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## **When gratitude is more than a platitude**

As a business owner we often take many things around us for granted. After all as an owner someone rarely thanks you for what you do.

What better time than Thanksgiving to stop, take a breath, and figure out just who to thank and more importantly how.

Who to thank? First of all think of your employees and then your customers. This may seem to be a strange strategy - to thank employees first. Who has the biggest impact on customer satisfaction you or your front-line employees? Remember the concept of leverage. If you want excellent customer service make sure you thank your employees.

When it comes time to thank your customers, start by breaking down your customers into groups. You want to group them as you consider how to best thank them. Perhaps they can be divided up by sales volume, loyalty and those whom you have lost in the last year. Obviously, each group may merit a different type of thank you.

The “how” is much more difficult than the “who”. Let me give you some ideas on this subject.

First, how thankful are you? Make your thanks relevant. If more than 50% of your revenue is from just a few clients you should be very thankful because without them you would be lost. Make sure that if you provide gifts as a thanks it matches that same level of gratitude.

Next, what would they really enjoy; a card, a calendar, a gift basket or something even more unusual? This can be a great strategy for the bulk of your customers and employees

Finally, how will you make it more personal and significant? You could get them a book on their favorite subject or paraphernalia from their favorite sports team. Adding a handwritten note makes it more special. Being personal sets you apart from the masses. In this electronic age how well do we really get to know our clients and employees? By selecting gifts or cards that “fit” your clients’ hobbies and past times you are sending a very important message to them. I am listening to you.

Consider delivering your thanks in person, this gives you an opportunity to reinforce the message.

Above all, make sure this is something heartfelt. Don’t do it just because you should, do it because you truly enjoy it.

Consider adding thank-you notes to your sales process all year long and as you develop your attitude of gratitude your business will grow along with it!

To my clients, peers, and friends, thank you for sharing your dreams, your fears, and your ideas. You have given a gift to people you haven't even met because what I have learned from our experience allows me to be a better coach. To my readers, thank you for your support and feedback because it validates, improves and energizes my efforts.

To our community business owners, we are grateful for your positive impact on our community. Thank you for providing jobs, allowing us to live in this great community. Thank you for locating here and supporting our community by paying taxes. Thank you for supporting that steady stream of school kids who come through needing support for their various activities. Thank you for all you do!

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