated revenue for the Postal Service. **PR**