

And don't forget to write

I got a friendly card in our office mail the other day. I was surprised and delighted. Who takes the time to sit down and write a friendly note anymore? Think of the effort: You write it, sign your name to it, neatly fold it, put it in an envelope, address it by hand, put a stamp on it and mail it.

What an awful waste of time, right?

Not from my end it wasn't. The sight of my name and address neatly handwritten across the front of the envelope caused me to push aside more than a dozen other pieces of mail and open it immediately.

A rare thing indeed

After I shared the note with my colleague, Managing Editor Jason Stahl, it struck me how seldom I receive a pleasant handwritten note delivered by the U.S. Postal Service. A thoughtful, friendly letter? Forget it.

Perhaps it's a generational thing, and forgive me for the "it was better in my day," but I remember when I looked forward to the mailman's arrival because it often meant news and greetings from my mom or my kid brother or, best of all, that special someone. Those particular letters were the best ones I ever received, and the letters I wrote back must have been pretty darn good, too. (That special person saved all of them, and they're in a shoebox in our home. Maybe we'll read a couple of them together as we celebrate our 34th in May.)

These days, I dread seeing the mail lady approach my mailbox at home, or the mail cart roll by my desk in our office. Almost all of the mail I get is junk mail — credit card offers, promotions of every shade, news releases and product announcements that have little to do with what we do here at *Landscape Management*. Most is just a discouraging waste of paper and postage.

This isn't communication

Today, it's so easy to put together a form letter (complete with digitally produced autograph) and spew out hundreds of copies with the push of a button.

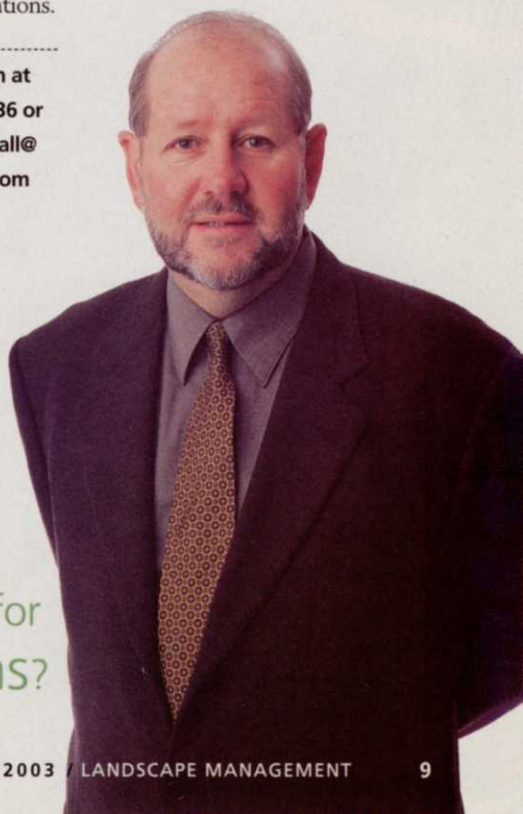
It's easier still to dash off an e-mail: "Dear XXXX (fill in appropriate name), How are you? We're fine. We greatly appreciate your XXXXX (select appropriate word from: business, kindness, gift, thoughtfulness.). Sincerely yours, Ron." Now that's efficiency.

But is that much efficiency necessary in our personal and customer relations? I don't think so.

Certainly not even our best friends or customers expect us to sit down and write them long newsy letters; It's just not done anymore. But what's wrong with the occasional friendly note or card? Absolutely nothing. In fact, it's one of the nicest things you can do. And one of the most appreciated.

Considering what the mailman brings every day, the recipient will remember your thoughtfulness long after all the bulk mail junk has been recycled for yet another round of credit card offers, print promotions and solicitations.

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Is so much efficiency really what you're looking for
in our personal and customer relations?