

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.

In New York, the connection makes the sales pitch

For the past 10 years, Flushing, NY Branch 294 member **Patrick Flynn** had been picking up more than 100 Priority Mail packages per day from National Battery. "They do all kinds of batteries: car, motorcycle, wheelchair, you name it," the carrier explained.



Patrick Flynn

However, over the past year, Flynn had noticed that the number of packages he was handling for the company was decreasing. He realized that the company had been shifting the package volume over to UPS and FedEx. The carrier, who had a friendly relationship with the owner after delivering there for so many years, decided to make his pitch. "I told him, we can give you a better deal," Flynn recalled.

Once he got back to the office, he filled out a lead and "sent the business agent down there," the carrier said. The business agent demonstrated how

USPS could help National Battery reduce its shipping costs, and the owner decided to switch back to using the Postal Service for the bulk of its packages. "Now I'm back to doing several pickups there a day," Flynn said.

The carrier explained that he thinks the clincher to making a successful sales pitch as a letter carrier is the personal connection. "We have a one-on-one relationship with [the store owners]," he said. "We can see what their needs are, and show that we can meet them." He added: "It doesn't matter if it's a mom-and-pop store or a big business—it's just all about the connection."

Thanks to Flynn's ability to foster those customer relationships, his lead retained and generated more than \$1.4 million in estimated revenue for the Postal Service.

A chatty carrier talks his way into a huge sale

For as long as he has been on his route, Hudson Valley Merged Branch 137 member **Stephen Sciarra** has loved to chat with his customers. "I go into all my businesses," the 34-year carrier said. "I talk to the owners and we build up a rapport."

One day, he was talking to a customer, Kevin Meehan, who always had a large number of packages he shipped out during the week. His online-based company sells a variety of health and beauty products, as well as vitamins and natural supplements. But Sciarra knew that Meehan was splitting his package volume between USPS and FedEx.

During this conversation, the carrier decided to finally make his shipping pitch. Sciarra told him, "I'm more reliable than FedEx." Meehan agreed to listen, so the carrier filled out a lead and sent over a business agent.

The agent explained how Meehan could save money and increase transit times using USPS. He was convinced, and switched more than 125,000 packages over to the Postal Service. Now, "I have to take half my route out, since there's so many packages on Monday," Sciarra laughed.



Stephen Sciarra

The carrier said that letter carriers are invaluable to the Postal Service when it comes to making sales pitches. "We see [the customers] every day," he explained. By putting a face to USPS's great service, carriers can show the customers just what they have to gain by switching. "Be nice, be yourself, be reliable," Sciarra concluded. "That's how I've gotten every lead."

The carrier's friendliness and reliability have certainly paid off: his lead generated more than \$970,000 in new estimated revenue for the Postal Service. **PR**