

# 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. In July, the Customer Connect program passed a benchmark achievement: It has generated more than \$3 billion in estimated revenue for the Postal Service. Below are some recent stories about Customer Connect leads submitted by letter carriers that have helped USPS earn new revenue.

## A courteous carrier closes the deal in California

When Andrew Jang, the owner of Grand Co. Sandals, approached Santa Ana, CA Branch 737 member **Maria Vance** and asked her whether the USPS overnight service was competitive with his current shipping rates, he knew he was in good hands. "We see each other every day, and we say, 'Hi, how are you?'" the 26-year carrier explained. "[Our interactions] are always professional and courteous."

Vance explained that Priority Mail Express service was every bit as good as the competition's and did not have residential surcharges, and that Priority Mail and Priority Mail Express came with free insurance included in the price. She also told Jang that he could order free shipping boxes and USPS would deliver them directly to his business address. Vance then took his information to pass along to the local sales team.

When a sales representative reached out to the customer, Jang praised Vance's helpfulness, and told

the representative that her willingness to assist him had already sold him on the idea of switching to USPS. Jang committed to shipping all of his deliveries using the Postal Service's Priority Mail Express and First Class Packages. Within a month, he also began to use the Priority Mail and Priority Mail International services.

Vance says that she tries to emphasize how important the Customer Connect program is to the newer letter carriers. "I want them to think about the fact that this is our future," she said. "If we do not have customers, then we will not have a business."

Vance's personal touch with her customers resulted in \$38,408 in new annualized revenue for the Postal Service.

## Asking a simple question generates a large sale

When she was delivering an Express package to customer David Blake, Austin, TX Branch 181 member **Kendra Lawson** "saw an opportunity," she said. The 16-year carrier knew that Blake was constantly sending and receiving packages—he runs a small business that creates beautiful, unique glass memorials and cremation jewelry (jewelry that is infused with ashes).

Lawson asked him if he had ever spoken with anyone at USPS to see if the Postal Service could give him better rates on shipping. When Blake said that he had not, but that he was interested, she passed his information along to the sales team.

A field representative met with Blake and discovered that he was looking for lower costs, tracking and insurance. Blake ended up choosing Priority Mail for the predictive pricing, lack of surcharges and the consistent delivery.

Lawson said that her strategy for getting leads is simple, but gets results.

"I just tell them that I see they have a lot of packages, and ask if they have a business," she said. "If they say yes, I ask them if they want better [shipping] rates." Lawson's lead from Blake resulted in revenue of \$90,750 for the Postal Service.

## Driving toward a great sale lead

"I was coming back from our Customer Connect quarterly meeting," Langhorne, PA Branch 4931 member and Customer Connect Coordinator **Joseph Tangradi** recalled about landing his lead from Jon-Don, a janitorial shipping company. As he and his postmaster, Dominic Campellone, drove back to the office, Campellone saw the Jon-Don store out the window, and mentioned to Tangradi that he kept seeing a FedEx truck parked in the store's lot in the morning. Tangradi, who has worked for the Postal Service for 26 years, said, "Let's stop by there now!"

In the store, they asked to speak to the person in charge of shipping. When the manager came out, Tangradi asked him if the company would like a better deal on its shipping prices. "The gentleman agreed," Tangradi said, and when they went back to the office, Tangradi filed the lead with the sales team.

The sales team followed up with Jon-Don headquarters in Chicago, and was able to sell the company on using USPS to handle its shipping needs. Thanks to Tangradi's willingness to seize the opportunity, his lead generated more than \$990,250 in new estimated annualized revenue for USPS. **PR**



**Joseph Tangradi**