

Confessions of a Former Station Manager 2010

Have you seen “Undercover Boss”? If not, I suggest that my fellow Letter Carriers tune in to CBS and enjoy the heck out of it! Your question should be “Would my boss do the job so things would be better in my office? Would they see solutions that are obvious to us but are a mystery to them now? Will my boss get off that cushy chair or up from behind that standup desk?”

First, let’s regress. In the beginning of 2008, we introduced the idea of pencil pushers carrying mail for one week every 4 months, on a route that the office’s Letter Carriers choose. Not a single Manager, Postmaster, District Manager, Area Manager, MPOO, or solitaire-playing support staff member has taken us up on the offer. Why do you think that is? Yes, because they have it GOOD JUST WHERE THEY’RE AT and DON’T WANT TO KNOW.

Not let’s get back to the present time. To put it in my teenage daughter’s language; OMG! We’re like... in...like... trouble!

Or are we?

We know all the panic and chatter aimed at making us all work faster and unsafely. Let’s, however, get a clue here and see what we’re really about:

- In Article 1 of the Constitution of the United States, Congress is charged with the responsibility to “Establish Post Offices and Post Roads”.
- In 1983, Federal Law mandated mail delivery 6 days a week.
- A few days ago, President Obama reinforced the law in his budget statement “That 6-day delivery and rural delivery of mail shall continue...” and made other supportive statements for our organization and it’s hundreds of thousands of employees.

So what does that tell us?

Every mailman knows that people need their mail. Just ask smaller communities who are now losing their Post Offices or rural delivery.

Just ask customers who are waiting for letters from service members and loved ones, checks, birthday cards, packages, etc. What about the economy? Direct Mailings result in profits that far exceed the advertising in newspapers, TV commercials, and internet spam ads. Why? ... because they work. Americans want and need their mail. We will be around as long as America is around.

The only people who don't want mail delivery are bloggers who seem to hate anything and everything and compensate for their own inabilities by trashing everything the government provides for them or those who have so much money that they look down upon any services provided to the lower classes as Big government. Then there are profiteers who want to allow any company or any person to deliver to your mailbox so they can make a buck. So, if you can't speak up in church, or your wife beats you, or you see servants as a lower class, or you have a selfish interest in violating the Federal protection afforded to people's mailboxes, then you probably don't like or need the mainline of communication that built this great nation.

Don't even think about how your local Letter Carrier will be the one bringing you Immediate Federal Aid in the case of a Nuclear/Biological/Chemical emergency. We will deliver help to bloggers too!

But wait! What would John Potter do if he were an Undercover Boss? Well, having met him, it is my feeling that he's a well intended, good family man and a good businessman not opposed to real solutions. I would suspect, that he would conclude the following, if he were to carry mail one week every four months on a route of our choosing:

- He would learn that "harassment and inappropriate conduct" is a daily occurrence, and is not being addressed in most offices.
- He would understand that the customers are what we are all about. The 5 day week talk would come to a sudden stop.
- He would set down any 204-B's who cannot pass the basic English and math comprehension test. A supervisor who isn't smarter than a 5th grader should not supervise after all. You have to be able to read, write, and add. Can I hear ... "like OMG!?"
- He would encourage his staff to strongly support "Customer Connect" and reinvigorate our financial status, after about a million questions a week from hungry business customers on the route.
- He would propose a final VERA for all employees similar to the one in 1992. We would be offered a 6 month separations pay, 5 years time on top of time in service, military service inclusion, and no penalties, for age or TSP. Newer employees would be hired where needed and, because of lower seniority, they would not be as expensive as those waiting to retire.
- He would begin work on the Re-Federalizing of the USPS from a Pseudo-pseudo-pseudo agency. He would ensure the maintaining of current contract rights.
- He would realize that all EAS (Executive and Administrative Staff) personnel need to carry mail one week every 4 months so they'd understand too.

What would it be like if your boss really did understand? Put him to the task. Take the initiative. Politely, respectfully tell your boss that he could be much more effective, and respected, if he carried mail for one week every four months on the route of your choice. If he doesn't take you up on it, well shame on him. Let's see if he can learn as much as real executives are learning on "Undercover Boss". I can tell you, from first hand experience, it is a real eye opener.

Be Well. Work Proud!

- Guy Nohrenberg