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**Karma and The Law of Reciprocation**

**By Kris Mills**

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Adding value. Karma. Give and you shall receive. No matter what you call it, it works ... and works big time.

It all comes back to the fact that most people are generous by nature. If you give a no-obligation gift or do a good turn for someone, more often than not, they'll feel compelled to repay you in kind.

This element of human nature can be effectively utilised in marketing.

For instance, you will experience far better results if you offer information obligation-free, as a starting point, instead of trying to sell something from a standing start.

Give them a taste of what you can do for them. Offer them a free eBook. A FREE trial. Let them experience the product in action in an obligation-free way.

THEN – once they've tasted the product, then ask them to buy.

The key is to provide a gesture that has no strings attached.

Here's an interesting story that offers a good example of the law of reciprocation.

A property management client of mine was about to implement some exciting new changes in their systems and loyalty programs. Before they got stuck into those changes they wanted to know what their clients wanted.

We knew that by sending a conventional feedback form, we'd receive pretty dismal response because people are basically lazy. And we knew that if we made clients an offer for returning the form, their responses would improve significantly.

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But instead of doing that, they went one step further. They sent a FREE gift in advance. We sent a feedback/survey form and attached a letter to it which thanked them for being a client and asked for their feedback. In it, we included the following passage:

"As a way of saying thank you in advance for letting us know what you think, you'll see we've included an "instant scratch it" ticket. Good luck. I hope you scratch up a winner."

Instead of a 5% or possibly 10% return rate on the feedback forms, a whopping 76% of people returned the survey form. Sure, it cost them \$1 each for scratchies, but after all, \$1 for valuable market research data is nothing.

One of our insurance industry clients also used this "reciprocation" law with amazing results. They gifted business owners a FREE clock, pen set or bag (each worth around \$25) just for providing them

with the due date on their insurance policies. The campaign consistently pulled 20–22% from a cold list THEN 80% of those respondents ended up insuring with the company when their policies fell due.

What can you do to capitalise?

That answer is heaps. It's a matter of showing your potential and existing clients that you care ... and it's about making them feel special.

Here are 6 ways you can do that:

1. When clients refer others, send a surprise gift thanking them for the gesture.
2. Send "no strings attached" news articles and information reports that provide valuable ideas relating to their interests.
3. Send surprise gifts thanking people for investing.
4. Create and send out your own newsletter packed with valuable information (not sales material).
5. If you sell a subscription service, provide a 3 month FREE trial.
6. Host special "thank you" events for clients to show your gratitude – golf days, seminars, free tickets to something that interests them.

### **How to Win a Reporter's Heart**

**By Rusty Cawley**

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## Karma and The Law of Reciprocation

Like all other humans, reporters are subject to the Law of Reciprocity. When they receive cooperation, they will give cooperation. When they receive loyalty, they will give loyalty. When they receive gifts, they will give gifts.

This is a very human norm that is rooted in our collective past, when reciprocity was a tool of survival.

And this is why most media outlets forbid their reporters from accepting gifts from the public, especially from news sources. The majority of media ban gifts that are valued over a certain limit, generally \$25 or so. Almost all news media forbid travel junkets as well.

Editors and producers want no questions to arise concerning any reporter's fairness and accuracy. Thus, the ban on gifts.

But there remains one gift that reporters will gladly accept and the Boss will gladly encourage.

That gift is "the scoop."

The scoop is an exclusive, important story. It is a news item that the reporter to beat the competition. It can be anything from a tip that the city council may change the town charter to a document that shows a local CEO is engaged in illegal insider trading.

Any tidbit of information that leads to a scoop is always welcome in a newsroom. Indeed, providing a steady supply of scoops is the only way to win a reporter's heart.

Scoops are what allow reporters to move up in the ranks. Scoops are what allow newspaper editors and TV producers to keep their jobs. Scoops are what allow newspapers to attract more readers, TV stations to attract more viewers, radio stations to attract more listeners and Web sites to attract more hits.

The PR Rainmaker knows: Scoops allow us to bypass the media's ban on gifts and to tap into the reporter's natural desire to observe the Law of Reciprocity. Become a valuable source, provide access to a steady stream of scoops, and you will receive more favorable coverage. It's human nature.

Reporters will succumb to the Law of Reciprocity. They will turn to you more often for expert commentary. They will look more favorably upon your story proposals.

In addition, reporters will succumb to the Law of Self-Interest. If you are providing scoops on a regular basis, a reporter is going to resist doing anything that might cause you to turn off the tap.

How frequent is a "steady" stream? One good tip per month is plenty.

If you are at all plugged into your industry or profession or community, you will hear plenty of good information to send along to the reporter.

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Get in the habit of passing news along to the reporter just as soon as you hear it. Also, take the reporter to lunch once a month to exchange information. Always take along plenty of potential scoops, even if they are nothing more than tidbits or rumors that you have heard.

Every reporter wants an inside source, a "Deep Throat." It's all part of the romantic image that most reporters have about their jobs.

Two cautions about reporters and reciprocation:

1. Never expect immediate quid pro quo. Understand that your relationship with a reporter will grow over time. Don't rush the process. Accept that you will always put more into the relationship than you will get out. If the reporter suspects that you think he owes you something, your relationship will sour fast.

2. Reciprocation only goes so far. If you're a valuable source, and the reporter has the story that your company is a front for the Mob, don't expect a pass. It won't happen. Because of your relationship, you'll probably receive more courtesy than will the usual subject of a tough story. But that's all.

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