**INFORMATIVE SPEECH**

**FOR**

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Hello everyone... Let me see by a show of hands, how many people have ordered things online? Even though we **usually** have to use our own money, isn’t it fun to make your selection, add it to your cart, wait a few days, and then... **WOW**!!! Almost like magic, the doorbell rings and there, standing before you.... a person dressed in brown or purple or even a plain postman’s uniform probably asks you to sign some electronic device, and there it is!! It’s like getting a birthday gift ... only first you wait seven to ten days for standard shipping!! (**Wait for the laugh**). You go back inside, grab a butter knife or a scissors, and slice your way to discovery. Fight through the layers of packing... the individual poly bag covered with stickers of numbers and bar codes and descriptions, and **FINALLY**... the **PRIZE** is ready to be revealed.. Let me have another show of hands... How many of you have found that the item you ordered is just like what you expected??? ... By the way, if I don’t ask, the vendor will!! (**Wait for the laugh**). How many times have you received the **WRONG** item? How many of you have had to return something? And finally, how many of you know just what is involved on the “back end” of online purchases... how many steps are involved.... literally... those warehouses and distribution centers are **ENORMOUS**. Every day, more and more products are available to be sold and shipped from online resources. It’s a very complicated process. If any of you, when you were little kids, were told that the stork brings babies, you can imagine that’s about how far off your image of online fulfillment and shipping is.... but there are innovations taking place to insure more efficient and correct direct selection and shipping to the customer. On a site called Digital Commerce 360, it’s stated that online sales increased by 16% in 2017. E-commerce represented 13% of total retail sales with Amazon accounting for for most of online sales. This is going on at the same time that we are experiencing nothing less than **CARNAGE** in the brick and mortar retail scene. Women’s Wear Daily reported last week that almost **THREE** **THOUSAND** store closings will take place in 2018... and that’s **just** in the apparel sector. Online selling and shipping are here to stay.... so what’s on the horizon to make sure the experience and end result go smoothly?

I must admit, I have had my frustration with glitches and problems when ordering online. Before Christmas of last year, I decided to order a 1500 piece jigsaw puzzle online from the Target website. Guess what I got? Oh... I got a jigsaw puzzle... only it was a **THIRTY PIECE** puzzle made for toddlers!! I have ordered quite a bit from Amazon and a mistake like this **never** happened. Maybe I was lucky. Or... Maybe Amazon knows what they’re doing. In an article on Fast Company, whose title is “Why Amazon Is the World’s Most Innovative Company,” CEO Jeff Bezos states, “Our customers are loyal to us right up to the second somebody offers them a better service.” That attitude of true customer appreciation has inspired the company to constantly innovate and upgrade their procedures in order to **EXCEED** customer expectations. In order for consumers to be served, and in order for them... **US**... to demonstrate faith in the process to increase online shopping, Amazon concentrates on anticipating customer demand and how to accommodate their massive work load.

Amazon now has a total of fifty three distribution centers worldwide and each center is approximately **1.6 MILLION** square feet. Do you **KNOW** how big that is? (**ask the students to give you an idea of how big this is**). Those are all “interesting” guesses. What’s the best estimate? A quick search explains that in **JUST** 1 million square feet, you can fit **NINE** football fields! That’s three rows, each with three fields. Now imagine running back and forth every time you need to pull an order!!! That’s **A LOT** of running!! I hope they’d at least provide indestructible sneakers in each warehouse, cause I’m sure they’d get worn out fast!! (**Wait for the laugh**).

Through research and exercises in practical problem solving, and in anticipation of the surge in online sales, in 2012, Amazon bought a company called Kiva Systems, now called Amazon Robotics. Instead of the pickers and packers running all over the place to find what is needed to fulfill an order, Amazon’s robots trace their “steps” up and down clearly designated aisles pulling the merchandise needed to complete each order. Those pulled items are taken by the robots to the packers so that they no longer have to run around wasting precious time. Each and every item has a different unique number called a UPC code. That stands for Universal Product Code. I’m sure you notice that everything you buy has a bar code.... that is read by scanners... Amazon’s robots are equipped with scanners to read and select proper items. By the way, things can go **VERY** wrong... did you know Amazon sells approximately **12 MILLION** unique items, not including books, media, wine, and services. ... yet I always have received the correct items!! They clearly know what they’re doing!

The next time you decide to order something online, you’ll have a little more of the **BEHIND THE SCENES** story of how your package “magically” arrives. No... the stork is not involved... just very smart planning and implementing of many procedures to make sure the steps from your final click to delivery run smoothly.

Thank you all!!