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"Giving Thanks"

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Imagine this scenario: You're at a chamber meeting (or some similar function), networking for new business. During a conversation, someone mentions a firm that's looking to relocate to your area. The lead is not only valuable to you, but you've also recently met a mover who could probably benefit from the information.

The next day, after penning a brief thank you note to the person who gave you the lead, you drop the mover an e-mail with the company name, contact person, phone number and any other details you may have picked up.

Several months pass; you've yet to hear a word from the mover. A similar situation arises, providing you with another potential lead.

Would you pass it on to the mover?

Not until hell freezes over, if it were me! For only one simple reason—he didn't say, "Thanks."

If you know me, or are a regular reader of this column, you've often heard me rail about the lack of courtesy in business. The above scenario exemplifies one of the prime offenses.

It's completely irrelevant whether or not the lead panned out; the simple fact that you were considerate enough to think of the mover—and to take the time and effort to let him know of the potential opportunity—is all that matters. That, and that alone, entitles you to a note, e-mail or phone call saying, "Thanks for thinking of me." If it's sincere, to me that's sufficient appreciation for just about anything.

There's virtually nothing people won't do for you if they truly believe you're grateful—and the best way I know of accomplishing that is to tell it to them directly.

"Thanks" shouldn't be limited only to certain acts, though. It needs to become one of the most popular words in your vocabulary. And it's literally impossible to overuse it.

Consider an average day. Someone helps you with a project. Thank them—even though it may be part of their job. An editor includes a quote of yours in an article—drop her a note saying how much you appreciate it. A friend clips a copy of the article and sends it to you—thank him for his thoughtfulness.

Such examples are endless, and shouldn't be restricted to extraordinary acts. It doesn't hurt or cost anything to say thanks for the usual or expected gestures. As a matter of fact, it will probably lead to others working even harder on your behalf.

One often overlooked area where people regularly take others for granted is customer appreciation. Whenever someone does business with you, make sure they know you're aware that they chose you, over others, to do their work. Make it clear you're grateful for their choice—and prove it by doing the best job possible and meeting or exceeding their expectations.

I can't recall ever having seen the phrase, "Say thanks," included in any company's marketing plan. I can tell you, though, that every successful person I've ever dealt with has mastered the art of

making people feel appreciated.

Thanks for reading this!

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