



A Little Gratitude Goes a Long Way

by Robbie Samuels, Professional Speaker | Author | Podcast Host | Coach

When an event runs smoothly participants don't notice all the time, money, and effort invested behind-the-scenes to create a great experience. The same is true when an association runs smoothly. This is why once a year, we gather to recognize the many, many people who are hard at work throughout the year keeping this chapter going strong.

No one volunteers in order to be recognized and quite often we don't notice their efforts. The same is true for your staff that go above and beyond their job descriptions - stepping up to take on responsibilities because they see a need and decide they'll be the one to fill it.

There are members of your community who do a little (or a lot) more than their neighbors to keep your area safe, vibrant, and a great place to call home. They too do not do it to be recognized, they do it because they can and really appreciate the results.

While no one does more than their share to be recognized, being appreciative of their efforts would leave a lasting impression and inspire them to keep going.

Awards ceremonies are one way to do this, but there are smaller acknowledgments that can take place throughout the year with a lot less fanfare.

- Take them to lunch
- Write them a handwritten note
- Give them a gift certificate to their favorite coffee shop
- Offer them a special discount for an upcoming event
- Arrange for them to meet with someone they look up to
- Take the time to offer career advice
- Tell their boss how much you appreciate their contribution to the team
- Write a comment on their blog post
- Leave a review on their Amazon book page or iTunes podcast page
- Simply say thank you in the moment

About twenty years ago, I was an intern at a statewide organization while earning my Master's in Social Work. One of my lasting memories of that time was when a volunteer, 15 years older than I was, offered to take me to lunch because he had noticed how hard I was working.

That felt awesome.

In that moment, I vowed to be the person who goes out of their way to thank those around me for their efforts. A decade later when I was a full-time staff member, I regularly took my interns out for coffee and gave them token gifts of my appreciation after they helped organize large events.

When I've read a book that makes me think, I recommend it to others and take the time to write a review on Amazon. The same is true for podcasts that have consistently had awesome guests. Leaving a review on iTunes takes just a few moments, but I know (as a podcast host and author myself) how much those reviews are appreciated.

Recently, a woman I knew briefly over 10 years ago came to my area for a visit. We happened to be at the same event and when we were chatting she thanked me for taking the time to give her life and career guidance all those years ago. She remembered the specifics of what I had said, even though the conversation was long forgotten by me.

I was happy to hear that and it made me recommit to the ways I can pay that gratitude forward. Who has inspired me? How can I let them know their impact?

Do you want to deepen your connection with people in your network? Become a person who regularly goes out of their way to recognize other people's contributions. The goodwill created from these small gestures will have an impact on your life in countless unexpected ways.

View the world through a lens of gratitude and you'll always be on the lookout to catch someone doing something great.

That is a gift that keeps on giving.

About Robbie Samuels

Prior to becoming recognized as a "networking expert" by Inc. and Lifehacker, and author of the best-selling business book *Croissants vs. Bagels: Strategic, Effective, and Inclusive Networking at Conferences* (available at www.CroissantsvsBagels.com) – Robbie was the Senior Manager of Events and Donor Engagement at a nonprofit in Boston for nearly a decade. Through this role, he oversaw 25 fundraising events a year that raised \$1million and was a relationship manager with a portfolio of over 200 major donors.

Robbie believes networking is a marketing strategy and as a professional member of the National Speakers Association, has been speaking on the topic of inclusive and engaging connections for over a decade. He works with meeting professionals and conference organizers to design experiences that engage all participants, especially first-timers and those attending solo. Learn more about Art of the Schmooze, his signature talk, at www.ArtoftheSchmooze.com.

As a consultant, coach, author, and speaker he shares how to shift your mindset around relationship building, so you discover new connections and business opportunities in the world around you – and know how to act on them. Listen to On the Schmooze podcast for more networking tips from Robbie and interviews with talented leaders: www.OntheSchmooze.com. Learn more about Robbie and his work at www.RobbieSamuels.com.

Want content you can share with your event participants? Download "Ten Tips for Conference Connections" at www.RobbieSamuels.com/MPI.