

PROSPECTING | PERSONAL GROWTH | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ULTIMATE NETWORKING - Referrals

“Referrals from friends...are the most underutilized yet most powerful way to get new business.”

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Referrals

Referrals from friends, family, neighbors, associates, customers, and clients are the most underutilized yet most powerful way to get new business. You already have an established relationship, and if you keep in frequent contact and provide quality products and excellent service, you can feel confident in asking for referrals. Create a mutual referral network to help and support each other. Ask them first about what they are looking for or what they need so that you can offer referrals or contacts. Then let them know what you are looking for and what you need and *ask for their help!*

You must learn to ask for help, as most people will respond because they enjoy the feeling of helping others. “Asking” is a technique that can be learned. I recommend the book *The Aladdin Factor*, by Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen, about how to ask for and get more than you expect. You can also encourage word-of-mouth referrals, which are not direct but indirect (viral marketing).

Your clients recommend your products and services to others who buy and use them; become satisfied customers who then recommend them to their network. Also spreading

information and opinions about a product or service by unconventional means like social media or e-mail.

How to Get Anything You Want or Need by Networking

Use the “Networker Profile” (see “FORMS”) to define, condense and summarize what you are looking for and what you want or need. You can set up as many “Networker Profiles” as necessary, but make sure it is for the most important or critical things.

You may be looking for quality prospects or funding for your business and/or projects, resources, ideas, getting a job, finding a new home, or even finding a compatible mate. Once you have completed a “Networker Profile,” set up a meeting or phone call with your friends, associates, or customers to go over your request. Give or send them a copy of your “Networker Profile,” and then ask if they are willing and able to help you find what you want.

The more “Networker Profiles” you distribute, the better your chance of finding helpers. You are creating a personal referral network to increase your ability to find what you seek. Don’t be shy—as I stated above, all you need to do is ask! People, in general, are willing to help if they believe you are serious and genuine.

How to Help Friends, Associates, and Customers Get What They Want or Need

Members of your business or social circle may ask, at times, if you know some good referrals or sources to help them. I get calls and requests weekly from friends, family members, and associates looking for something, and most of the time they are vague and aren’t effective in communicating what they need (“get to the point”).

They provide lots of unnecessary information and are not clear as to their objective. Send them a “Networker Profile” (see “FORMS”) to complete and return to you. Once they have a defined “Networker Profile,” they can use it to send to others in their network. The “Networker Profile” system is a much better way for them to have a chance to get help from you as well as their network.

Build a Referral System

Look to establish a referral system, and get your employees and salespeople involved. Referral reward programs offering cash, prizes, discounts, shopping vouchers, or redeemable points will help increase sales. Also, commissions paid for referrals are keys to affiliate-referral-partner and refer-a-friend programs to motivate your friends, associates, customers, and the general public to bring business to you.

LEARN THAT YOU MUST GIVE TO GET AND ASK FOR HELP

YOUR EXISTING DATABASE IS YOUR MOST POWERFUL REFERRAL SOURCE

YOUR NETWORK IS YOUR NET WORTH

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU KNOW, BUT WHO YOU KNOW

IT'S NOT ONLY WHO YOU KNOW, BUT WHO KNOWS YOU

IT'S NOT ONLY WHO YOU KNOW, BUT WHO YOU SHOULD KNOW

WHO DON'T YOU KNOW, AND WHAT AND WHO DO THEY KNOW, THAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

WHERE AND HOW DO I GET TO KNOW WHO I NEED TO KNOW?

Customers and Clients

Get business referrals from people who know you, trust you, and use your products and services.

- Business owners don't spend enough time cultivating their customers and clients.
- Every business should have a referral system in place for its customers.
- Always ask for referrals after you complete a job or make a sale (offer a reward program for customer referrals).

Customer Reward Considerations.....

- Discounts for future purchases
- Offer additional products or services after a sale
- Extended warranties or guarantees
- Tickets to events
- Parties and appreciation nights for customers who refer business
- Referral commissions (affiliate program)

- Rebate's and point's programs
- Volume discounts

Family

Let your family know about your business and make them aware of what you do. Also, let them know who your target market is and what kind of referral you are looking for. In return, find out what kind of business your family members are in, and try to find referrals for them.

Friends and Associates

Let your friends and associates know about your business and make them aware of what you do. Also, let them know who your target market is and what kind of referral you are looking for. In return, find out what kind of business your friends and associates are in, and try to find referrals for them.

- Invite friends and associates to a social evening or event with the premise of getting to know each other better, socializing, and finding out how to help each other.
- Create mastermind groups with friends and associates to brainstorm and refer business to each other.

Professionals and Experts

Get to know as many influential people and centers of influence as possible including politicians, celebrities, event planners, promoters, leaders of clubs, organizations, charities, and nonprofits. Join clubs and organizations. Get on panels and advisory boards, and become a person considered an expert in his or her field.

- Ask professional friends and associates how you can help them and what they need.
- Do favors, and don't expect anything in return.
- Always return their phone calls, e-mails, and text messages.
- Invite them to attend your events or tour your facilities.
- Take them out to lunch, dinner or to events (this will keep you on the top of their minds).
- Make sure you let them know what you are looking for and what your needs are.

Referral Directory

Refer professionals, businesses, and experts you trust and have used by creating a referral directory (example at www.unedirectory.com).

You can build a free referral directory website using Wix (www.wix.com) or Weebly (www.weebly.com) and to list valued, top-notch businesses and professionals who you can recommend to others.

Add to your database when you meet a new contact or find out about a good product, service, or business. You can then suggest that your friends, family, and associates do the same. This creates an ongoing referral network between people who know each other to share quality products and services.

- Create a referral directory of professionals who you are using and have used, such as dentists, doctors, lawyers, accountants, landscapers, painters, house cleaners, etc.
- Create a referral directory of family members, friends, and associates.
- Create a referral directory of clubs, organizations, and nonprofits that you can recommend.
- Establish an e-mail and phone-directory database and then keep adding to your databases is priceless.

How to Give Referrals

- Explain to your associate why you think it would benefit them to contact your referral and use their products and/or services.
- Ask your associate when they would be available to communicate with your referral and vice versa.
- Ask your associate what is the best way for your referral to communicate with them and vice versa.
- Ask your associate if they would prefer a three-way call, with you included, call at their convenience or use text, e-mail, Skype, or send a message.

How to Respond to Referrals

- Once you get a referral, arrange for a method of contact such as phone, text, e-mail, instant message, or other.
- Communicate with your referral within a reasonable time to show respect and be professional.
- When you make contact with the referral, decide how you will benefit doing business with them.
- Ask questions and qualify them to establish a new relationship which will be beneficial to both of you.
- When they explain their products and services, let them know your level of interest on a scale of one to ten (ten being highest).
- If not interested, let him or her know as soon as possible so as not to keep them guessing.
- Once you express your interest, schedule any necessary follow-up activities.
- Always inform your associate of what happened between you and the referral.

How to Get Referrals

**The data works in your favor...

- Eighty-three percent will introduce you to a specific person if asked (if you already have a business and social relationship).
- Sixty-six percent will introduce you to a specific individual if asked (if you only have a business relationship).
- Direct request
 - Ask your clients or customers through e-mail, online, in person, or a request at the bottom of your invoices. Earn credibility and trust by providing good products and services, plus good customer service.
 - Effort plus excellence—provide great products and services plus outstanding customer service, and you will be well rewarded with appreciation, loyal customers, and referrals.
 - Educate—let your customers know about your products and services, and create an excellent customer experience.
 - Customer satisfaction—under promise and over deliver as well as give them more than they paid for! Also, offer incentives, promotions, discounts, rewards, and better pricing to loyal customers. The old cliché still applies: “The customer is always right!” Your customer should be your first priority!
 - Customer maintenance— resolve issues, problems, and returns to the satisfaction of your customers.
- Target your best customers
 - Provide loyal and long-term customers with discounts, better pricing, special offers, and rewards as incentives to keep them buying and using your products and services, plus referring you to others.

- Keep in communication and maintain an ongoing relationship to keep you on the top of their minds.
- Provide additional value
- Educate customers about your products, services, and industry through social media, newsletters, blogs, e-mails and white papers.
 - Ask if they would like to be in your e-mail database for product updates and upcoming events.
 - When they place an order or upon completion of work, offer additional features, services, or products at no cost.
- Customer appreciation
 - Thank customers for their business by e-mail, direct mail, phone, and special customer-appreciation events to encourage them to refer others.
 - Always thank them, and keep them posted about any referrals they send you.
- Referral programs
 - Establish affiliate, reseller, or referral programs for your products and services with documents defining commissions and rewards for referred business.
 - Create referral marketing material for your referral program, such as brochures, replicated websites, e-mail scripts, phone scripts and banners for websites.
 - Add a refer-a-friend link to your website(s), e-mails, and newsletters for your visitors and customers to forward. Referral tools to get you started: ReferralCandy (referralcandy.com), InviteBox (www.invitebox.com), and SaaSquatch (www.saasquatch.com).

Special Note

Reward others for their efforts; make an offer that motivates referral partners and makes business sense also. The question becomes how much is a good commission to offer? Should you pay a flat fee, percentage of sales, and/or a residual commission if payments are over time? Another example might be a straight percentage based on the number of years, such as 15 percent (first year), 10 percent (second year), and then 5 percent for the third year and no more. Check out this payment calculator, which provides a variety of options: <http://www.businesspowertools.com/2017/07/writing-a-business-plan/much-pay-referrals/>.

- Don't wait to ask
 - Even if your project or job isn't completed, you can start asking your customers for referrals.

- As you get feedback during a project, ask if they know anyone else that is in need of your products and services.
- Return the favor
- Find out what type of prospects your customers are looking for (Who is their target market?), and let them know you will refer them to your friends, family, associates, and other customers.
- Ask your staff to seek referrals for good customers (create a customer directory, list their products and services, and provide the directory to your employees and staff).
- Personalize it
 - Direct a personal referral request to your customer rather than a request that you send or blast to all your customers.
 - The best way is a personal one-on-one request at an event, in a phone call, or at a meeting.
- Referral Directory
 - Ask your customers, friends, family, and associates if they would be willing to be part of your referral network.
 - You can build a referral directory website (Wix or Weebly), and/or establish a vCard (www.ultimatemobilemarketing.biz) referral directory on your mobile phone.
 - Get their contact information, website, and mobile site addresses, and add them to your directories.
 - Give them your contact information, website, and mobile site addresses so they can list them in their referral directory.
- Indirect referrals
 - Ask your customers if they would be willing to participate in testimonials, promotional videos, or product reviews or be part of a case study.
 - Ask them for product or service endorsements.
 - Ask them to be a sponsor at your events (either pro bono or for a fee).
- Be target specific

- Don't ask for a random referral, but be target specific about what type of prospect you are looking for, or what you need.
- Promote your customers
- Give them referrals.
 - Promote them on your social media pages.
 - Offer them sponsorship tables at your events.
 - Give them banners on your website, blog, or in your e-mail newsletters.
 - Like their Facebook pages.
 - Give them endorsements on LinkedIn.
 - Promote your customers with your friends, neighbors, family, and associates, and ask if they can provide any referrals.
- Referral networking groups
 - Join networking groups where you can get leads, generate referrals, and give referrals such as:
 - BNI groups (bni.com)
 - Chambers of commerce
 - Meet-ups (meetup.com)
 - Trade shows
 - Business-card exchanges
 - Speed-networking events
 - Mastermind groups
 - Clubs and organizations
 - Start a networking group
 - Advisory boards and trustees
 - Colleges and universities
 - Nonprofits and charities
 - Business clubs and organizations
 - Chambers of commerce
- Partner and collaborate with other companies
 - Establish relationships with other companies to refer their products and services because you cannot supply them.

- Refer outsource partners that can do requested work that you don't have time or capacity to do.
- Centers of Influence
 - Make a list of the top professionals in your community and business category, then find ways to meet them, get to know them, and build relationships.

REFERRALS ARE THE LIFE BLOOD OF MOST BUSINESSES

**Wealth Management by Matt Oechsli | Oct 14, 2013 "Today's Affluent Talk



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Another Great contributing author and leader for the
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