

Want to Be More Influential? Science Says Do This

By Peter Economy

When was the last time you wrote someone a note or letter using a pen or a pencil? Can you even remember?

Handwritten notes, it seems, are becoming more and more of a dying breed.

These days, in our tech-heavy lives, we send hundreds of emails, texts, and quick instant messages a day by computer and smartphone. We barely remember the words we write down. However, we rarely consider the circumstances of such blase behavior towards the words we choose to share with others.

If we aren't sending people messages that hold weight, if we aren't providing them with meaningful words--how could they take the things we say at heart?

Well, the answer is quite clear: They can't.

A way to avoid this phenomenon of being forgotten in cyberspace is actually much simpler than we think. We go back to the simpler things. We go back to writing by hand.

Whenever we do something uncommon, it's sure to be noticed and appreciated a much greater amount than things that appear mundane. And these days, handwritten objects are most definitely a treasure.

According to the U.S. Postal Service's annual survey, the average household receives only about one personal letter a week, while the average corporate email account sends

and receives more than 100 emails in a single business day. How could we pretend to argue that the letter isn't dying out when we almost have nothing to remember it by?

While the idea of rifling through old letters can appear a bit contrived and overly nostalgic, it seems that there's really a method behind the madness. People perceive you as more memorable when you pass them a handwritten note. Not only that, but research indicates that people who express gratitude to others benefit--they're happier, healthier, and experience less anxiety.

According to motivation and employee engagement expert Dr. Bob Nelson, one of the most powerful rewards you can give an employee is a simple, handwritten thank-you note. This simple act has the power to build strong relationships with your employees that will make you and your business even more successful.

Showing someone that you took the time to do something as seemingly simple as putting a pen to paper will resonate with people much more than you think. So start writing things down--your results will surprise you.

*While Peter Economy has spent the better part of two decades of his life slugging it out mano a mano in the management trenches, he is also the best-selling author of *Managing for Dummies*, *The Management Bible*, *Leading Through Uncertainty*, and more than 75 other books, with total sales in excess of two million copies. He has also served as associate editor for *Leader to Leader* for more than 10 years, where he has worked on projects with the likes of Jim Collins, Frances Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith, and many other top management and leadership thinkers. [Sign up here](#) to always stay up to date with Peter's latest Inc.com columns, and visit him anytime at petereconomy.com.*

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