

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's sharp eye key to scouting new businesses

Philadelphia, PA Branch 157 member **Joe Delmont** had been keeping an eye on the newest business on his route for a while. The 23-year carrier quickly struck up a rapport with his new customers, who turned out to be the owners of a startup e-commerce fulfillment company, IK Marketplace.

"After a few times [delivering to them], when I heard what they did, I said, 'Hey, can I get someone to talk to you?'" Delmont recalled.

After the owners agreed, the carrier passed their information along to his Customer Connect coordinator, who logged the lead and helped facilitate the sale.

Following further discussion, the sales team then closed a deal to handle



Joe Delmont

the company's shipping, generating an estimated \$6.9 million in new annualized revenue for the Postal Service.

Delmont has submitted several other leads for the Customer Connect program, and said that he always tries to keep a lookout for potential new customers.

"If I see anything on a loading dock, even if I don't go in [to deliver mail] myself because they have a P.O. box, I relay it to the Customer Connect coordinator," he said. "Sometimes, we strike gold."

Delmont added that his best advice to newer carriers would be to "keep your eyes and ears open," he said. "If you notice a couple of packages at a house or business, or you're seeing UPS or FedEx, just write down the address and give it to Customer Connect."

In Iowa, two carriers deliver big for the Postal Service

Two letter carriers from Central Iowa Merged Branch 352 recently struck big with sales leads for the Customer Connect program, generating almost \$200,000 in new estimated revenue for the Postal Service.

Branch 352 member **Travis McCray** said that as a T-6 working on mostly commercial routes, he keeps an eye out for possible leads while delivering—but his most recent lead came from a source closer to home.

The carrier's wife works for a law firm, and she asked McCray for assistance when the firm was swamped with an especially heavy mailing period.

"I've got my wife's boss asking me questions about postage," the six-year carrier said. "I was on vacation at the time, so I called the station."

Working together, McCray and his fellow carriers were able to satisfy the firm's needs and get everything mailed out. His lead generated more than \$125,000 in revenue for USPS.

McCray said that his strategy for finding leads was based on his previous employment. "I used to work at a place

that did a lot of shipping," he explained, "so I knew what's cheaper through us and what wasn't."

When he sees a business that he knows could save money through USPS, he said, "I look into getting them a better deal."

For his lead, Branch 352 member **Jason Berkley** found a slightly more unusual business: Crayfish Empire II, which sells all-natural food for shrimp aquariums.

"I'm a T-6, so I see a lot of routes and businesses," the carrier, who has also served as a steward for 14 years, said. "[I approach businesses] if I notice UPS stopping there quite a bit."

His approach to leads is straightforward, Berkley said: "I ask, 'Can I give your name and number to someone to lower your shipping costs?'"

Then, he passes their information along to the branch Customer Connect coordinator, fellow Branch 352 member **David Weaver**, who takes over the sale.

The key, Berkley said, is "to get to know your customer." He added, "I've been doing this 26 years, and you learn to speak friendly to people."

Both carriers were enthusiastic about Weaver's ability in his role as coordinator, and credited him with a lot of assistance in finding and generating leads.

The carriers also agreed that most businesses, if approached the correct way, are eager to hear ways to save with the Postal Service.

"People hear it will lower their costs, and they're interested," Berkley said. **PR**



Jason Berkley