



## Reciprocation Drives Positive Results

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Social cues help us understand if we're being understood, accepted, rebuffed, or if we're just being plain annoying to the people around us. Have you noticed when you're talking to someone across a table and they lean back in their chair with their arms folded at their chest? Perhaps even with their brows furrowed?

I want you to engage in a little social experiment: sit back in your chair, cross your arms, narrow your eyes, and furrow your brows. How does that feel? It probably doesn't feel very positive, does it? And it may remind you of a time that your actions caused this behavior in others. I have certainly been in that position before!

Social cues can lead to positive or negative reciprocation. This can be demonstrated when entering a restaurant and holding the first door open for the person behind you, and they reciprocate by holding open the second door for you. That is a nice gesture and actually more engrained in human behavior than you may initially realize.

Take Phillip Kunz, as an example. He was a sociologist at Brigham Young University. In 1974, Kunz conducted an interesting social experiment. He selected 600 random people from the phone book and sent them a holiday card. He was curious to see how many people would send him a card back, demonstrating the rule of reciprocation, which is: if someone gives us something, we feel compelled to give something back.

Would you believe that 200 people actually sent Kunz a card in return? Some people even sent long letters containing all their family updates of their year!

I'm not suggesting you send out holiday cards to strangers. But if you do, I'd love to know how it turns out! What I am suggesting is to be mindful of your actions and ensure you're putting out a positive impact in order to receive a positive response.

Remember the image from the person I mentioned earlier? The person was reacting and putting out a negative response, which may just encourage more negativity and in turn, an unproductive result. Instead, try sending out a more positive and supportive action to see what positivity comes back to you.

The fleet industry lives this rule very well. We're a collaborative and supporting industry. A new person comes into fleet, either as a fleet manager or as a supplier, and we all rally around them to ensure they have the right network available for them to learn, share best practices and grow. And as the new person grows in their tenure, they too, embrace the new members of our community and provide the same support they were once given. We exemplify the rule of reciprocation!

Fifteen years after Kunz sent the first card, he still received cards from some of the people he contacted in 1974. Always remember a simple gesture of kindness can create a lifetime of goodwill.

Join the conversation! Email me at [ljozwiak@wheels.com](mailto:ljozwiak@wheels.com)

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