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CAREER CORNER

The Currency of 'Thank You'

In his acceptance speech for the 2011 AMA Volunteer of the Year award at the Leadership Summit this spring, Myles Bristowe mentioned the "currency of 'thank you'" as one of the most effective ways to help others feel appreciated and valued. Deeply thanking someone for her efforts lifts her up in a way that a Starbucks gift card never could.

The flipside of that coin is that thanking someone also can help you. In our fast-paced, 140-character world, pausing just long enough to say thanks makes an indelible impression on your peers and helps position you as a gracious, thoughtful and considerate colleague. Here are five often-overlooked instances when the currency of "thank you" gives your personal brand a boost and pays professional dividends beyond calculation:

1. Performance reviews

I'm not talking about your raise, or lack thereof, but rather the feedback on your work. If you've ever written a performance review, then you know how much effort goes into providing an employee with thoughtful, actionable and constructive insights. Whether your review was good or bad, if your supervisor takes the time to give you guidance, counsel or coaching, circle back to her and offer a sincere thank you for her investment in you.

2. Recruiter relations

I know many wonderful recruiters, but as a recovered job seeker, I also know the candidate-recruiter relationship can be difficult. If a recruiter presents your credentials to a hiring manager, regardless of the outcome, say, "Thank you." If he gives you feedback on your résumé or advice you'd otherwise rather not hear, say, "Thank you." If you want more job leads, then be known as the candidate who respects the hard work

that recruiters do and is grateful for each opportunity that comes your way.

3. Unsolicited criticism

It's not easy hearing that your work is flawed, you handled a situation poorly or your outfit is not appropriate for the office, but if you are not grateful for these "learning opportunities," they might stop coming your way. Swallow your pride and receive spontaneous feedback graciously; the more people "on your team," the better!

4. Teammates

Whether they are your direct reports, an ad hoc task force under your command or a merry band of volunteers, thank your team. It's easy to get caught up in deadlines and deliverables. Make a point of ensuring that each member of your cadre knows he's valued as a person, not just as a doer. Be known as a respectful and appreciative leader and you'll see loyalty like never before.

5. Network referrals

We live in the Age of Referrals. Be it an internal promotion, a new job opportunity, a coveted volunteer assignment or even a vendor recommendation, your network—when well-maintained—can be a referral machine. Go out of your way to thank each and every person who takes action on your behalf, who makes an introduction, shares a resource or gives you five minutes of his precious time. Encourage the behavior by expressing gratitude and, when possible, returning the favor.

Really want to blow someone away? Drop a hand-written note in the mail; he'll be your personal brand champion for life.

AMA NEWS

AMAF Elects New Leadership

The American Marketing Association Foundation (AMAF) Board of Trustees is pleased to announce the election of new leadership.

Jerome Williams, who has served on the board of trustees for 10 years and was vice chairperson for the past three years, was unanimously chosen to serve as chairperson and his two-year term began on July 1. Williams is the Prudential Chair in Business and research director of the Center for Urban Entrepreneurship and Economic Development at Rutgers Business School-Newark and New Brunswick. Williams was preceded as chairperson by Dawn Lesh, president of A. Dawn Lesh International and an adjunct professor of marketing at New York University's Leonard N. Stern School of Business.

Bill Cron, who has served on the AMAF Board for four years and is a past president of the AMA Academic Council, was elected treasurer. Cron is a J. Vaughn and Evelyn H. Wilson Professor in Business and the associate dean of graduate programs and research for the Neeley School of Business at Texas Christian University. Cron was preceded as treasurer by Don Lehmann, the George E. Warren Professor of Business at Columbia Business School.

The AMAF champions the marketing profession by encouraging excellence and investing in marketing that benefits society. For more information or to make a contribution, visit TheMarketingFoundation.org. **m**



Jerome Williams



Bill Cron