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Thank Your Way to the Top



Writing thank you notes with my cat Bianca 1991. Follow up changed my life!

Write thank you notes, not text or emails. Those are average and ordinary. You can still do those, but thank you notes are gold nuggets and texts are tin. In my mind, a written note is 50Xs more powerful. It shows that you really care. It creates a deeper friendship and bond. I'm not saying don't text and email; do those things too! Your follow up isn't done until you send a thank you note through the good ole' U.S. mail. I'm not sure everyone does this, but I wait till the end of going through my mail to open anything that looks remotely good, like a thank you note. It's my treat after dealing with mortgage statements, bills, etc. If you ask anyone who was the last person to send them a hand written thank you note, not only can they recall who, but they can tell you when, and what it was for. Ask them who texted or emailed them last Wednesday around noon and they have no clue. It's that valuable! The value of being a thank-you note writer is only going up in years to come, so this one great habit will be more valuable in years to come because technology is just too easy.

I first tried writing thank you notes in 1988 after attending a Tom Hopkins seminar in Kansas City. I was a young struggling salesperson. I took my customer, Paul Straten—who was working for a great security company called National Guardian—to the seminar with me because I felt guilty that I was out of town on business with expenses of the hotel, rent car, etc., and wasn't seeing four to five customers that day. Tom Hopkins is a motivational speaker who made his money in California real estate as a sales person. Quite frankly, he really came off as cheesy. With every meeting, seminar or event I focus on trying to learn just one thing from the other person that they do better than me and try to incorporate that into my personality. Seriously I do this every day. By doing this, even in a bad situation, you can find something positive, even if it's learning what NOT to do.

Back to Mr. Hopkins, he did two memorable things that day, one he asked a question with a long drawn out approach that was demeaning to the person being asked the question (kind of I'm smarter than you attitude) so I learned not to do that! But the multi-million dollar gem he gave me was Thank You notes! This \$99 dollar seminar has paid out millions. Talk about a return on

investment! It's said that it takes 21 days to turn a behavior into a habit. I decided that I would try Tom Hopkins' thank you notes suggestion for 30 days before I made a decision to quit or keep it for life. To hold myself to this goal, I kept a journal of who I sent thank you notes to, for the benefit of seeing if those individuals were more receptive to me in the future and to keep score because when you are writing thank you notes it's a lot of lonely work. In addition, I wasn't sure it was going to work and I wanted to journal my experiment.

I went crazy with these things. If someone basically kicked me out of their office a note went like this, "thank you for giving me a moment of your time today, I love successful, busy people like yourself, looking forward to the opportunity to sit down and help you become even more successful". For real, you kick me out of your office; you get a thank you note! So guess what happened? I still was an unskilled, but a more likable young salesman. However, now I had adopted the professional skill of "follow up" by writing thank you notes. As you would probably expect, folks were more willing to see me, buy from me, and help me because I was slowly becoming a young professional salesman. An added byproduct bonus was that I started to remember people's names much better because I was writing them a note and writing their address on an envelope.

Tons of people have a hard time remembering other people's names; this is a great byproduct of written thank you notes. You are never too old or too good of friends with someone to write them a thank you note.

I'm going to rat out a buddy, but keep his name out of it. I really like this guy, but it's too good of an example to not share. I've had a 10-year relationship with my buddy that sold me my 1st Lamborghini, from Lamborghini of Dallas. I've helped him with home security stuff for free. He left Lambo of Dallas for a few years (people don't buy Lambos in a recession), and I tried to get him a job. He literally said I was the only person who tried to help him get a job. He's invited me to car rallies, sneak previews of the baddest new Lambos, etc. Right before Thanksgiving 2013 I had a

small financial windfall (sold a lot in a prestigious neighborhood) and decided to buy a used 2003 Ferrari 360 convertible, with only 3,000 miles. I grabbed my stepson Garrett, drove to the dealership, and haggled a little with my salesman buddy. We agreed on a price, and I drove away in the Ferrari and he got a \$100K sale! It took maybe two hours, with an hour of that Garrett and I having lunch, trying to get a lower price. Sure enough, an envelope from Lambo of Dallas showed up a week later, and I knew my buddy had done the right thing: he sold a Ferrari and I was getting a thank you card, right? Wrong! It was a generic Christmas card from the car dealership. How in the world as a professional sales person who has sold me more than \$250K worth of cars (Update, now over \$550K), not take four minutes to write a thank you card?

You know what happens when you buy a Ferrari? Everyone, and I mean everyone, asks you where you got it. You could walk around town with a Unicorn (I promised my buddy Ainslie Fukuda from Wave Electronics I would work a Unicorn into the book) and folks wouldn't ask you where you got it as much as a Ferrari. So my point is, if everyone asking you where you got it would my buddy like to hear me say my good friend "blank" at Lambo of Dallas?! He probably sold four to six cars all month. So let's say its six cars times four minutes. You don't have 24 minutes out of a 160 hours that month to thank guys for buying cars between \$100K and half a million dollars? I still buy cars from my buddy because he has a ton of great qualities, but I secretly wonder how much better my friend could be doing with thank you notes.

I'm here to tell you that I will be on my deathbed and I still will be sending thank you notes. If you are a professional you have to follow up with written thank you notes. My old boss, Ben Cornett, (get used to hearing his name, because he is the MAN and he is in the book a lot!) always said only thank the customers you want to keep. Well, customers are too hard to get to begin with, so I'm going to be the salesman who will ALWAYS thanks them forever! I've written over 20,000 thank you notes so far and hope to write another 20,000! I might not always be the best salesman at any given time, but I will always be the best follow up guy!

Update- Right before this book went to print I got a thank you note from my car guy! Threw it out in the universe and things happened!