

How to Write an Unforgettable Thank-You Note

BY [JACQUELINE WHITMORE](#),

Twenty years ago, I wrote a thank-you to a man named Brian from the Palm Beach County Solid Waste Authority. I was on a recycling field trip with a group of people from my office and he was our tour guide. After the tour, Brian and I exchanged business cards and made small talk. I got the feeling that we both were interested in learning more about each other, on a personal level.

After the tour I sent him the note. A week later, he called and asked me out on a date. We went on many more dates after that and eventually got married. I joke that the thank-you note was the catalyst for our long-lasting love affair. Besides, I never imagined meeting the man of my dreams at the county dump!

In my case, a thank-you note changed my life. It's a small touch that has the potential to leave a lasting impression. We communicate more quickly than ever before. Instead of a handwritten note, most people opt to send a quick text message or email.

For the most part, technology is incredibly beneficial. You can do a lot more in less time. It allows you to be more efficient and effective. But there are drawbacks. Faster communication has reduced the level of personal connection in daily interactions — especially when you express gratitude.

In business, most of the gifts you receive aren't tangible. Whenever someone gives you their time, advice, or a helping hand, it's more than enough reason to genuinely thank them.

For example, let's say you've been courting a company for a few months and you feel an introduction to the CEO would help you clinch the deal. After some research, you reach out to an alumnus from your university who knows the CEO. You ask this person for an introduction and he happily obliges, which ultimately helps you make the sale.

Everyone's time is valuable. Whenever a friend, colleague, or client chooses to set aside his other responsibilities and help you, the best way to show your appreciation is to personally thank him through a handwritten note.

A phone call or casual email may feel like enough, but it doesn't have the same gravity as a mailed letter. Think about it. You receive countless emails per day, but how many handwritten notes do you receive? One of my clients recently told me that he has received only two thank-you notes in 10 years.

Thank-you notes may seem like a habit of an older generation, but at my company, The Protocol School of Palm Beach, I encourage more and more professionals to make it a part of their weekly routine. The benefits are well worth the investment of time and energy. Thank-you notes can help you make new connections, grow relationships, and show your thoughtfulness.

Handwritten notes may be sent for any occasion — after a meeting with an important customer or client, when you receive a gift, or when you're invited to an event. To ensure a positive response, keep your thank-you notes short, simple, and meaningful. Here are a few more tips to keep in mind.

Invest in branded stationery. Rather than pick up a generic pack of thank-you cards from the store, order stationery custom-made especially for you. The design and style of the card should reflect your personal brand.

Always write by hand. The personal touch conveys that you cared enough to take the time to write it. The time investment is thoughtful and will make the other person feel special and important. Invest in a nice black or blue fountain pen. Thank-you notes are more fun when you use an elegant writing instrument. People will remember a thank-you note long after they have forgotten what they did for you.

Keep it short. Rather than send a long and laborious letter, carefully craft your message in a few sentences. Mention what the person did to help you, how they positively impacted you or your business, and reiterate your appreciation. Be sure to mail the thank-you note right away. Send it within one or two days after someone does something special for you. Your promptness will showcase your sincerity.

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