

## Customer Connect adds up for USPS

**B**y touching every address in the U.S. at least six days a week, letter carriers naturally develop special relationships with all of 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 instead of relying 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.



Chris Jakositz (c) and Derek Simpson (r)

### Crescent Marketing

"Teamwork makes the dream work," as the saying goes, and Garden Grove, CA Branch 1100 members **Chris Jakositz** and **Derek Simpson** are certainly a revenue-generating team. They know that the Postal Service does not receive tax dollars for operating expenses, relying solely on the sale of products and services for revenue, and spotting opportunities and submitting Customer Connect leads has become part of their daily activity.

Jakositz is the regular carrier for Crescent Marketing, a supplier of toys and hobby goods located in Brea, CA. He noticed UPS picking up packages

from the business and asked whether Crescent was interested in learning about USPS products and services.

Simpson then assisted by speaking with the customer about being contacted by a USPS shipping specialist. The customer agreed to be contacted, stating that she wanted competitive pricing and reliable pickups.

Their strategy worked, and Jakositz and Simpson's Customer Connect lead generated \$696,000 in new revenue for the United States Postal Service.

### Marathon Sports

Boston Branch 34 member **Al Safrine** is a Customer Connect coordinator at the Back Bay facility and recognizes the program as critical for the success of USPS. "You have to have both sides working to reach the same goal," he said.

His concerns were heard loud and clear by his post office, and he did not give up. When he saw a nearby business, Marathon Sports, exclusively using a competitor, Safrine stopped by for a talk and zeroed in on the company's needs.

Marathon Sports worked only from a warehouse until Safrine suggested that the sales team give them a call. The company has since blossomed into a multi-location shipping client, at the suggestion of the USPS marketing department, all due to Safrine's sharp understanding of his business clients' needs. The letter carrier's lead generated \$280,368 in revenue for the Postal Service.



### The COOP

Boston Branch 34 member **Liam Cunningham** spotted some Customer Connect potential while out on his truck route. He often spoke with a contact of The COOP, a book warehouse that services the MIT and Harvard communities, and suggested it to a business development specialist.

Cunningham's singular knowledge of the business, and its use of a competitor, is what led to securing nearly \$170,000 in revenue for the Postal Service.



### Liquid Planet Online

When a local business, Liquid Planet, sought shipping-cost comparisons, Missoula, MT Branch 701 member **Robyn Morrison** listened to its needs. The carrier connected Liquid Planet's Truxton Rolfe with those at USPS who could help with the company's expansion to Liquid Planet Online. This online part of the company now delivers specialty coffees and accessories to customers by First Class, Priority and Express Mail.

When Morrison saw the potential for revenue for USPS, she notified her postmaster, who in turn submitted the lead to a business development specialist. The BDS saw that the revenue potential was substantial and gave the information to a sales representative, who secured the initial sale of \$34,125.

With Liquid Planet Online saving money and USPS making money, this business relationship flourished with



Jose Rico of the Washington Park Station in El Paso, TX, received a certificate (above) for his lead. Additionally, the carriers were treated to breakfast (left).

two more sales of \$70,680 and \$38,700, bringing USPS annual revenue a total of \$143,505.

The cooperation doesn't end there. Another Branch 701 member, **Ryan Sherwood**, Morrison's T-6 carrier, saw the opportunity to help this customer even more. Liquid Planet Online was mailing 20 to 25 packages per day with a scan on each package. To make things more efficient for the customer and USPS, Sherwood introduced the idea of using a Firm Sheet, which would allow for only one scan daily for all the packages, no matter how many were being shipped out. Liquid Planet Online quickly adopted this process. The business continued to grow to the point where it is now a daily pickup on a collection route.

Missoula sets a good example of NALC and Postal Service cooperation for the betterment of the USPS and its customers.

## Employee Engagement success in Texas

Washington Park Station in El Paso, TX, has seen a lot of Customer Connect success recently. Its employees were recognized for generating more than \$153,300 in combined revenue for various Employee Engagement programs in Fiscal Year 2017.

To show appreciation to employees for their participation in the Employee Engagement Program, the Rio Grande Employee Engagement Team delivered to each employee a letter signed by the district manager. They presented El Paso Branch 505 member **Jose Rico** with a medal and a "Revenue Generator" lapel pin.

The employees also were treated to breakfast burritos, an assortment of pastries, cake and refreshments.



achieved such a goal.

Booksrun.com sells books online and has a warehouse on Cecala's route. After Cecala's lead was submitted, it was assigned to a sales executive, who met with the company's owner, Kiryl Zarubau, and presented him some information.

The company's website not only allows customers all over the country to sell, buy or rent text books, it is also a fulfillment provider for some major bookstores. One of Booksrun's biggest advantages is that it provides customers an opportunity to buy used textbooks.

During the demonstration of USPS's solutions, Zarubau said that his package volume has quadrupled since 2016 and is growing at a steady rate. He has a major fulfillment commitment with Amazon and has to maintain a business relationship with it to remain competitive.

The owner was receptive to see how he could save on his overall shipping costs by upgrading to Priority Mail and first-class package services versus ground shipping. He also expressed his desire to use USPS as a single-solution shipping partner. He was won over by USPS's competitive rates, improved transit time and service standards.

The USPS sales executive offered Bookrun.com a Priority Mail negoti-

## A million-dollar deal with Booksrun.com

When a million-dollar lead comes in, it's a big deal—and Staten Island, NY Branch 99 member **James Cecala** recently

ated service agreement with a commitment to ship 125,000 packages annually. The company demonstrated growth and advocacy of the USPS brand, resulting in new revenues anticipated to exceed \$1.2 million—all thanks to Cecala's lead.

## Market Link Gift Shop

Chattanooga, TN Branch 62 member **Kevin Martin** submitted a Customer Connect lead for Market Link Gift Shop when he noticed that the number of packages the customer was giving him had dropped drastically. The store sells gift items for all types of occasions.

Amazon had apparently been pressuring Market Link's manager to ship more with UPS, even though that was more expensive. USPS Business development specialists contacted the customer and learned that it wanted to continue to ship with USPS. The sale was closed, with revenue of \$371,250 for the Postal Service.

A few months later, a BDS contacted the customer again and was successful in gaining even more of Market Link's shipping volume. As a result, a second sale was closed for more than \$1.3 million—the largest Customer Connect sale to date in the Tennessee District.

The Tennessee District's marketing department provided a breakfast to Chattanooga's East Ridge Station to recognize and celebrate the first sale from this lead and is planning another breakfast to celebrate the second sale. **PR**



Kevin Martin