

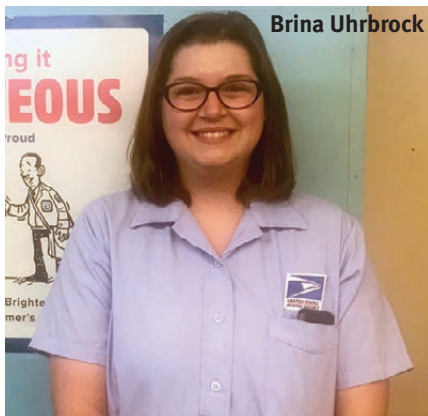
# Customer Connect adds up for USPS

**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, 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.

## Neighborly behavior pays off for customer and carrier

When the COVID-19 pandemic started affecting package deliveries in March, Muskegon, MI Branch 13 member **Brina Uhrbrock** noticed that Amazon appeared to have stopped delivering to and picking up packages from her next-door neighbors. Their company, Amazing Gifts LLC, sells seeds, and had been sending out a lot of extra packages in 2020.

Given her relationship with the company's owners—"I know them, and they're nice people," Uhrbrock said—she decided to broach the subject and ask them to consider switching to USPS.



Brina Uhrbrock

"I'm not good at sales pitches myself," the six-year carrier added. "I just knew that they needed help, and I could help them."

Uhrbrock told them all of the reasons to consider changing delivery services: "I told them that [USPS] could help them save money, though it turned out they were less interested in that," she said. After their bad experience with Amazon, the customers were more interested in reliability.

But Uhrbrock was able to adapt her pitch on the fly. "I talked about our set schedule [for deliveries]," she said. "And that convinced them to switch."

For other carriers looking to find leads for the Customer Connect program, Uhrbrock advised them to be watchful while out delivering. "I just keep an eye out for businesses that are going to other companies," she said.

The carrier's lead with Amazing Gifts generated \$318,500 in new revenue for the Postal Service.

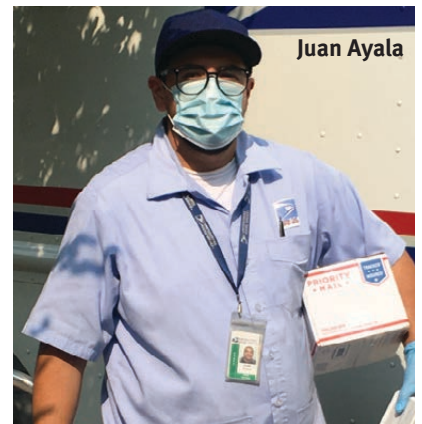
## A California carrier crosses the million-dollar mark for USPS

In the four years that he has been delivering for USPS, Santa Ana, CA Branch 737 member **Juan Ayala** has been a star when it comes to finding sales leads for the Postal Service. Since 2016, Ayala has submitted 28 leads for a total of more than \$1.3 million in new revenue.

As a city carrier assistant (CCA), "I was delivering on a business route," the carrier explained, and he got to know his customers well. When doing his sales pitch, Ayala kept it simple. "I had an idea of what the customers wanted—they wanted to know, 'What can the Post Office do for us?'" he said.

Once he spoke about the potential benefits of using USPS, Ayala continued, "Most people were interested in hearing more."

One of the carrier's most recent leads



Juan Ayala

came when he noticed competitors' trucks at the loading dock of one of his customers—a company that makes espresso machines.

"They had just moved in," Ayala said. So when he went in with his deliveries, "I told them, 'We can save you money on flat-rate boxes,'" the carrier added. "I just told them to give us a chance."

After speaking with the company's shipping manager, Ayala submitted a lead through Customer Connect. A field sales representative was able to close a shipping deal with the company, and they switched to the Postal Service; Ayala's lead is estimated to have generated more than \$555,000 in new revenue.

"Juan is Irvine's very own 'Million Dollar Carrier,'" Mary Anderson, a USPS director of small business engagement, said in a statement recognizing the carrier's accomplishment. "He is proof that leads are out there, and a few questions can result in a happy customer and new revenue for the Postal Service."

Ayala, meanwhile, has since transitioned to a residential route, where he has fewer opportunities to find leads. But he believes that other carriers shouldn't be afraid to reach out to their customers. "The worst thing someone could say is 'No,'" he explained. "And someone could say yes." **PR**