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## The Value of a Business "Thank You"

As times and technology change, it is still the personal touches that are most meaningful. Saying thank you is an important ritual of etiquette that is effective in all relationships. Knowing when, and how, to say thank you can make a difference in helping you and your company succeed in reaching its goals.

### General thank-you etiquette

- Special gifts for select employees or clients should be given in a private setting.
- Acknowledge a gift when the sender has no other way of knowing you received it. Strangely enough, this might involve sending a thank-you note for a thank-you gift, but it does let the sender know you have received it.
- Being gracious when receiving a gift even if you don't like it.
- Handwritten notes and letters are a rarity. Be generous with how often you are choosing a written note as the appropriate form of thank you.
- Thank-you etiquette and gift-giving customs vary from one country to another. When saying thank you in any manner to an international client, know the protocol to avoid cultural "faux pas".

### Expressing thanks

When expressing thanks, make sure your expression of "thank you" balances what you are saying "thank-you" for.

- *Verbally.* Expressing a sincere thank-you at each encounter will leave your client knowing that you sincerely appreciate their business.
- *A handwritten note.* Sending a note when someone sends a gift or makes a contribution is a thoughtful and memorable gesture.
- *A contribution.* Contributions to a cause that has meaning to the recipient or their company helps to express thanks when a strict "no gift policy" is in place.
- *A gift.* A gift is a tangible symbol of thanks. When the gift is tailored to the recipient it will be memorable and appreciated long after it is received.

### Art of a Written Thank You

- Send a handwritten note as a personal expression of gratitude. Handwritten notes are less common and convey special appreciation.
- When a written note is appropriate, write it as soon as possible. Timely thank-you notes seem more sincere and are easier to write.
- Emphasize the generosity or thoughtfulness of the giver. Make specific reference to the gift or contribution that you received.
- Express desire for opportunities to work together again.
- Avoid sending thank-you expressions by e-mail. The point of a thank-you note is that it is personal. E-mail has many virtues, but graciousness and formality are not among them.



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There are many occasions when “thank-you” is appropriate. Use every opportunity to express your gratitude.

- Sincerely value the gift of business. When a client does business with you, thank that client every time. There are many companies that can fulfill most product and service needs. Thank your clients for choosing to do business with you by sending a simple note to a gift of appreciation.
- Thank a client for their comments or suggestions. Thanking a client for feedback says that you have heard what they had to say and that you value their opinion. Something as simple as "thank you for taking the time to tell me" delivered with sincerity can work wonders.
- When someone has referred your company to an associate. When a client recommends you, they put themselves on the line. A thank you for the referral shows you are appreciative, and may even garner more referrals in the future.
- Thanking a client for their patience and understanding in a difficult situation. Recognize that "a thank you" will also help to defuse their frustrations and potential negative effect on your future relationship.
- When a client compliments you or your company. Compliments can feel embarrassing. Learn to accept a compliment gracefully and let clients know you appreciate their business.
- When someone tries a new product or service. Trying something new can be uncomfortable and risky. Thank a customer for trying something different.

#### Those often forgotten

There are many people with whom you interact each business day. Thanking each of them for their contribution will promote the environment necessary for success.

- Thank co-workers. He/she often provides assistance in many of your tasks on a regular basis.
- Your boss. They have often provided the leadership and feedback to help you grow and perform your responsibilities.
- Vendors. It is often the teamwork with a vendor that meets a customer's need.