



## Using Gratitude in Business

*There is more hunger for love and appreciation in this world than for bread.*  
Mother Theresa

As a child we are taught by our parents to say thank you. As one of the very first things that we learn, our parents are teaching us that showing simple appreciation is not only polite behaviour but also the right thing to do. As a lesson that our parents teach us it's one of the most valuable and we should thank our parents for teaching us.

There are many ways in which you can show your gratitude in your business or professional life. This article will share a number of ways in which you can, if you select to use these suggestions with the right spirit and attitude. It is important that you approach these suggestions with an authentic attitude and you will reap more than you will sow. If you select to consider these suggestions as techniques, you risk being seen as manipulative or insincere.

### Have you put Gratitude on your Calendar?

*'Develop an attitude of gratitude, and give thanks for everything that happens to you, knowing that every step forward is a step toward achieving something bigger and better than your current situation.'*  
Brian Tracy

Looking at your goals and thinking about achieving them, how would it feel if you were to select the date that you know you've achieve it (a future date)? If you know that when you achieve your goal you will be grateful, what's the reason that you are not prepared to show your appreciation in advance? Think about how you will express your gratitude. Take a moment to put your gratitude on your calendar.

### Track your Ideas with a 'Gratitude Diary'

Have you suddenly had an inspiration about a specific item that someone you know would love to receive? You could be walking on the beach, browsing the web, reading a book, meditating, or just browsing through the newspapers; when your inspiration strikes. What do you do with the idea?

Open your diary to a day in which you would like to give the person you are thinking of a gift. On that day enter the person's name and your idea of the gift you would like to give them. About a week before select a time on which you would like to purchase the gift.

This way, not only does my diary start to act as an archive of thoughtful gift suggestions, it also serves as a reminder to express my gratitude.

### Thinking of and Treating Prospective Clients the same as we Treat our Paying Clients

*'Gratitude is the most exquisite form of courtesy.'*

Jacques Maritain

Thinking about your prospective client as your next big and well-paying client, will help you change your state of mind. Often we find that the person with the seemingly insignificant enquiry has the large project waiting somewhere in the back-ground.

### How do you include Gratitude in your Sales Process?

If you don't have a standard Sales Process, now is the time to pull one together. What do you need to include in your standardised Sales Process – create a checklist.



As part of your Sales Process consider when you can include gratitude. Examples of when you could include gratitude are:

- ✓ When you meet someone new at a networking event (professional or personal) on your return to your office, hand-write a Thank You note on an appropriate card. I use scenic cards of the surrounding country-side in which I live.
- ✓ When you meet a new prospective client for the first time, on your return to your office, hand-write a Thank You note on an appropriate card; expressing your gratitude for their time and consideration.
- ✓ There are various thoughts on how to thank your prospective client for placing an order with you. Some suggest that you could send your new client a gift card to their favourite restaurant; or you could send them a box of chocolates. As long as you know how you are going to thank them in advance of winning the business, you will include the cost in the cost of the proposal.
- ✓ It is important that you express your gratitude for your new business opportunity.

### **Let your Clients join you in the Excitement**

Expressing your gratitude when a prospective client places their business with you shows your thanks at that time, but what about on-going clients?

On a regular basis, and no this does not have to be frequent, it could be once a year, do something that shows your existing clients your gratitude. Examples of expressing your gratitude could be:

- ✓ Printing a range of t-shirts and sending each client one or more.
- ✓ Ordering a range of fun promotional items and sending some of these to your clients.
- ✓ Having a range of fun, but promotional, stickers printed and including a different one each time you send your client some communication. These should be high quality stickers as these will be used by your client, rather than filed in what I call 'file 13' (the dustbin).
- ✓ Throw a 'client appreciation party'. This party could be organised as a 'launch of a new product' party, or a 'festive celebration', or a 'pre-big event' party, or a 'thank you' party. Whatever type of party you select, just simply order food and drinks, organise a couple of very short speeches, and let people network and have fun.
- ✓ It is important that whatever you select, you are virtually guaranteeing your clients to relax and have fun. For this they will appreciate you and the fun that you are providing.

### **Treat your Clients the same way You would like to be treated – like Royalty!**

Jeffrey Gitomer in his [Little Black Book of Connections](#), as part of Asset 6 (The Secret Power of Connections) has a chapter called 'WOW! Them to WOO them' and a chapter called 'From MEOW to WOW!' In these chapters Jeffrey describes the way in which he learnt about making a client say 'WOW'. Imagine turning up to a client's office one afternoon with a present worth £50 where the only reason that you would do this is to show that you appreciate their support. This gesture sounds unreasonable until you consider that for a small outlay of £2,600 in the year you can turn 52 clients into your strongest refers and gain a lifetime of referrals for your business.

Before you start working through this process, think about what make each client say WOW and purchase just that one item. For example, if you know that one of your clients is a rugby supporter, what would your client say if you presented them with a signed rugby ball? Who signs it is not always as obvious as you think – you and your staff should sign it. Now think about how your clients will feel when you create your WOW budget of only £2,600 – when these clients are in their own meetings, networking events, or events, and someone asks if they know of someone they could recommend – who do you think that they will recommend?



The suggestion of £50 spent once a week is a suggestion. If you look at your budget and you can't find the initial £2,600 then think about £50 once a month. Whatever WOW budget you set, think about what you can afford and who you should present the gesture to. This is all about lasting impressions and referrals.

### **Some Ideas**

In this section I have documented a number of ways in which you can select to show your gratitude to your customers or your prospective clients or your colleagues or even your suppliers.

#### **Say 'Thank you'**

A simple 'Thank You' is appreciated when someone does something for you. It's important that when you say 'thank you' that you are specific as to the reason you are thankful.

#### **Write 'Thank you'**

In the 'How do you include Gratitude in your Sales Process?' I talk about hand-writing notes to someone new you meet at a networking event. Writing out your thank you expresses your gratitude in a way that typing a thank you cannot.

I have a file full of thank you notes handwritten by clients, colleagues, students, and various other people I've met in networking environments that I've introduced to someone else, that just say thank you. You've heard it many times before handwritten notes are a powerful thank you.

#### **Type 'Thank you'**

If you can't say thank you or drop them a handwritten note, then drop someone a quick email. Sending an email of thanks is powerful as these reminders are permanent and these are the emails that people will keep.

#### **Share a Token**

In the previous point we talked about the WOW Budget. A token is another way to say 'thank you'. Although these tokens are not created or purchased with the same level of thought that the WOW Budget gifts are, they are still tokens with which you can say 'thank you'.

If you think back to a time when someone gave you a basket of fruit, a bowl of flowers, a coffee mug, wine, sweatshirt, or something else as a recognition of their gratitude – how did you feel? Selecting small tokens of gratitude to say thank you will bring the same feeling of appreciation that you felt.

None of these ideas are new and none of them earth shattering – it's all common sense, but often when we are first starting up a business or trying to turn a business around, these are the type of expenses we remove from our budgets first. Often these are the type of expenses that we should retain, as they often produce a higher return on our investment.

The way in which the gift or token is presented is as important as the action of giving.

### **Become an Educational Resource**

Giving away something free – advice, white papers, newsletters, e-books, blogs, for example – puts your knowledge and your business on display. A potential client is more likely to choose a person or a business who has already provided them with something versus the



person or business that has nothing to say. While you may argue with this point as you may feel that you worry about giving away all your trade secrets, this couldn't be further from the truth.

Looking at this from a purely marketing perspective, giving away something free every so often keeps your current client base and your prospective client base attentive.

*Thankfulness is the beginning of gratitude. Gratitude is the completion of thankfulness. Thankfulness may consist merely of words. Gratitude is shown in acts.*

**Henri Frederic Amiel**

### **Say 'Thank You' all the time!**

A simple way to start saying thank you is to write a list of all those that you should thank. Looking at your list, go out and buy a large number of cards. Allocate some time in your diary. At this time, sit down and hand write thank you cards personalising them as you work through your list. Send them first class post.

It's important to remember that these thank you notes also serve as a marketing tool. They do help to remind the recipients of the products and/or services that you provide.

On completion of your list, put the remainder of your cards in open view. This will allow you to just reach out every time you want to thank someone.

In this way you will keep gratitude in sight and in reach. You will naturally start to thank people more often.

### **Giving and Receiving**

Giving a gift of gratitude is a polite thing to do!  
Giving a gift of gratitude is the right thing to do!  
Giving a gift of gratitude makes the recipient feel important!

Although all the above is true,  
giving a gift of gratitude with the right spirit and genuinely from the heart,  
we get as much or more in return for giving the thanks  
as the receiver gets from receiving it.

Dale Carnegie wrote that the desire to be appreciate is 'a gnawing and unflinching human hunger, and the rare individual who honestly satisfies this heart hunger will hold people in the palm of his or her hand, and event the undertaker will be worry when he dies.'

In my experience Customer Appreciation is a tool that every business has, yet few choose to utilise it. As the owner of your business there is no better investment than taking the time now to create and incorporate a Customer and Sales Appreciation system in your Business Plan. The benefit of creating a 'sales force' of grateful clients is immeasurable.

Thank you for taking the time to read this article.

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