

# DIRECT

# Hit

The **SUCCESS**  
*Spotlight*



## NAME TO A GOOD LOOKING FACE: Andy Velez

Andy Velez has been with us since September of 2019 as our First Shift Presort Standard Mail Manager. In addition to all of his daily responsibilities, Andy is all about team-work and makes it an important part of his job to motivate and teach his team something new every day. We are so glad to have Andy as part of the Midwest team!

### *What is your favorite food?*

My favorite foods are seafood, steak, and salads.

### *What would your dream vacation be?*

A vacation on a beach with a cocktail, and fishing with the grandkids.

### *What's your favorite movie or TV show?*

My favorites are NCIS, Armageddon, The Sorcerer's Apprentice, and Kitchen Nightmares.

### *Tell us about your family.*

My family is big! I have 4 children - 3 girls and 1 boy and 11 grandchildren. My children's ages are from 29 to 39. My grandkids' ages are from 2 to 19. Our family supports the military. My son was in the army for 9 ½ years and is now a minister in Georgia and has his own church near Fort Stewart. My daughters are all working, which is a good thing. My kids live in the Carolinas, Georgia, and Houston which does make it difficult to visit them.

### *Describe what a typical day is like for you at Midwest.*

At the start of the day, we put a plan together on how the day is going to go. We discuss who is going to be on what machines and map everything out. Our game plans change constantly in production mail, so that plan we put together changes constantly throughout the day, too. One of the most important things that I have learned is that you can only control things that are in your control and not the unexpected so make the best of your day and do the best you can to meet your goals. There are days you will win and days you will not. The main objective should be to keep your focus.

### *Please go through your journey here at Midwest.*

I previously had about two years of sorting experience in a smaller shop in Lynchburg, VA, managing a letter shop, print, fulfillment, wavejets, and presort. I experienced a lot while I was there and learned a lot too. When I first started at Midwest, I worked with Don, Dadhi, and Jason on the second shift. This is where I learned how they process First-Class mail. I then moved to the first shift to join my team. I went around observing and introducing myself to them. When I looked at the numbers, I had to find a way to increase throughputs on the machines. Running Standard Mail is slightly different than First-Class mail because the mail is bulkier and at times thicker. I also had to build this team up. In a short amount of time, I did win some of their confidence and our numbers are climbing daily.

### *What keeps you coming back?*

This is my 30th year in the mailing industry. I have worked in many roles during my career. I have worked as an operator, lead, trainer, supervisor, IT operation manager, lettershop manager, laser room, and offset printer supervisor. I make it a challenge for myself to meet my goals and have my team hit high numbers on the sorters. I enjoy my job and like working with my staff. I tell my staff we do not run mail we run math. Mail has always been a math game to me. I have met a lot of interesting people in my time in this business and I have learned a lot from most of them while I continue to learn in my craft.

### *What changes have you seen in the company in your time here?*

We have added another sorter to help us get the mail into the mail stream faster. We also installed larger TV monitors so employees can see their daily production numbers, and if they are meeting their daily goals. We have also gotten new inserters in the lettershop, so we are always updating our equipment.

### *What's a recent success that you're proud of?*

I am proud of how well my team works together. We are a unit. I will work with each and every one of my staff to teach them something about their job. Everyone learns differently and at a different pace. Where others may think that they will not cut the grade, I will try hard before I give up on someone. Everyone needs an opportunity to succeed! Maintaining a positive attitude helps when you are trying to teach others and you must have lots of patience. I am also proud of a recent project we did. I was asked to participate in a training video by the Marketing department on sorters. Once completed, they put step by step words to the video. I also created the SOP (standard operating procedures) for the training video and employees.



## Team Treats



### BLUE BACON STUFFED MUSHROOMS

Whether you have a Labor Day party to attend, or you are by yourself on a Friday night looking for some comfort food, we think you will love this dish by AllRecipes for blue bacon stuffed mushrooms:

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 3 strips bacon
- 6 large mushrooms
- 1 tbsp. butter
- 1/2 onion, diced
- 1 clove garlic, sliced
- 3 oz. cream cheese
- 3 oz. blue cheese
- 1/3 c. bread crumbs

#### DIRECTIONS:

1. Cook bacon strips in a large skillet over medium heat until crispy; drain on paper towels. While the bacon is cooking, remove stems from mushrooms. Set caps aside, and chop stems.
2. Add butter to skillet with bacon grease. When melted, stir in chopped mushroom stems, onion, and garlic. Cook, stirring frequently until the onions caramelize, 15 to 20 minutes.
3. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a small baking dish with cooking spray.
4. Once the onion mixture has reached a deep, rich brown color, place into a blender along with bacon, cream cheese, blue cheese, and bread crumbs. Blend on low until ingredients are roughly chopped and evenly combined. Stuff cheese mixture into mushroom caps and place into prepared baking dish.
5. Bake in preheated oven until bubbly and lightly browned, 10 to 15 minutes. Serve and enjoy!

## FUN FACTS: CHEWING GUM

September 30th is National Chewing Gum Day. Here are some facts about the popular treat that you may not have known:

- Swallowed gum won't clog up your intestines, but it will be with you for a few days. Gum base can't be digested so it will pass through your system in one piece.
- Chewing gum burns around 11 calories per hour.
- Back in the 1920's, prohibition increased gum sales because people needed to mask the alcohol on their breath. When prohibition was enacted, Adam's Clove gum hit the market with the slogan: "It takes your breath away!"
- Chewing on gum while cutting onions can help a person from crying.
- The color of the first successful bubble gum was pink because it was the only color the inventor had left. The color stuck, and today bubble gum is predominantly pink.

### Communication Tip:

#### MANAGING YOUR TEAM EFFECTIVELY

With a myriad of different communication styles, it can be tricky to effectively communicate with everyone in the workplace. A trick to learning how to communicate with someone or what they are motivated by is to learn their personality type. Here are the four DISC personality types:

- **Dominance.** A "D" personality style is known for being results oriented, a driver, and competitive. With priorities getting immediate results, taking action, and challenging themselves and others. They are motivated by power, authority, competition and success. They often lack concern for others and can be impatient or insensitive.
- **Influencing.** An "I" personality style is described as someone who is persuasive, inspiring, and enthusiastic. Their priorities are expressing their enthusiasm, taking action, and encouraging collaboration. They are motivated by social recognition, group activities, and friendly relationships. However, they can be impulsive or disorganized and lack following through.
- **Steadiness.** An "S" personality style is described as someone who is amiable, democratic, and patient. Their priorities are giving support, maintaining stability, and enjoying collaboration. They are motivated by stable environments, sincere appreciation, cooperation, and opportunities to help. They can often be overly accommodating, resistant to change, and indecisive.
- **Cautious/Compliance.** A "C" personality style is someone who is analytical, detail-oriented, and systematic. Their priorities are ensuring accuracy, maintaining stability, and challenging assumptions. They are motivated by opportunities to use expertise or gain knowledge and have an attention to quality. They can often be overly critical of themselves and have a tendency to isolate themselves or over-analyze a situation.



## The Worst Advice We've Ever Heard About Data

Among many other things, we specialize in data management, hygiene, list acquisitions (especially the tough niche list pulls), matchbacks, attributions, and customer journey modeling. Therefore, we've heard some interesting "theories" about data. Here's the WORST advice we've ever heard about data:

- **"Direct mail is dead." You only need to collect email addresses and social media handles.** With direct mail response rates being so high, it is important to make sure you have the right data so the mail gets to the right place. This means collecting more than email addresses and social media handles.
- **"There is nothing you can do about returned mail."** CTRAC Direct, a division of Midwest Direct, can run your data through NCOALink® to clean up your mail database so you can update your contacts and don't get so much returned mail.
- **"You can let everyone at your company manage their own list."** Multiple formats can cause multiple problems and everyone manages their data differently. Therefore, it is safer and more efficient to put one person in charge of all the company data so that everything stays consistent.
- **"You only need to clean your list once a year."** Data hygiene should be taken care of continuously. You need to routinely check and clean up your data to prevent address issues and returned mail. Sending your data to NCOALink® will help you keep it clean.
- **"There's not much you can do with the crazy stuff people add to data fields in online form fills."** The information you get off websites is maybe 50% accurate — if that. Most people don't follow the rules and they will put random information in, such as a phone number where the address is supposed to be or a zip code instead of a phone extension. We can help you implement a screening system to sort out real leads from the junk.

Want advice on data you can trust? CTRAC Direct, a division of Midwest Direct, has been in the data business for over forty years. You can trust our data experts to help you capture, clean, keep and capitalize on your data.

Give us a call at  
1.800.686.6666  
or email [info@mw-direct.com](mailto:info@mw-direct.com)  
to learn more.



## Health & Safety Tip of the Month: CONCUSSION SAFETY



Concussion Awareness Day is celebrated in September every year by the Brain Injury Association of America.

Concussions are brain injuries that result from the brain hitting the skull or a strain on the tissue due to excessive force. When it comes to working in places that require lifting or moving objects, or really any warehouse type occupation, concussions are a risk. Here are some concussion recovery tips that may help reduce the effects of the injury:

- **Reduce exposure to light and sound, including screen time and big crowds.** Bright lights and the eyestrain that is associated with looking at them can make concussion symptoms worse. As you recover, try to limit the amount of light coming into the room and the amount of time you spend looking at your devices. In addition, avoid big crowds or parties for the meantime while you recover.
- **Avoid unnecessary movement of your head and neck.** Try to avoid any movements that cause your head or neck to jostle around that will not allow your brain the chance to recover. It may be the time to tell the family that Cedar Point is not in the cards for you this weekend!
- **Stay hydrated.** Dehydration may increase your risk of concussion and there are studies that show staying hydrated while healing from a concussion can help with the healing process.
- **Rest.** Although resting may be the last thing that is on your mind, it is the most important thing you can do while recovering from a concussion. Giving your mind and body time to relax reduces your stress levels and helps your body recover.
- **Lastly, and the most obvious, follow all your doctor's orders.** If your doctor gives you additional recovery tips based on your particular accident, do them and if your doctor prescribes medication to help treat your concussion, make sure you take it. It is important to have a doctor check out a concussion to make sure there isn't extensive injury to the brain and to give you signs to watch for to make sure you don't make the injury worse or end up in an emergency situation.

## HELP KEEP KIDS SAFE *from* BRAIN INJURY



Use gates at the top and bottom of stairs to prevent serious falls among infants and toddlers.



Use child safety seats and booster seats that are correct for a child's age and weight. Make sure they are properly installed.



Make sure your child always wears the right helmet for their activity and that it fits correctly.



Use playgrounds with a soft landing surface (such as sand or wood chips, not dirt or grass).

**LEARN more AT:**

[www.cdc.gov/TraumaticBrainInjury](http://www.cdc.gov/TraumaticBrainInjury)

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