



The Personal Business Thank You Note

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Oldest Tip in the...

So you pride yourself on your impeccable, responsive and personable customer service. Heck, you might even consider it a distinct defendable competitive advantage and/or, a unique selling proposition (for those who have followed my writings, please say this isn't so). But when was the last time you actually put pen to paper to *thank* a customer for their business? Was it last week? Last month? Or so long ago you can't remember? For those who answered "never," "I can't remember," or "greater than six months ago," I've got news for you... While one of the oldest sales tips in the book, it 'still works!'

I recently purchased two pairs of chinos and several button down shirts from Brooks Brothers, the premium men's clothing store. The prices there are usually higher than what I'm most comfortable with but the quality of their chinos is outstanding. I know this as my last two pairs purchased just two years ago are still wearing strong. My in-store experience was not all that different from most other clothing stores. The sales rep helped me find my size and even supported my decision as my chief clothing consultant/stylist (my wife) was absent at that time. The checkout was pleasant and it was clear I was already in their database from past purchases made.

Two weeks later I received a card with my address and name hand written on an envelope. I opened it quickly thinking it was an invitation of some kind yet was pleasantly surprised to see a Brooks Brothers branded card and handwritten note inside. It read:

"Hi Angelo,

Thank you for your business at Brooks Brothers – Waterside. I look forward to assisting you in the future.

Best regards, Peter Levenson, Associate."

A business card accompanied the note as did a printed copyblock at the top of the card. That read:

"As the oldest institution of its kind, perhaps, in the United States, it is natural that Brooks Brothers has developed a personality so distinct... that a great many people have come to regard us not merely as a business, but more as a lifelong family friend.

-From a 1939 Brooks Brothers Advertisement-

This Thank You note had all the elements of a good one, in my opinion; obvious but not over-the-top branding, a feel good story (from 1939), and, of course, the personal note from my rep and the Brooks Brothers organization whom I may now aptly consider a "lifelong family friend." – great connection and tie in. It probably took Peter less than 2

connecting you to a world of good business



minutes to complete the note and mail it yet the return and value for that investment is immeasurably awesome and potentially long lasting (heck, here I am sharing it with you in this article).

Writing Your Own Successful Business Thank You Note

I reiterate, personal Thank You notes still work. They take little time and cost little money. They're effective. And, they foster long-term relationship building with customers. They also separate you from your competition who may or may not be doing them. Here are some tips when writing your own...

Some tips on what to do:

1. Handwrite your note. It has such greater impact to your customer knowing that you made the effort and took the time.
2. Address the recipient as "Dear {FIRST_NAME},".
3. Open the letter by thanking them for their business, meeting or other engagement.
4. Use your own words to convey your gratitude. If it doesn't sound like you it may be construed as a handwritten form letter that is sent to everyone. Be friendly, sincere and professional.
5. Include something personal about the meeting, transaction and/or exchange, when applicable, perhaps validating the meeting.
6. Mention a potential next meeting or engagement, without sounding presumptuous.
7. End it appropriately with "Yours Sincerely," or "Best Regards"

Some tips on what NOT to do:

1. Don't be solicitous and use the Thank You note as an opportunity to cross-sell/upsell something else, or as a referral campaign, survey or other marketing piece. (i.e. offers, coupons, etc.) This will dilute the effectiveness of your objective.
2. Do not pat yourself on the back in your thank you note. For example, writing something like "I pride myself on satisfying clients and being the best real estate professional in the area which is why I'm sending you this Thank You note..." ugh. The note, like your business and your awesome customer service should focus on the customer, always. Period.
3. Don't brand your business too much (i.e. sumo postcard). Instead, be classy, professional, forthcoming and sparse, yet still noticeable, just as in the Brooks Brothers example.
4. Do not use a printed label on the outside of the envelope. Rather, hand write that too as it's your customer's first impression of the Thank You note and is likely to end in the trash if it's perceived to be form letter.

I encourage you to write at least ten personal Thank You notes this next week and see what kind of a response you get. Keep in mind it is also the ones that don't say anything where it's likely to have the greatest impact. And, if it's anything like the Brooks Brothers example, your Thank You note, could go viral...

About the Author

Angelo Biasi is General Manager of SMART Marketing Solutions, LLC, a leading full-service integrated marketing company in Florida and New York since 2001. He has



helped create and execute marketing plans and integrated marketing solutions for companies such as Playtex, Bic, Rogaine, Tauck, and over 35 colleges and universities, to name a few. Angelo has an MBA in Marketing from the University of Connecticut and teaches Marketing at New York University where he has for over six years. He has been quoted and/or featured in USA Today, Mobile Marketer magazine, Mobile Commerce Daily, Luxury Marketing magazine, BNET TV and Business Currents magazine, to name a few. For more information or to learn more, email him at abiasi@smartmarketingllc.com, visit www.smartmarketingllc.com, call him at 239.963.9396 and follow him on Twitter @angbiasi.