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## Saying thanks, and meaning it

Handwritten notes are still best

By Sheba R. Wheeler  
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(eInvite.com)

Holiday responsibilities rarely end with exchanging gifts.

Despite communications advancements like e-mail or text-messaging, a handwritten thank you note is still the best way to express heartfelt gratitude, according to Kerry Amidon, product manager for the online stationary vendor [eInvite.com](http://eInvite.com).

Here, Amidon shares a few tips for crafting

quick, sincere thank yous.

### What is essential to an effective thank you note?

Thank you notes do not need to be longer than three lines. Some people are overwhelmed by the idea of a thank you note. They think they have to be good writers and compose this long message. When they pick up a pen and are staring at this blank piece of paper, they think they must fill it and tend to freeze up...

This is a thank you note, not "War and Peace"! Don't be overwhelmed; keep it simple and personal. Thank them for — fill in the blank — so they know you received the proper gift. Don't just say, "thank you for the vase; it was lovely."

Mention how you might be using the gift. For example, say in the note how beautiful that vase looked on your dining room table. Telling them something personal about the gift helps them visualize how you will be using it and really shows an appreciation for the gift. A great closer is sharing with them the hope you will be seeing each other soon sometime in the future.

That's it. You are done.

### How do you respond to people who say e-mail or texting a thank you is faster?

It still takes time to (write) a quick e-mail. It's the same amount of time it would take to pull out a piece of paper, but the results are better because the handwritten note is more

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personal (and) can be re-read and shared with others. You can display the notes on a mantle — you can't do that with an e-mail. Plus, they won't clog up an e-mail box.

Many people don't feel they have time for reading personal e-mails while at work and are more likely to gloss over them. Delete, delete, delete!

## What can make the process of writing a note faster?

Have the pen you like to use, your favorite stationery and stamps on hand so you can write a thank you note as soon as the gift comes. People tend to stash stationery away in boxes, and it just overwhelms people to have to hunt for things like that. Put stationery in a nice decorative box or basket on your desk.

...The sooner (you send the note), the better. But if you have let time lapse, still send it and just apologize the delay. Ignoring the problem doesn't help, and it's never too late to send a thank you.

If your handwriting is bad, there is a huge variety of stationery that can be run through laser or ink jet computers. Type it in the computer, print it out and always hand write your signature.

## How can parents teach their children the art of a handwritten note?

With children, you must involve them as much as

possible, from choosing the stationery to dictating the note. Get it personalized with their name or let them choose a motif such as soccer balls or a little girl's tiara. Trying to get my son to write thank you notes to grandma was difficult until I found stationery with fire engines on it. Personalizing your stationery can make it more fun for adults, too.

Don't overwhelm the child by saying, "You've received 20 gifts; now you have to write 20 thank you cards." Have them choose one day or every other day to write so they don't feel like it's a chore. If a child is too young to write, have them tell you what they want to say (then) have them sign their name.

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