

## Potential for Expanded Retail Services

With the largest retail network in the country and many unmet community needs, there is much that the post office can do. Ours was the first post office in the world to offer public access to the internet in 1997 in St. Catharines and Niagara on the Lake. This initiative was funded and implemented through an Innovation and Change mechanism that the union first negotiated with Canada Post Corporation (CPC) in 1993. In addition to banking, broadband services and offering charging stations for electric vehicles, Canada Post's retail network can be leveraged for other innovative products and services, including enabling digital transactions and additional points of public access for government services that are closer to where people live.

### **The post office: a physical link to digital transactions:**

- Post offices can serve a renewed purpose with the digital revolution in shopping and goods exchange.
- Post offices can improve on a good thing that has been around forever: Cash on Delivery (COD) service: customers of on-line purchases can pay in cash, upon collection for parcels at the post office, with direct e-transfer by Canada Post to the online retailer. This would open online purchases to more Canadians, including those without credit cards or those who prefer to pay cash, while also creating a potential new revenue stream for Canada Post by ensuring exclusivity in parcel delivery. Amazon Japan offers a similar service. If postal operators could collaborate through the UPU, international purchases can be enabled both financially and physically, thereby helping parcel volumes stay in the postal stream <sup>1</sup>
- Post offices as the physical enabler to some digital transactions – for example, the place to leave keys, and have identity checked from people borrowing apartments.

### **A national institution promoting local products:**

- Canada Post can become the go-to place to shop for Canadian-made artisanal products, particularly Indigenous crafts and products.
- Large post offices in urban areas could sell a national line of quality local products<sup>2</sup>.
- Canada Post could host a website showcasing made-in-Canada products from small and micro artisans and producers.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.uspsaig.gov/sites/default/files/document-library-files/2016/RARC-WP-16-001.pdf>, p.14

<sup>2</sup> Poland Post is partnering with other central European posts to offer traditional artisanal products in each other's post offices

- Pop-up retail: public outlets have varying degrees of extra space that could be used to display the products of small and micro sellers. Sellers can also chose to display their products in any post office of their choosing, based on where they want to test their products.
- By assisting local small producers with marketing and accessing on-line selling sites and tools, retail staff can be effective agents of local economic development.

#### **Leveraging a good location and extra space - A local hub:**

- Some public post offices have additional space in the back, this space should not be left underused – it could be shared space for self-employed and start-ups who want access to an office, pop-up warehouse for e-businesses, community learning meeting place, and other local uses. With EV charging on site, the post office can become a place for information on climate change mitigation and adaption in every community.
- Post offices should be part of every downtown revitalization effort, have opening hours that align with community needs and try to respond local opportunities and needs as they arise.

#### **Notary Public, Commissioner of Oaths, Identity authentication, and related services**

- Many of these services are only offered in larger centres requiring people to drive out of their communities; retail staff can provide these services in their communities.

#### **Government Services**

- Certain services from all levels of government could be offered for the digitally excluded and for particular services that require in-person identity authentication.
- Many foreign posts are experimenting with digital ID authentication services.

#### **Public Information**

- With 6300 points among virtually every community, post offices can be the place to distribute information. For example, short educational videos that the various levels of government produce could be available on public tablets. Incidents of identity theft<sup>3</sup> and protection from

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.discovermoosejaw.com/local/47142-local-woman-speaks-out-about-a-mail-redirection-scam>

fraudulent requests for money are often caught at our public post offices<sup>4</sup>. It just makes sense that the public can access educational prevention information, in addition to general free access to the internet.

### **Data collection**

- With some training and instruction, retail clerks can administer surveys at the counter for various levels of government, Statistics Canada and other publicly funded research institutions. This can be a very quick way to obtain information from the public that is vital for public planning and consultative purposes.

### **Local Tourism Promotion**

- Post offices can provide local maps and brochures of local attractions, offer audio guides to the area and other promotional products and services.

### **Recommendations:**

That Canada Post commit to using its retail network for on-going testing of new products and services and preserve piloting mechanisms that ensure that ideas from the union and the public are considered and tested.

That Canada Post leverage its public retail network for collaborative initiatives with various levels of government and public institutions.

That Canada Post provide high-speed (broadband) Internet access and wifi access at post offices.

That the retail network be allowed to respond to local needs and promote local economic development.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://globalnews.ca/news/1529591/moncton-postal-workers-help-save-woman-from-phone-scam/>