

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.

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**



David Savillon