

Thank you....thank you very much!

Why Elvis was the King and what salespeople can learn from him

“Thank you...thank you very much” is the trademark phrase used by every Elvis impersonator from Tokyo to Vegas. It is how we think of Elvis Presley who despite his personal problems was one of the most successful entertainers of all time. One of the reasons for the “King’s” success was he was truly grateful to the audiences who supported him. Elvis took every opportunity to thank the people who bought his albums, watched his movies and attended his concerts. Do you do the same for your audience?

Ask anyone who sells anything to tell you about his or her clients. The first customer that comes to mind will be the account who is a pain in the backside. This is just human nature; we tend to remember the challenges we face more than the pleasures we enjoy. Because of this quirk of human nature our least favorite customers often get the best service from us. The 2nd proof, the extra call, the special tear page delivery, spec ads – they get these because we don’t want to lose their business. Sometimes you need to do this, but don’t let the time spent on these accounts cause you to neglect the uncomplaining, good paying customers that are the backbone of your territory.

Here are some ways to thank these accounts:

- Mean it when you say thank you – one of the best things about being a salesperson is that we see firsthand the connection between taking care of customers and our paychecks. Our company name may be printed on the check but it is our customers who pay us. If you see customers and prospects as adversaries you are in the wrong business.
- Always say “Thank you”. Don’t just fire off a quick obligatory “thanks” as you are flying out the door. When thanking a customer, make good eye contact and if possible, shake their hand. This will demonstrate your sincerity and make the customer feel truly appreciated.
- Be specific. Instead of just telling the customer “thank you” Tell them “Thank you for advertising with me”, “Thank you for always paying so promptly”, “Thanks for taking the time to tell me about your business”. This shows the customer that you truly appreciate them and rewards them for the specific behaviors we need them to do.
- Thank them even if they don’t buy from you. Again sincerity is the key. When a customer takes the time to review your proposal and listen to you, you owe them thanks no matter what the outcome. This is the mark of a professional. Not only is this the right thing to do, but this practice

can pay off in the long run. The impression you leave with the prospect may result in an ad if the competition screws up or their needs change.

- It is the little things that count. If you see an article or some bit of information that would be of interest to the customer give it to them. Find out when their birthday or the anniversary of their business is, and send them a card. These small acts of kindness will demonstrate to the customer that you care about them. These actions set you apart from the “typical” salespeople they see every day.
- Doing the “write” thing. Few modes of communication are as effective as the hand written note. Taking a few minutes to write a thank you note to your customer is a high leverage activity. A few seconds with your pen in hand will raise your esteem in the customer’s eyes, distinguishing you from the competition. Keep a box of thank you cards in your desk and set yourself a goal of sending out 1 or 2 everyday. New customers, customers who sign (or renew) contracts, new prospects who gave you an appointment etc. all should receive a card from you. Find an excuse to send cards. Send cards to customers after they’ve been advertising with you for 6 months, or gave you some information about the market, whatever the reason, send them a card. Often a card is most effective when it is least expected.
- Don’t forget to thank your coworkers. A word of thanks or a note when someone goes the extra mile is greatly appreciated. Remember, as salespeople we get a lot of recognition, the members of our team who work behind the scenes do not. A word of thanks now and then will make them feel valued and motivate them to support your sales efforts.

The need to be appreciated is hard wired into the human brain. Taking the time to sincerely thank the people who buy from you or help you is simply good manners. It is the right thing to do both as a businessperson and as a caring human being. Adopting an “attitude of gratitude” will help you to focus on the good things in your life and cement your relationships with your customers and coworkers. Elvis probably wasn’t too interested in ancient Rome but I am sure he would agree with the great Roman orator Cicero who said:

***“Gratitude is not only the greatest of all virtues,
but the parent of all others.”***

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