

Want more business? Send these 10 thank-you notes

Gill South

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Social media advocates may say the handwritten thank you note is antiquated and redundant in this age of Instagram and Facebook likes, but it's alive and well for many agents around the country using their letter-writing prowess with some success.

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“The card stock, the engraved typeface, the font, the ink and penmanship — it’s all highly personal and sensory,” Stribling & Associates’ broker Christine Miller Martin said in an email, flagging a recent article in *The New York Times* endorsing the practice of note writing generally.

Thank you notes create a positive impression and give confidence to the recipient that you will treat their referrals well, thereby reflecting well upon them, she added.

Notes that are unexpected, sincere, on-point and supportive are essential to building strong and healthy personal and professional relationships, says Dave Waldroup, managing broker at Exit Magnolia Coast Realty in Gulfport, Mississippi.



Christine Miller Martin

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You will be relying on an up-to-date customer relationship manager (CRM) for this kind of regular exercise as recommended by broker Amanda Ross, who says everybody should be in your database, including friends, vendors and clients, for occasions such as these.



Rebecca Brooks

Rebecca Brooks, senior broker associate at tech-centric Climb Real Estate in San Francisco, sends thank you notes to a wide range of recipients in her sphere.

“In a business sense, I’ve always thought that personal notes are a good way to acknowledge someone who has helped you in a specific way or gone the extra mile. I like to send them out to cooperating agents, lenders, insurance agents, vendors, stagers — anyone who has helped us during the course of the transaction, and I usually do this as part of my ‘closing a deal’ checklist,” she told Inman in an email.

Examples

1. Following up after a listing presentation

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2. When your listing goes into contract with a buyer

Celebrate this moment with a note to your sellers to thank them for all their hard work so far.

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Celebrate this moment with a note to your sellers to thank them for all their hard work so far.

5. Client referral

Nothing is more precious to an agent than a referral from a valued client, so when that happens, take the time to thank them properly with a handwritten note.

6. Happy house-iversary

A note a year after clients have bought their home is a nice way to get back in touch and send home the message that you are still thinking of them and to let them know you are there for any real estate needs.

7. Thank you to cooperating agent

A deal doesn’t happen unless agents on both sides are working hard on it. A thank-you note saying you would love to work with them again will often lead to more business.

8. Thank you to a business partner

Sending out a thank-you note to a business partner — a lender or a home stager — after a deal is done sets you up extremely well for the next time you work with him or her. It only takes a few minutes, and it can help foster a relationship that'll last a career.

9. Thank you to a vendor

Agents will often ask quite a lot of their painters, plumbers and handy people, so a thank-you note when their work is done (as well as a Yelp review) is a much-appreciated gesture.

10. A random thank-you note to reconnect

Clients respond well to high-touch as long as it's not overdone. A note that shows you're thinking of them, including a personal reference that you both relate to, can be a nice undemanding way of reconnecting.

What do you say?

Not everyone is a natural letter writer — what do you put in one of these special messages? Personal and relevant content is key — and smart agents are using what they learn on social media about their clients to connect with them when they write these notes.

It doesn't have to be a novel, Brooks said.



Alicia Selliken

Just make sure your message is authentic, Cascade Sotheby's International Realty broker Alicia Selliken, advises.

"I avoid canned sentiments that we see replicated on cheesy business cards. I like to include a personal line or two specific to the person, their family, their new home or a shared memory and then a simple statement of appreciation," Selliken said.

Waldroup is a big fan of the random note to clients and contacts.

"The subjects of the note should focus on something personal to the recipient; maybe you learn that someone saw a movie or read a book that had a particular impact on them that you can relate with them about," he said in an email.



Jay O'Brien

And avoid heavy-handed business asides, said chief day maker of client experience agency Client Giant, Jay O'Brien.

"A handwritten thank-you card with no business information in it, just a thank you, that's it. If you are going to do a closing gift, you do it later, don't tie it to the transaction," he said.

When should you send?

Agents will send thank-you notes after a listing presentation to show they are serious about wanting the listing, as well as at key times during the real estate transaction, especially at closing or when a deal comes out of escrow, for instance.

Exit Lifestyle Realty's Chantal Traversy says she keeps note cards in her car's glovebox. Immediately after a presentation she writes a note up and pops it in the mail box before leaving.

O'Brien advocates sending thank-you notes and gifts during all the main stages of the real estate sale, from the opening of escrow to the sellers moving into their next new home.

And keep the love coming after the deal is done, says Traversy. One of her favorite things to do is write a happy "house-iversary" note along with a bottle of champagne after the first year of her clients being in a home.

And the business — like the champagne — will flow if you time these notes right.

"I sent a card a couple of weeks ago to say happy anniversary and thanks again, and my client emailed back to say that their grown children may be looking soon, and they'd like to get together to discuss possibilities," Selliken said.

Real-life thank-yous

We've mentioned that many agents don't believe in canned thank-you notes and that what you write should be personal. With that said, we can't give you exact scripts, but we can show you examples agents are having success with.