

Business

"I love coming to work each morning, because it's the best of both worlds."

John J. Cummings | PostNet owner



TIM REVELL | DISPATCH PHOTOS

John J. Cummings opened PostNet, 8917 S. Old State Rd., after being let go from his job because of downsizing.

Packing it in

PostNet franchise owner finds second career rewarding

By Tracy Turner
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

After 30 years of working in corporate America, John Cummings one day found himself and 500 of his co-workers out of a job as the result of a corporate buyout.

But instead of viewing the downsizing as the end of his career, Cummings, 58, decided that it was just the beginning.

With the money he received from a buyout offered by his former New York-based employer, Cummings and his wife, Sue, decided to move back to central Ohio and open a franchise.

Cummings, who worked as the director of sales planning and promotion for Bristol-Myers Squibb, wanted to choose a company that dealt with sales and that also would allow him to work with his wife.

"I wanted a business that when I get up in the morning, I could look forward to coming to, and work better hours than in the corporate world," he said.

They chose PostNet, a packaging, mailing and shipping store and small-business resource center. Within three years of opening in Polaris, the Cummings' store



PostNet locations

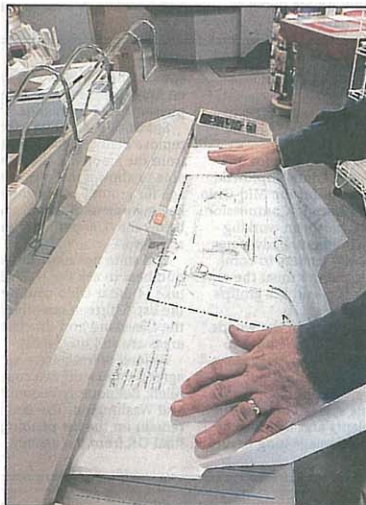
1. 8917 S. Old State Rd., Lewis Center
2. 7385 Rt. 3, Westerville
3. 1039 Hill Rd. N., Pickerington

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has become one of the company's top franchise locations in central Ohio in terms of sales.

Part of the store's success, Cummings said, is its mix of services for individuals and small-business owners. And the pleasure he gets

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Cummings feeds a blueprint into a large-format blueprint copier. Services offered at the franchise include printing and copying, packing and shipping.

PACKING

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from running it.

"I get the business support that I need from corporate headquarters, but I still get to run the business," he said. "It's the best of both worlds."

The Polaris store experienced double-digit revenue growth from 2005 to 2006 and is projecting a similar situation for 2007, Cummings said. January sales are projected to increase 25 percent, he said.

The company's corporate parent has pledged to open at least eight more central Ohio PostNet locations within three years, said Steve Greenbaum, president and CEO of the Denver-based company.

PostNet has 1,000 franchise locations worldwide with sales of \$200 million last year, Greenbaum said.

The company, which is rated No. 66 on the list of the county's top global franchises by trade publication *Entrepreneur* magazine, has been able to maintain its steady growth against national chains by creating a niche in the market-

place, said Terry Hill, a vice president with the International Franchise Association, based in Washington.

"The type of operations PostNet runs and the relationships they've developed with their franchisees have helped them to stand out in the marketplace," Hill said.

PostNet also has stores in Pickerington and Westerville. The stores offer printing and copying, packing and shipping services, computer rentals, desktop publishing, Internet services, private mailboxes, faxing and notary services. They also sell greeting cards, office supplies and offer passport photos.

For many customers, the service is the biggest draw.

"He's great," said Gail Jones, referring to Cummings. The Lewis Center resident said the shop "is convenient, and they make you want to come back."

Cummings runs the shop with wife and three part-time workers.

"I get to make the decisions as to how the store is run, what our goals are, and I no longer have to wear a suit every day." turner@dispatch.com