

Engage Their Emotions...

by Vanessa Lowry

How can a few handwritten words in a note make you feel? I recently selected some key clients and business contacts to send a handwritten note and these are a few of the responses I received.

"I got your card yesterday. I love the outside sentiment, but your note inside brought tears to my eyes." – Leah



"Thank you for that beautiful card earlier this week. Vanessa, it truly touched me. I think it was one of the most beautiful personal notes I have ever received. The card was beautiful, of course, but the message... WOW!" – Lissa

"Thank you so much for the heartfelt card. It was a shining light in what has become a very challenging week." – Charlie

A handwritten note can be just the boost someone needs.

The added bonus is that a handwritten note can be kept and provide a visual reminder of support and encouragement.



This quote by Maya Angelou brings the impact of feelings to the forefront... **"People will forget what you said, People will forget what you did, but People will never forget how you made them feel."**

Leaders need encouragement. I recently spoke at a Women's Retreat for a large church in the Atlanta area. At the end of my presentation, I gave a note card to each participant, asking them to spend a few minutes writing a handwritten note to Marsha Crowe, the leader of Women's Ministry, who serves as visionary and organizer of the Retreat. This was the response from Marsha, the Minister to Women, **"I just finished reading the last of the wonderful thank you notes written by the women who attended your session. I cannot even begin to tell you how encouraged their words have been to me. I have intentionally opened only a few each day since the Retreat so that I could take the time to praise God for what He did to change the lives of women. I have placed them all in a basket and will pass them on the Women's Ministry team."**

Show volunteers that you appreciate their involvement.

Handwritten notes are a great way for an organization or group to say "thank you" to the volunteers who are so critical to success – from a specific event to everyday operations. A few months after Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans and the north-central Gulf Coast, volunteers pitched in to help at those locations, as well as in cities where displaced refugees were relocated. Profits in Progress organized an event to write thank you notes to individuals who helped in some way. About 2000 handwritten notes were sent to firefighters, pastors, church members, food bank workers, nurses, schools and more. One of the responses we received was from Sarah at the Atlanta Community Food Bank. **"One of our long-time volunteers actually brought (the note) to our office last week. She was very touched and wanted to know who sent it to her, as she is the one who helps us send out our thank you notes to volunteers... so it wasn't her, who was it? We rely on volunteer support so much and recognizing that contribution is a key component in a long relationship, especially in a time of extra need and work."**



Businesses can create loyalty with handwritten notes to customers. Nordstrom's, one of the nation's largest upscale apparel and shoe retailers, is known for exceptional customer service and their sales staff is encouraged to write thank you notes to customers. Here is an excerpt from a blog posting by Kinley Levack about the thank you she received from Nordstrom's.



make them smile with a handwritten note



"A few weeks ago I ordered new pillows from Nordstrom. I love Nordstrom and wish that we had one here in Manhattan. They already had me as a happy customer. Last week, I picked up my mail and received a hand written thank you note from one of Nordstrom's customer service reps that thanked me for buying the pillows, said she hoped I was enjoying them, and to please think of Nordstrom for my holiday shopping. A hand written card from a department store—Wow! It's too bad that this is the state of affairs, that people are so stunned by thanks. Not only will I be thinking of Nordstrom when I do my holiday shopping, but I'm shooting to get my thank you notes out within a week this year."

Think back to a handwritten note you received... who was it from? How long did you keep it?

Employees will often keep notes of appreciation for years.

It can serve as a source of encouragement after a tough day or week. In an article by John Hersey that ran in The Business Journal of Phoenix, he shared this story of a handwritten note's longevity. **"I've heard from people, who years after receiving a handwritten thank you from a supervisor or CEO, still remembered the kind, human gesture. Recently, I met a military nurse who worked in the White House in the early days of the George W. Bush administration. One day at the president's Texas ranch, the White House photographer took a picture of the nurse standing with the president. She soon received a copy of that picture with 'Great job! George Bush' scrawled across the bottom. The handwritten words from her boss – in this case the Commander in Chief – made her feel special and important. Years later, she was telling me the story. The personal touch left a lasting impression on her."**



John continued the article by saying, **"The impact from handwritten notes is increased employee morale, production and loyalty, all of which result in better employee retention. The cost of a first-class stamp and taking a few minutes to write a note will positively impact your organization's bottom line."**



And, don't forget to write notes to the individuals in your personal life that mean the world to you. I have a note from my sister that was written several years ago. I carry it in my daily organizer and read it when I'm having a stressful day. An excerpt from her note says, **"I appreciate your perspective on life – you have grown into a wonderful, wise woman."** On days when I'm not feeling particularly wise or wonderful, this is a great reminder that I have it in me!



Take a few minutes and write a note... to a leader, customer, vendor, employee, volunteer or personal connection. You will be remembered and it will make a difference to the individual receiving your note.

Start Note-Working Today!

Find out more about the individuals and companies referenced in this article...

Maya Angelou, www.mayaangelou.com

Johnson Ferry Baptist Church, www.jfbc.org

Atlanta Community Food Bank, www.acfb.org

www.misoapbox.com/2006/11/a_tale_of_two_t.html, blog posted by Kinley Levack

www.bizjournals.com/phoenix/stories/2004/05/03/smallb4.html, article by John Hersey

Start your habit now of handwriting personal notes — engage their emotion and be remembered!

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