

Referral Guidelines

*"The best way **not** to get referrals is to ask for them as soon as you make a sale. BIG MISTAKE. What have you earned? Why would someone risk a referral on an unproven person or product?" Jeffrey Gitomer*

There are several guidelines to keep in mind when playing the referrals game. You can build your entire business through referrals, and never have to make a cold call. Referrals require active relationship management, so that you are continually planting the seeds by sharing with everyone that you are building your business through referrals and all referrals are greatly appreciated. It is important to also continually ask for referrals. Beyond planting those seeds, you must water them by reminding folks in all your circles that you love referrals. Sprinkling these references to referrals into conversation wherever you see the opening to do so will result in a garden of referrals in full bloom. Give referrals freely and to everyone. Don't expect immediate return referrals. Ask for referrals in an ongoing, continual loop. Be specific about the kind of referrals you want. Follow up on all referrals and follow through by getting back to the person who gave you the referral. Identify fruitful referral streams and nurture those relationships. Acknowledge and appreciate your referral sources.

Checklist: 4 Keys to Referrals

1. Give Excellent Service (in other words, Be Refer-able!)
2. Express the Importance of Referrals to your Business.
3. Ask for Referrals.
4. Acknowledge Referral Sources.

Remember the giver's gain concept from the chapter on networking? That applies here, too. Sales expert Jeffrey Gitomer tells us "the best way to get referrals is to give them first. The second best way is to earn them." This is where networking and referrals work together. Go back to your networking list from which you made your strategic target list. Of that list, pick the top five that you think would be powerful referral sources for you. Now, think about what you know about their work, about their ideal clients, about their needs and challenges. Using that information, you can most likely come up with a couple of prospective clients that you could refer to them. Giver's gain...if you can come up with a few referrals to give your top five chosen referral sources, then you'll be leading by example. It is much easier to ask folks to give you referrals if you have already given them something of value.