

# Customer Connect adds up for USPS

**B**y 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, 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.

## In New York, an island expansion inspires a great talk

While delivering on his normal Bay Shore, NY, route, Long Island Merged



**Arnie Juarez**

Branch 6000 member **Arnie Juarez** struck up a conversation with Rajinder Sharma, the owner at one of his regular delivery stops. Sharma owns Shoreline Wear Inc., a franchise of women's and children's clothing stores.

Juarez noticed the volume of deliveries coming in and out of the store. "[The company] was sending out boxes every day," he said. Sharma was expanding his business from New York to the tropical shores of St. Thomas, Hawaii and Puerto Rico.

The carrier told Sharma all about the benefits of using the Postal Service during the expansion. "Oh, that's great, that's exactly what we need!" Sharma told Juarez. The carrier went back to

the office and told his supervisor, "We have a new customer!"

After a sales representative explained the benefits of using Priority Mail, Sharma agreed to create an Endicia.com account and switch his volume to USPS.

Juarez said he was glad that he was able to make the connection. "I appreciate my job; anything that can give back I want to do," he explained. "People want the [USPS] services, but they don't get approached by anyone." As letter carriers, he continued, "we're right there—it's very simple just to let [the customer] know what's available."

Juarez's willingness to start the conversation produced \$110,952 in estimated revenue for the Postal Service.

## One great question opens the door in California

Every two weeks, Greater East Bay Branch 1111 member and Customer Connect Coordinator **Bob Avila** gives a stand-up talk to his fellow letter carriers. During his speech, he tells them the secret to his success with the Customer Connect program.



**Bob Avila (l) and USPS sales and marketing manager James Tatum receive a certificate of achievement for their participation in the Customer Connect program.**

When you're meeting with a potential new customer, he says, you just have to ask them one question: "If I can show you a way to save money, would you be interested?" Almost everyone says yes, and then he can make his pitch to switch to USPS.

"It's all about the services" that the Postal Service can provide, the carrier explained. "I think we have a great product."

**"You just have to ask them one question: 'If I can show you a way to save money, would you be interested?'"**

The 32-year letter carrier thinks the program is especially suited to his personality: "I embrace different challenges, and I like the public." But Avila doesn't think that shy carriers should not participate in the program. During his stand-up, he emphasizes the need to give back. "It's time to give back, time to get involved. Do something for your community," he said.

When he's not out helping others, rallying his fellow carriers or delivering mail, Avila is generating leads himself. Recently, he approached the store managers at a local business park who had been using UPS pickup services for years. But after they heard Avila's special money-saving question, the managers of Bay Alarm Medical were receptive to his information about USPS's services. Six months and a call from the sales team later, the company was shipping with USPS on a large scale.

Avila's ability to practice what he preaches generated \$99,475 in new revenue for the Postal Service. **PR**