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## SAY THANK YOU AND MEAN IT

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Quick Summary: Email and mechanized responses do nothing to build relationships.

### Abstract:

*Mechanized order acknowledgments have become part of standard acceptance and processing. Unfortunately, they are totally ineffective in building or solidifying a customer relationship. It is easy to do far more and create a lasting positive impression.*

Some individuals may take offense to the title of this article, reacting with the comment, “Of course, we thank our customers for orders, and of course, we mean it.” Although this may be the intention, the question is, how is the thank you interpreted when received? Was the thank you delivered automatically by programmed logic? Was it delivered by someone who is in the process of turning the crank to follow up on customization and implementation issues? Was it delivered by a sales rep just closing the sale before it is handed over to someone else?

Or, was the thank you created with a handwritten and signed note from a higher-level person that contained some personal comments about the customer, the system, or other individualized information? The impact of this last approach is obvious. It is a manifestation of a simple concept: take time for and appreciate others, a core concept of Principle Two of this series: Treat All Individuals with Dignity and Respect. Creating and sending a thank you note via postal mail, NOT email, is a small fraction of the time it takes to establish a customer relationship. In most cases, the simple personal thank you is actually the first step in establishing an ongoing relationship or making the first new sales call. Ask others in your organization to follow suit and write thank-you notes as well. They can and should be sent to other individuals in the customer’s organization. Some of those individuals may not even have been involved in the purchase decision but may be involved later or, perhaps, not at all.

The act of showing gratitude, when repeated, develops a true sense of gratitude. Initially, the act may seem part of a customer process, but over time, with its handwritten and personal nature, will become part of the company’s culture. It reinforces the notion that customers are the life blood of an organization and should never be taken for granted. Compare the impact of a personal note to that of a scripted, canned response from a customer service person whose goal is to recite the thank you and move on. How do you want to be thanked? Make it personal and mean it.