

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 instead of relying 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.

Three Alabama women who really mean business

Three city carriers out of Alabama have combined leads that brought in nearly half a million dollars for the Postal Service. Each carrier received a Certificate of Achievement, and NALC and USPS teamed up to provide breakfast for the staff at each carrier's station.

Ursula Crook of Birmingham, AL Branch 530 turned in a lead worth more than \$367,000 from Highland Commercial Mortgage, a Birmingham lender.

Jasper, AL Branch 3099's **Debra Hatfield** got an \$81,000 lead from Shmic and Boo's Boo'tiful Treasures, a Jasper retailer.

And **Flo Jackson** of Tuscaloosa, AL Branch 1096 secured an Every Door Direct Mail lead from Vapors Smoke Shop in Tuscaloosa worth \$36,000.

"All three women have submitted successful leads before. In fact, Flo is from my local branch. I was very glad to have the opportunity to congratulate her in front of our co-workers," said **Chris Strickland**, regional administrative assistant (RAA) for Region 8.

For Strickland, Customer Connect is about self-determination and self-



Alabama's standouts, from l: Flo Jackson of Tuscaloosa Branch 1096; Ursula Crook of Birmingham Branch 530; and Debra Hatfield of Jasper Branch 3099.

preservation. "When a letter carrier submits a lead for \$80,000, they have essentially justified the hire of a new CCA or paid benefits to a retiree. We have to take advantage of every opportunity provided to us, proactively," he said, then summed up with a motto of sorts: "Find the lead, submit the lead, follow up on the lead and enjoy the lead!"

'The Keurig of vitamins' opts for the ease, convenience of USPS

A company in Plymouth, MI, wants to change the way people take supplements. Tespo, which has been called "the Keurig of vitamins," creates vitamin mixes in pod form to be inserted in a special dispenser. The machine combines the supplement blends with water to create a flavored drink, much as Keurig brews a cup of coffee from a small pod of ground beans. Tespo makes mixes for men, women and children as well as more specialized blends, including some for bariatric patients, who need to prevent nutritional deficiencies post-surgery.

Letter carrier **James Holland**, a member of Western Wayne County, MI Branch 2184, suspected that Tespo and USPS might be a healthy combination themselves. He asked Tespo's owner if

USPS could look into saving the company money. The owner agreed, and Holland turned in the lead to his supervisor.

A business development specialist and the local sales team worked their magic, selling Tespo on First Class and Priority Mail for order fulfillment. Three months later, the company added more business, with a solution for returning and recycling the BPA-free polypropylene pods.

The end result of Holland's lead was a shot in the arm for USPS—a robust \$193,000 in new estimated annual revenue. **PR**



From l: Northville, MI Postmaster Cheryl Bickes, letter carrier James Holland of Western Wayne County, MI Branch 2184; and steward Valerie Watkins.