

Customer Connect adds up for USPS

By 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' 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.

Excel Logistics

Columbus, OH Branch 78 member **John Ishler** was delivering mail one day when one of his business customers, Excel Logistics, asked him whether the Postal Service could provide discounts for their shipping needs.

Ishler took some basic information and submitted it to his management team, who in turn entered the information into the Customer Connect program. These steps, although basic, were critical in securing new revenue for USPS.

John Ishler (c) was recognized for his lead by **Region 11 National Business Agent Dan Toth (l)** and **Branch 78 President Todd Hornyak.**



The local USPS field sales representative responded to the lead and contacted representatives of the company to discuss USPS services and potential savings. After several visits, USPS and Excel Logistics representatives agreed to a business relationship that helped secure more than \$1.2 million in new annualized revenue for the Postal Service.

Because Ishler took that first step to submit a lead, USPS and its employees will benefit for years to come from the revenue that this "connect" will bring.



The carriers at the Downtown Delivery Annex in Baltimore

Maryland post office has six carriers bring in big leads

Employees at the Downtown Delivery Annex in Baltimore understand the importance of the Employee Engagement Programs (EEP). The EEPs are a group of employee initiatives designed to identify new business opportunities and to use customer relationships to generate new revenue.

Six letter carriers from the annex were recently recognized by the district for their EEP participation. Collectively, these Baltimore Branch 876 members generated more than \$400,000 in Customer Connect revenue for USPS: **Arthur Shaw III**—\$31,722; **Patrice Johnson**—\$205,426; **Carl Martin Jr.**—\$12,957; **Donna Ward**—\$15,065;

Charles Pinchback—\$78,840; and **Harold Arthur**—\$69,600.

To celebrate their achievement, these carriers received certificates of recognition and letters of appreciation.

Luca + Danni

Providence, RI Branch 15 member **Kevin Evans** had a business on his route that was using one of USPS' competitors. Luca + Danni sells jewelry handcrafted in the U.S. Its shipments of dangle bracelets were in small packages.

Evans' persistence helped to secure the deal with Luca + Danni. The carrier recognized that USPS' competitors already were using the "last mile" of our delivery system and that we could save the company money. The business had also been having trouble with the competitor picking up and delivering the packages as promised.

Evans' manager, who spoke with Luca + Danni, found out they needed to get their packages out at a certain time and arranged for Evans to work with the mailer to pick up their packages when they were ready. Evans recognized this opportunity and this lead resulted in \$70,000-plus of annualized revenue for the Postal Service.



Kevin Evans (c) helped Luca + Danni improve its shipping through a Customer Connect lead.



Photo by Ammy Bolger

Frankie Rodriguez was recognized at his station for helping to make the sale with Small Bear Electronics.

Small Bear Electronics

Sometimes a good Customer Connect lead starts with just keeping your eyes open, as was the case of Brooklyn Branch 41 member **Frankie Rodriguez** and Small Bear Electronics.

“The company was on my route and I noticed they were getting packages from UPS,” Rodriguez told Ammy Bolger at the *Triboro Tribune*. “I told them to give USPS a try and as their carrier I would give them great customer service. I am a hard worker and I like to make people happy.”

The carrier then submitted the lead to a business development specialist, who solidified it as a referral lead. A senior field sales representative then met with the customer and successfully closed the sale.

Rodriguez’s lead created a sales opportunity with the potential for \$92,695 in annualized revenue for USPS.

Tina’s Cuban Cuisine

When New York City Branch 36 member **Deborah Singleton** saw an opportunity for a business on her route, Tina’s Cuban Cuisine, to switch to the Postal Service for its mailing needs, she didn’t hesitate to turn in a Customer Connect lead.

Singleton got the impression the restaurant would like to expand its communications channels, so she put Tina’s manager Nancy Espinosa in touch with a USPS field sales representative.

During the meeting, Espinosa discussed her need to increase her business and the brand awareness of her restaurant as well as the media channels and communications efforts that Tina’s was using.

The USPS sales rep discussed the positive points of using Direct Mail, explaining that mail was measurable, effective and targetable. The rep also mentioned the current USPS mail offer-

ings available and that there are many promotional/discounted programs that USPS offers that are changing how mail is looked at in the advertising market.

Espinosa decided to move forward with Every Door Direct Mail as one of her primary offerings to customers because it is a “touch point” that effectively communicates a business’s message and brand identity. Additionally, the price point and delivery interval addressed her needs and that of her customers. Espinosa said that Tina’s Cuban Cuisine was interested in better targeting her potential clients and believed that the additional cost savings that EDDM provided in its built-in demographics would help her to better target ideal customers.

An EDDM piece fit the business’ needs and was designed. The first mailing was planned for April, with future mailings planned through 2017 and beyond. The projected new revenue to the USPS is \$144,000, thanks to Singleton’s lead.

Expressions

Expressions is a dance clothing e-commerce boutique on the route of New York City Branch 36 member **Jesus Chu**. One can find dance clothing and accessories here, including shoes and costumes.

Chu saw potential with the business and submitted a Customer Connect lead. A USPS rep spoke with Expressions rep Jackie Escalona about the company’s shipping practices.

Escalona explained that Expressions had recently taken on a number of new product offerings and had seen a rapid growth in sales. The company shipped the majority of its packages domestically to mostly residential addresses using UPS. She was concerned about an increase in shipping costs and wanted a more cost-effective shipping solution.

For Expressions, tracking and cost were paramount. Escalona explained that UPS’ charges were steadily increas-

ing operational costs. The USPS salesperson proposed First Class Mail and Priority Mail as cost-effective solutions for the company, with a focus on the lack of surcharges associated with USPS shipping products, as well as the improved transit time that First Class Mail and Priority Mail offered. They also discussed USPS’ tracking capabilities, highlighting the increased number of scans a package receives from the time it enters the mail stream until it reaches the recipient.

Escalona acknowledged the cost effectiveness of First Class Mail and Priority Mail and accepted the proposal. To further demonstrate the company’s commitment, Escalona opened an account and instructed her staff to immediately shift all shipping to USPS. Because of Chu’s lead, this sale will represent an additional \$151,100 in USPS revenue.

GingerChi

New York City Branch 36 member **Carrie Pizarro** knows a good business opportunity when she sees one. When the carrier saw that a business on her route, GingerChi, was using UPS to ship its packages, she turned in a Customer Connect lead.

GingerChi creates products made with fresh ginger oil. The business’ manager, Anna Lam, met with a USPS field sales representative to discuss her shipping needs.

The rep discovered that Lam was unhappy with the rates that UPS was offering her and wanted to reduce her shipping costs. They presented Lam with the features and benefits of Priority Mail and First Class Mail. The manager was sold on the efficiencies and cost saving that she would see by using these products. Pizarro’s keen intuition led to an estimated annualized revenue for the Postal Service of almost \$100,000 each for Priority Mail and First Class Mail. **PR**