

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.

Optimist International

While delivering on his route, St. Louis Branch 343 member **Marcellus Roberts Jr.** noticed that a local business, Optimist International, was using a USPS competitor to ship its parcels. Roberts had a friendly relationship with the person he saw there every day, Carl, and over time he began to inquire why the company ships with UPS and not the Postal Service.

Carl replied that he did not know, so Roberts took the opportunity to ask whether Optimist would be interested in learning more about what the Postal Service could offer in terms of savings and shipping solutions. Carl gave Roberts the name of the person to speak with for the business, and Roberts

Marcellus Roberts Jr. (center) was recognized for his Customer Connect lead.



submitted a Customer Connect lead.

After a follow-up by USPS's sales department, Roberts' lead turned into a sale worth \$92,433 of annual revenue for the Postal Service.

China Garden

Minneapolis Branch 9 member **Richard Langsdorf** was walking around his route recently when he noticed a local business, China Garden, was putting its menus in customers' doors and on their front steps.

As the Customer Connect coordinator for the Richfield, MN, station, Langsdorf saw an opportunity.

The carrier stopped by the business and informed its owner about Every Door Direct Mail and the benefits of having him deliver China Garden's menu to every mailbox. After entering the business name and information into the database, the business development specialist team contacted China Garden and helped guide them on the requirements of EDDM.

Langsdorf continued to stay connected with the business owner and noticed that the restaurant did indeed start using USPS for advertising with EDDM. The carrier's persistence and extra effort with China Garden turned into a \$14,400 sale for Customer Connect.

The carrier's efforts also factor into an especially productive station. For Fiscal Year 2017, the Richfield office leads the Minneapolis area with 60 leads and 36 carriers participating, with a total of 225 percent participation.

Green Building Supply Company

After seeing USPS competitors pick up packages from the Green Building



Richard Langsdorf

Supply Company, a business on the route of Fairfield, IA Branch 726 member **Paul Tray**, the carrier approached the shipping department to discuss trying to save the company money.

Green Building Supply was interested. Tray then filled out a lead card and submitted it. A USPS business development specialist followed up on the lead and closed the sale.

The carrier returns to the business every day at the end of his route, picking up Green Building Supply's packages and making sure they are properly shipped. Tray said that by seeking out new business for USPS, carriers are securing their future.

Tray's lead generated a sale of \$87,500 in annualized revenue for the Postal Service.

A triple win for USPS

While delivering to the businesses on his route, Ballwin, MO Branch 5050 member **Jeffrey Gradel Jr.** noticed several opportunities to generate new shipping business for the Postal Service and submitted those leads.

Two of his customers, Ezekiel & Sterns and Industrial Technologies, were using FedEx for their shipping needs, while a third customer was using UPS. Gradel leveraged his relationship with his customers to spark a conversation regarding saving them money by giving the Postal Service a chance.

Gradel said that when he talks to his customers, he explains that, at no expense to them, he can have a business development specialist get in touch with them to see whether USPS can help them save money.

The leads the carrier generated have resulted in new annualized projected revenue totaling \$209,950 for the Postal Service. Because of this, Gradel was pre-



NALC officials presented Jeffrey Gradel Jr. (2nd from l) with a certificate in recognition of his successful Customer Connect leads.

sented with a certificate of appreciation from NALC for his continued success with the Customer Connect program.

Gradel is a motivated supporter of the Customer Connect program and continues to work at getting other businesses on his route to either advertise or ship with the Postal Service.

Counselman Automotive



Kiesha Cordier

When Mobile, AL Branch 469 member **Kiesha Cordier** saw a UPS truck at a business on her route, she recognized the potential for new revenue. She soon entered a Customer Connect lead for Counselman Automotive Recycling.

Counselman Automotive predominantly sells recycled auto parts. It has more than a million parts in stock, including sheet metal, electrical and mechanical parts.

Cordier asked Counselman's manager, Gabe Givens, if he would like to speak with a USPS representative about how to save time and money with their shipping. Givens said yes, so a business development specialist contacted him and presented information on Priority Mail as a great value for the business to reduce the company's shipping cost while emphasizing the Saturday delivery service—an important benefit for customers requiring three-day delivery.

As a result of Cordier's support, the Postal Service has newly projected annualized revenue of \$97,650.

Jar & Company

When Florence, AL Branch 892 member **James Hollis** noticed packages outside a clothing store, Jar &

Company, on his route not intended for the Postal Service, he decided to speak with one of the employees there.

With some information gathered, the carrier submitted a Customer Connect lead for the business. Hollis's actions resulted in a business development specialist contacting the manager, Ms. Whitney. After determining the customer's shipping needs and offering Priority Mail as a solution, Whitney made the commitment to start using the Postal Service.

As a result of Hollis's support, the Postal Service has newly projected annualized revenue of \$35,360.



James Hollis (l) received a certificate of appreciation from his NALC national business agent.

Patriot Arms

Emerald Coast, FL Branch 4559 member **Richard Moller** submitted a Customer Connect lead for Patriot Arms, a business on his route. Patriot Arms sells weapons and security equipment online as well as at its storefront location.

Moller noticed that Patriot Arms had been shipping with UPS and informed a USPS sales executive, who met with the customer and recommended that they use Priority Mail. The customer said they were pleased with USPS' quick delivery, free Saturday delivery to all locations, no hidden fees and tracking visibility.



Richard Moller

This sale generated \$95,985 in new revenue for USPS, thanks in part to Moller's effort.

Three times charmed

Honolulu Branch 860 member **Johnette Ho'ohuli** appears to be by a lucky charm for Customer Connect, with three recent leads totaling \$184,000 in annualized revenue for the Postal Service.

The carrier's first lead was for Jeans Warehouse, a local apparel company with stores on Oahu, Maui and Guam. Ho'ohuli saw that the company was using FedEx and UPS for its shipping, so she approached them to see whether there was any way that the Postal Service could help.

Ho'ohuli submitted the lead, then called a business development specialist for follow-up. Jeans Warehouse was shipping all merchandise from the Guam stores via FedEx and paying international prices. This activity then led to two opportunities worth more than \$134,000.

Another opportunity soon presented itself to Ho'ohuli, and she submitted Pacific Harley-Davidson as a Customer Connect lead. The carrier had someone follow up with her contact there, Angela Wong, which led to a \$49,000 sale.

The carrier provided this advice on how to approach customers: "I think it's all about the relationship that you have with your customers. I didn't know that there would be such a big savings for my customer, but I knew that they were using our competitors. Now, they are so thankful to me and I am so happy knowing that they are saving money through us." **PR**



Johnette Ho'ohuli