

# The Business Connector

A Quarterly Newsletter from AmSpirit™ Business Connections

## *The Wonderful Thing About “Thank You”*

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Almost universally, the first words our parents endeavor to teach us to say are “mama” or “dada.” Although some of us perhaps were quicker than others, sooner or later we made our parents proud by uttering these words.

Shortly thereafter our parents attempted to grow our young and impressionable vocabularies, while making us polite human beings, by teaching us to say “thank you” or some other words of appreciation.

Although our first “thank you” was likely for something given to us, we now realize that there are a lot of reasons to show our appreciation.

We can say thanks for compliments, encouragement, friendship or a referral – we can even thank someone for thanking us. In short, there is hardly an activity or event which does not provide us an opportunity to express our genuine and sincere appreciation.

Although our first “thank you” was probably spoken, we now also know that there are as many ways to say thank you as there are things to be thankful for.

Clearly, we can continue to verbally say thank you – whether in person or over the telephone. We can say thank you in a note – whether handwritten or typed. We can say thank you by returning a favor – whether a similar favor or something entirely unrelated. We can say thanks by sending a gift of appreciation – whether something meaningful or a small token.

The “when’s” and the “how’s” of saying thanks are reasonably clear. The reason why we should say it is not as clear. Most networking books and articles that attempt to answer why we should say “thank you” do little more than say “because it is the right thing to do.” This answer only begs of the question.

The precise reason why we should say thanks, however, is probably not important. Again, our parents taught us to say it with the intent of setting us on the path to being courteous, well-mannered human beings.

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Despite these intentions, by laboring to teach us how and when to say “thank you” our parents have unknowingly armed us with a powerful networking tool.

How is this? Simple. Networking is about establishing and strengthening relationships for the mutual benefit of individuals in the network. In short, taking the time to appropriately say thanks fortifies our network.

When we contact someone in our network, our words of praise, note of thanks or gifts of appreciation serve to further etch us in their mind.

We may never be able to make ourselves completely indelible in the memory of our network. It is, however, this contact – no matter how trivial – that serves to create, strengthen and consummate our relationships, especially when regular contacts might be few and far between.

Once we have established contact, the gratitude we demonstrate serves two purposes. First, saying thanks provides our network behavioral reinforcement. In other words, showing appreciation provides a tangible or intangible incentive (depending on what you give) to repeat the action.

When someone gives us something – whether information, a lead on a new job or client, or an introduction to someone – we feel great. When we say thanks to the giver, our elation tends to be contagious.

Although it is not our intent in showing appreciation to gain something else, positive reinforcement is powerful. The giver seeks to repeat the behavior that has provided him or her a positive feeling – giving us something else.

The second benefit our gratitude provides is confirming with our network the opportunity we seek.

For example, our contact could be used to reiterate that “what you provided is exactly what I needed.” Our contact can also be used to clarify that “although I appreciate the thought, what I am really looking for is this...” In either case, we can use the opportunity to further inform and empower our network to work for us.

In summary, there is so much we can be thankful for and there are so many ways we can say thank you. Saying thank you or showing appreciation, however, is more than just the right thing to do. In short, taking the time to appropriately thank someone can be used to further expand and develop our network.

Oh. Almost forgot... Thank you for your attention.