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## 14 Ways To Tell A Customer They're Appreciated



By Carolyn West Price

Thanks to the world of retailing, someone would have to live in a cave to not know that Valentine's Day is in February. With this holiday of appreciation and affection upon us, now is

the perfect time to extend your list beyond loved ones to other people to whom you should say, "I appreciate you."

While it may not be appropriate for you to send roses to an entire database of customers, here are some suggestions for ways to tell your loyal customers they are appreciated.

1. Create a "Customer Appreciation Day or Week" in honor of Valentine's Day. Send an email blast or post card to your customers and invite them to come in for a special treat—a discount, a giveaway...a party. Even if they don't come, you've had the opportunity to say thanks and they know you appreciate them.
2. Send a frequent purchaser card that rewards more loyalty with a thank you note.
3. Create a culture of "love." Specifically, empower your entire

staff to be grateful to customers by creating a contest among staff to thank customers with a special card signed by that employee. The employee who has the most cards redeem their special cards by the middle of March wins something special.

4. Promote a gift with purchase during February; these are always good incentives, just ask the cosmetic and perfume companies.
5. Offer free delivery or set-up in February.
6. For biz-to-biz relationships, drop by customers with a thank you goodie. Be sure to think visual and longevity. While food is good, it's gone in a flash, so think of an imprinted gift to go with it that will stay around as a mini-billboard.
7. Give t-shirts to customers...they're walking billboards that will promote your company for months to come.
8. A "Hi, how are you?" phone call—out of the blue.
9. An invitation to a community/business event as your guest.
10. A donation to a charity in the names of your customers with a note to them to tell them of your generosity.
11. Send a certificate for a gift you've pre-arranged with a vendor you

wish to patronize (or one of your clients). (My insurance agent always sends me a certificate for free flowers for my birthday; some years I pick them up (and he probably gets the bill), but other years I forget. Nonetheless, I appreciate his effort.)

12. Send a Valentine—the old fashioned kind that just says "You're Special." (Try to hand-address and sign the cards.)
13. Hire a barbershop quartet to visit your "A" list of customers (biz to biz) and sing a Valentine that will surely get them talking.
14. Create a "Salute" ad campaign and feature your customers. They get exposure and you do, too.

In addition to thanking your customers, don't forget your employees and your vendors, too. Although you may have acknowledged these folks during the recent holidays, you really can't say, "Thank you," too much.

And by the way, thank you for reading my column over the past 14 years. It's a pleasure to share my marketing ideas and perspectives with you all...and your feedback is appreciated!

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