

The Best Ways To Get Tons Of Referrals And How To Systematically Keep Generating Even More!

We all know that referrals are one of the greatest ways to get new clients and patients. In fact, it's a dream for most businesses to passively sit by... without spending a dollar on marketing and have floods of clients enter their business.

Keep on dreaming... because it doesn't happen very often. If you want referrals, you'll need to follow a system. The best system I know is the EAR system. It stands for:

Earn
Ask
Reward

I learnt it from master marketer Dan Kennedy. The first part of this system is E for earn. One thing is for certain...

Satisfied Customers Do Not Refer!

It's not enough to have satisfied customers. You need to go way beyond that. To receive scores of referrals you must have...

Raving Fans!

This all gets back to providing WOW service. You need to earn your referrals. You can't expect them to flow through your doors, or into your business if your products are substandard... or if your service is sloppy and inconsistent.

It just won't happen.

In fact, the most creative marketing strategies on earth will not persuade unhappy clients to give you referrals. Satisfied clients perhaps... unhappy, certainly not.

Your first step is to give outstanding... almost over the top service. A question that Walt Disney used to ask himself all the time, which helped make Disneyland so successful, was...

How Can We Do What We Do So Well, That Our Customers Can't Help But Tell Their Friends About Us?

You want to make the process of doing business with you... so enjoyable... so much of a joy; that clients can't help but tell their friends.

Notice I'm not even speaking about your products or services. I'm speaking about the interaction... the human interaction clients have with you and your staff. I'm speaking about making the transaction itself so pleasurable that it leaves a mark on your client.

It all gets back to courtesy, and treating people with the highest level of respect. It doesn't matter which industry you're in... respect transcends everything.

I have a rule which I allow govern my business life, and that is...

Treat Every Client As They Were My Best Friend!

What I mean by this is, I obtain an image of my closest friend, and I imagine he's asking me for help in his business. Doing this allows me to approach my work from a higher level... far beyond monetary gains.

How would you treat your clients if you imagined they were your best friends? What if they were family? You would treat your clients with the highest level of respect.

Always, always, always approach every transaction in your business as an act of giving... not receiving. Extend yourself over and beyond the client's expectation levels. This is so important. Don't overextend too far however, otherwise you may not be able to sustain that level. Extend just enough so your client says "WOW... that was great!"

Do this and the next two steps are a mere formality.

The 2nd Step Is To Ask For Referrals

I know this sounds simplistic, and it is. But I'm often amazed at how many business owners and managers simply do not ask for referrals.

I guess it's because they're uncomfortable asking for help. Maybe they're embarrassed... or... perhaps it's because they feel they don't deserve them.

Listen: If you're not asking for referrals on a regular basis, you're really missing the boat.

Think about it. You've rendered a noble service to your clients. You've helped them solve a problem and they have relief.

You Deserve Referrals!

When is the best time to ask for referrals? The absolute best and most superior time to ask for a referral is at the time when your client praises you for your work... or... when you've completed the job and the results are in.

If you don't get an automatic praise, you'll need to ask for their opinion. At this stage, if you have done a great job (not a good one), it's the perfect time to ask for referrals.

How do you ask for referrals? Well, there are loads of ways. As an example, you're a physiotherapist. Your client came to see you because of a recurring neck pain. You manipulate her neck and provide her with some sought after relief.

She's grateful and thanks you for your help. That's when you say...

“Thanks for that. Listen... we’re trying to grow our business... and instead of spending lots of money on advertising, we’ve decided to invest back into our patients. If you have any friends, family or co-workers that suffer from recurring pain, you can introduce them to us and we’ll give them a FREE 15-minute back examination. This way we can advise them about the best course of action... and if in fact physiotherapy can help. They just need to present this letter discreetly when they come in, as this offer is unavailable to the general public.”

Can you see how simple this is? People appreciate when you go that extra little more for them. At this stage, you can either ask for the referee’s name and address and enter it into the computer to process... or... you can give your patient a voucher for the back exam (with their name on it as evidence)... or... hand them a letter which explains the offer which they give to the referee.

Also, you’ll want to jog their memory. In the initial stages of the script you could say...

“Thanks for that. Listen... we’re trying to grow our business... and instead of spending lots of money on advertising, we’ve decided to invest back into our patients. When you’re at home, at work... or... even at a friend’s home, you may think of people you care for suffering from back pain. When you do please hand them one of these vouchers...”

And you’d go into the rest of the script. This is what’s called a ‘posthypnotic command’. You need to jog your client’s memory, and give them a focus. You can’t just say, ‘give this to people who are in pain’. That’s way too broad. You need to say, “who out of your immediate family is suffering from pain?” ... “Who in your extended family... cousins, uncles or aunties is suffering from pain?” ... “Who in your department at work is suffering from pain?” ... “Who in your close circle of friends is suffering from pain?” ... and so forth.

Or, you can approach it from this angle:

“Thanks for that, I really appreciate it. Listen, I’d like to give you these (hand over vouchers). They are FREE back and neck evaluations. We normally don’t do any free consultations at all because we’re so busy... but... as a service to you, if you have any friends, family or workmates that suffer from any recurring pain, give them one of these vouchers and they’re welcome to come and receive a very thorough 15-minute examination. This way we can advise them about the best course of action... and if in fact physiotherapy can help... without it costing them a cent. The vouchers expire on the 24th of November, and they must bring it in receive their consultation.

Or you can send a letter. The following is for a dentist, but you can easily adapt it to suit your business:

Dear Peter,

I’m writing to you today to let you know about a new service we’re offering as a courtesy to our patients. For quite a while, our patients have been asking us to assist friends, acquaintances and family members who felt they could benefit from the therapeutic affect our expertise and methods achieve.

We’ve decided to establish for the next 3 months, a time each week, where loyal patients like yourself can refer people they know who are unnecessarily experiencing any pain. This would be on an appointment only basis as it would be at absolutely no cost to your valued friends and family members.

If somebody dear to you is currently experiencing discomfort or pain with their teeth or gums, and you believe we may be able to assist them, I suggest you contact them and say they are entitled to a no cost, no obligation consultation.

We will objectively evaluate their symptoms, and problems and determine whether or not we can help. If we think so, we'll tell them of the type of procedures it would entail to restore the health of their mouth.

This is a service we're trailing. I can't promise if we'll continue it indefinitely, but it seems there are so many people like you who have friends or relatives they want to refer to us, and we are so busy with the practice day by day, it becomes difficult to fully accommodate them.

So for the next three months, every Wednesday night between 7pm and 9pm... and... every Saturday between 1pm and 3pm we'll sit down with anybody you refer at no cost. But it's strictly going to be appointment only. So if you know of anyone, tell them soon because quite frankly, I expect to be inundated with phone calls as we have 2467 clients.

Have them contact my office directly on XXXX-XXXX and mention your name.

Sincerely,

Joe Bloggs

P.S. Remember, this is only for a limited time.

The most important factor in this letter is the offer. What you offer your client, and/or their friend is what is going to determine the amount of referrals you receive (outside of your WOW service, of course). So you'll want to experiment and test many, many referral concepts.

This idea can be extended to any professional services business... ranging from:

- Accountants
- Mortgage brokers
- Real estate agents
- Dentists
- Insurance brokers
- Financial planners
- Stock brokers
- Optometrists

The common thread between all these is to offer INFORMATION – to educate the prospect... and to provide a genuine no cost consultation. The accountant can give advice on how to legally save on tax. The stockbroker can give advice on how to make money in stocks.

Are you in professional services? If so, put this idea into practice. Meet with referrals during your quiet periods. Who else can use this letter and idea?

All tradesmen – plumbers can offer plumbing and pipe audits... or... to replace all washers and valves which are worn out... for free; electricians can offer electrical safety evaluations; mechanics can offer brake tests

All retail outlets – offer a 'premium' only available during quiet times

Another way to put this idea into practice is to offer free reports... or seminars... exclusive for friends and relatives of your clients. This is especially effective if you genuinely don't have spare time to provide free consultations. (Note: please be mindful of your ethical constraints. If you can't give away free consultations, the free report is a perfect solution. Alternatively, you can also offer steeply discounted services).

Other Ways To Ask For Referrals

Give A Reward

You can reward your referee with additional bonuses, extended warranties, movie tickets, dinner for two, future discounts... even a cash incentive, just for giving referrals.

Use Gift Certificate Vouchers

Hand out referral gift vouchers... as in the physiotherapy example above. Place the client's name on these vouchers so you can track where referrals are coming from... but also to create the impression they are a gift from your client.

Also, leave a space for an expiration date to create urgency and scarcity. Who can use this idea? Mechanics can offer free wheel alignments... plumbers can offer plumbing inspections and audits... all medical related professionals can either give a free consultation (if not restricted by ethical constraints)... a discount service... or free information such as an audio report/tape or book.

Clothing stores can offer discounts for clothes, or even a fashion audit where clients are advised on the most flattering colors and designs for their body shape. Printers can extend special offers on business cards. Remember, you can also joint venture with companies and have them offer their product or services for free... or at a steep discount. Use this as your offer.

Make It Compulsory

Make it a compulsory part of doing business with you. I know it sounds ridiculous, but hear me out. This is especially effective if you have an in-demand product or service. State from the onset, as a condition of doing business with you, clients need to refer 5 friends. Clearly you'd be very tactful about it. In fact, here's what you say:

"If we perform to these standards, and solve your problem, will you favor us with 5 referrals?"

So, at the very beginning clients know what they're in for. Businesses that constantly solve problems (chiropractors, naturopaths, mechanics) again can use this idea very, very well.

Get Their Rolodex

Here is the most powerful referral strategy I know of. It's especially applicable to slightly higher transactions... a few hundred dollars. You can get up to 100 referrals in one sitting with this idea and works best with clients who have really benefited from your product or service.

All consultants can very effectively use this in their business (accountants, real estate agents, financial planners etc.). All direct salespeople... and... even plumbers, bathroom renovators, moving companies and so forth.

Having said that, I doubt there's any business that couldn't benefit from this strategy. If you're in direct sales you WILL really want to hear this.

It's all got to do with re-associating the value of your service to the client... and going beyond asking for a few referrals... to... having them open their entire Rolodex!

I know it may sound overboard but what wait until you hear it. (By the way, remember how I told you how Brad Cooper's *FAI Home Security* sales consultants used to average 11.3 referrals per client? This is the strategy their top salespeople used).

Here's what you do.

After you've completed the sale... or... at an appropriate time when the client sees evidence your product or service is impeccable, and has praised you for extending yourself so far (for some products or services this may be at the time of sale. For others it may be one to three months into the future)... you make your client relive the positive emotions associated with your product. You explain the benefits and how it'll impact their life in the future (this is an NLP process called 'future pacing').

Basically, you have them imagine all the wonderful experiences and emotions your product is going to give them in the future. As they are feeling these emotions you ask a question like, "If there were some friends, associates or family members you know who could benefit in the same way have, would you be interested in letting some of them know?"

This gets the client to say yes to a general idea or concept.

And then you say, "You probably know a lot more people than you realize. Tell me, where do you keep your names?" And the client may respond "in my address book"... or... "In my planner"... and then you say the next 5 words...

"Let's Start With The As".

This is a very powerful process. How do I know? Because I was introduced to it through first hand experience! I purchased an FAI Home Security system... and this is exactly what happened to me! I'm not kidding.

I was reminded of this technique recently when it was mentioned on a Jay Abraham audiotape. I actually forgot about this method all these years! But boy does it work.

And let me tell you, I don't give the names of my friends or relatives out to just anybody. In fact, I'm quite a scrooge when it comes to referrals. Before I knew it however, I was actually going through my contact list, letter by letter... and...

I Loved It!

Let me explain. When your client shuffles through their Rolodex they pick up momentum and get all excited. This is what happened to me. I got into the mode of giving referrals... so I tried my hardest to give as many as I could.

FAI gave me a great offer, with loads of free bonuses. I felt special... so I gave in return. This is a great strategy. Use it in your business. Don't feel like your being pushy. Remember, if your client has truly benefited and feels taken care of, she WILL reciprocate.

So what's the next step? You've just received 43 referrals with this strategy. What's the best way to contact them?

Before I give you an answer, think about it for the moment. What have learnt so far? How could you apply what you've learnt in this program to answer the question effectively?

Well, if your client feels really taken care of... and she's benefited, what else should you be asking for? That's right...

A Testimonial!

You get a testimonial. Think about this for the moment: why can't this testimonial be used as the basis for a cover letter to introduce you and your product?

Isn't that a great idea?! Now you say to your prospect...

"Obviously I can't get you to contact each of these people on this list because it will take you too long. It would be much better, and I'd appreciate it, if we can send them a letter, basically reiterating how you benefited. I'll write the letter, but it'll come from you. Of course, you'll approve anything I write before it's sent out."

If you're on the ball, you'll notice this has now become a joint venture! You can also choose to use the endorsement letter in the joint venture chapter to approach the referrals.

The key with referrals is to get into the habit when clients praise you or your product in any way...

To Ask For Names!

Remember, you've extended yourself. Clients will be willing to give them to you.

There's a postscript to my FAI story. They screwed up. I never referred anybody else to them ever, ever again. Why? Because they didn't implement the final step... and that is...

Reward Referrals

Let me ask you: how do you feel when you do a favor for a friend... you've extended yourself... and... you DON'T receive a thank you in return?

You feel resentful don't you? Sort of like you wasted your time... and... regret putting yourself out.

Isn't that true?

Well, the same applies with referrals. If any of your clients give you a referral...

You MUST Reward Them!

Remember, anything you reinforce you get more of. When you reward the behavior of referrals... you get more in turn!

And how do you reward referrals?

Oh, I don't know... can you pick up a phone and say...

Thank You?

Can you drop a letter in the mail and say you appreciate their kind assistance and that you'll do your best to help their friend out with their problem? Can you send a dessert... or... cheesecake?

Often this is all that's required. I'm not kidding. Again, you can also give:

Movie tickets
Chocolates
Whiskey
Wine
Theatre Tickets
Dinner for two at a nice restaurant
You could even give away a holiday!

The magnitude of the gift you give in return is a function of the importance... and value (both financial and personally) of the referral. This is very important, so please don't forget. If a client gives you a referral worth \$30,000... would you only reward her with a bottle of whisky? Relative to the value of the referral, it doesn't look like much.

It's a decision for you. Remember, you need to first GIVE... in order to RECEIVE. It's a spiritual law and it's a law of doing business.

Above all though...

**Give It A Personal Touch.
That's What Matters Most!**

Give back to your clients, and they in turn will continue to give to you!