

METROWEST BUSINESS



[WRITE ON THE MONEY]

Show love in your messaging

While you are probably focused on your beloved this Valentine's Day – and that is a good thing – it's also a great time to think about how to show some love in your business communi-



Maureen Condon
LOCAL COLUMNIST

cations.

This doesn't mean grabbing your boss for a big fat kiss or writing love letters to a prospective client. It means communicating in a way that showcases your passion and enthusiasm, celebrates the contributions of others and treats people with respect and kindness.

Here are some specific examples:

► Share your news and views

This goes beyond issuing the standard press release announcing new hires or promotions, although that is important.

Strong business communicators commit to offering a consistent flow of information, insights and opinion to their key audiences, and not just

when things are going great. Acknowledging and apologizing for mistakes go a long way toward building trusting, loyal relationships with customers and the public.

Other ways to contribute your thoughts and ideas include articles in your industry or business publications, blogging or commenting on the blogs of industry leaders, and a robust News & Views section on your website.

► Celebrate employees

The behind-the-scenes contributors to a company's success rarely get the recognition they deserve.

Buck this trend by creating and sustaining a program that honors those individuals who display the values, effort and behaviors you want to reinforce.

Consider an employee-of-the-month parking spot, especially these days with all the parking spaces lost to snow banks; a mention in your company newsletter; or a page on your website or post in your blog or Facebook page. The good news is that it doesn't have to cost a lot and the goodwill you build will always be worth it.

► Appreciate clients

Beyond a "Thank you for your business" on the bottom of your invoices, it's critical to show the love to clients in a tangible way.

This may mean sending a donation to a charity they support, participating in an event that is important to them or simply sending a birthday wish. Some firms hold client appreciation events that are well-received, while others develop loyalty programs to reward long-term customers.

You could even highlight a customer of the month in your marketing materials as a way of building community.

► Praise publicly, criticize privately

This general practice shows incredible love in professional environments.

When you have something good to say about someone, shout it from the rooftops. Be specific about why you are recognizing someone, which is more meaningful than a "You are great."

When you have negative feedback to give, it's also important to be specific and

even more important to be kind. Offer criticism privately and give the person room and space to digest the information before they respond to it.

► Give credit, give thanks

Last week's Super Bowl victory speeches from the Packers were filled with the usual clichés, but they also included the typical, yet valuable, credit and thanks to others.

In what will be for some their biggest professional moment, the first thing the owners, coaches and players did was to recognize someone else – the fans, the coaches or their teammates. This is a powerful gesture that every professional and business can learn from.

When you make it to the top, remember the ones who helped you get there. That shows some real love.

Maureen O'Grady Condon of Framingham is principal of Precision Marketing Group, a marketing firm that serves entrepreneurial, B2B companies. Contact her at Maureen@precisionmarketing-group.com.