

SAYING THANK YOU

When and how to express thanks and appreciation to your clients and others

BY STEVEN A. MEYEROWITZ

from a grandparent or other relative to say thank you?

More specifically, do lawyers have to say thank you?

The answer to that last question is, of course, yes.

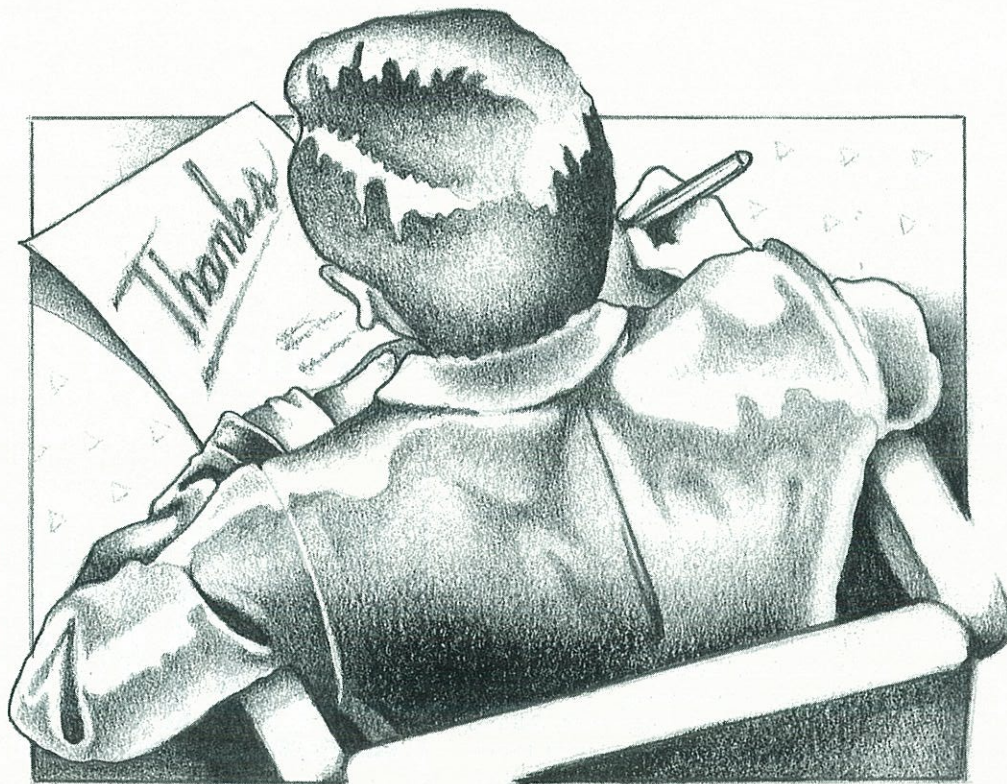
Good Thanks

"Thank you" matters. It especially matters if the thank-you is more than a form thank-you, more than a simple computer-generated line in one of what to a client may appear to be a series of seemingly unending statements for services rendered and more than a passing reference made seconds before the end of a conference. In other words, as Boston-based management-consultant Deborah J. Addis says, saying thanks matters if it is "not insincere, generic, or too repetitious."

The wrong kind of thank-you can be just as irritating to a client as wanting to speak with a telephone operator but hearing a taped message instead. At the least, the wrong kind of thank-you may just reinforce the nega-

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— Art by Dug Waltz

A person dialing long-distance information may hear "Thank you for using AT&T." A cash register receipt from the supermarket is likely to end with "Thank you for shopping with us." Bills from cable-television companies, electric utilities, pharmacies and credit-card issuers

now thank customers for past payments before telling them the new amount due.

Do these automated expressions of appreciation really count? Is the true meaning of "thank you" getting lost? What would Emily Post say? Is there actually a reason for anyone other than a child who has received a birthday gift