

# PROJECT SPOTLIGHT



## Vanderbilt University Mail Services

### Electronic Parcel Locker Redesign Delivers Precision Package Pickup

#### CHALLENGE

Vanderbilt University, in Nashville, Tennessee, has about 6,600 students who live on campus during the school year. The school's post office had 7,000 individual mailboxes to serve that population, each one measuring 4" x 5". In addition, parcels were handed out from four manned kiosks. Given that the majority of the students would collect their packages and mail after traditional daytime classes, it was common for wait times to be up to 30 minutes for those standing in line.

Dated and dark, the post office setup was crowded, uninviting, and not as efficient as it could have been. With the increase in online shopping as newer students became more and more technologically savvy, Vanderbilt's postmaster and associate director for business services recognized that a change was in order.

#### SOLUTION

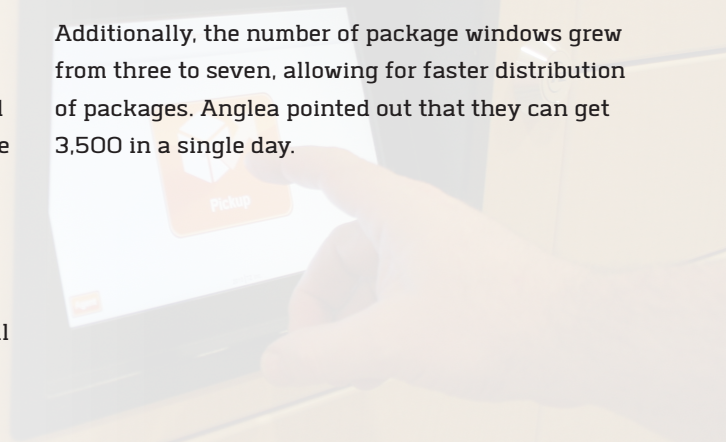
Change can be fun; it's always dynamic. For Postmaster Mickey Anglea, the desire to better serve the campus community was a driving force.

*"I decided that if we went to a virtual mailbox, it would have to coincide with new parcel lockers," he said. "It was a good trade-off."*

The 7,000 physical mailboxes (taking up approximately 2500 square feet) were removed as part of a wholesale renovation. In their place were added a mixture of different-sized parcel lockers (5½" x 17"; 10½" x 17"; 17" x 17"), and a number of other smaller boxes dedicated to dispensing the physical mail that students elect, electronically, to have left for pick-up. All told, the virtual mailboxes and parcel lockers, provided by TZ, number 500 and take up just 100 square feet in the new space.

Students receive a four-digit code at the beginning of their residency and use it for their entire Vanderbilt career. They are notified via email of their incoming mail, and can let the post office staff know, electronically, which pieces of mail can be shredded and which can be held for delivery.

Additionally, the number of package windows grew from three to seven, allowing for faster distribution of packages. Anglea pointed out that they can get 3,500 in a single day.



**“Our number one goal from the outset was to better serve the students, and we’ve definitely achieved that.”**

Mickey Angela  
Post Master  
Vanderbilt University Mail Services

## ACHIEVEMENT

Wait times for parcel pickups dropped to an average of 10 to 12 minutes. What’s more, the addition of the virtual mailbox technology eliminated the need that had sometimes arisen for students to share mailboxes. What had been four banks of physical mailboxes were converted into information kiosks where students can type in their four-digit code and immediately find out at which mailbox/locker they can pick up their mail and/or packages.

*“We’ve had very good success. We keep the mail folders thinned out,”* said Angela. *“Our number*

*one goal from the outset was to better serve the students, and we’ve definitely achieved that. Things move faster and everybody likes that. We fill the electronic parcel lockers 3-4 times a day. The most we’ve been able to give out in a day is in the 800 range. But that’s pretty good for 500 lockers.”*

Challenges breed creativity. The post office at Vanderbilt University learned first-hand how the marriage of technology and tenacity can often lead to innovative changes.

