



Referrals

Ultimately, agents who do not cross the referral threshold are depriving themselves of a streamline of new business. Simply stated - Referrals are plain, old-fashioned good business. Every client will have friends, neighbors and co-workers with similar interests, incomes and backgrounds, in other words, excellent potential customers for you. By building solid relationships with and catering to your current customers' needs, you can turn them into walking and talking advertisements for your business.

Don't believe it? Then keep reading – this story should motivate you to see the power in Referrals:

In a time when people are worried about job security and next month's mortgage payment, it's not easy getting them to think about what might happen 10 or 20 years down the road. But that's Mike's job. As an agent for a large captive agency for over 20 years, he sells life insurance, annuities, and other long-term investments to clients, and his are mostly in the medical field. And despite a 15 percent drop in the individual life insurance market in 2009, his business is booming. In 2008, Mike, who has five assistants and three associate brokers, sold more insurance and financial products than any of this captive agencies 11,000 brokers, racking up hundreds of millions of dollars in insurance products and tens of millions of dollars in securities.

Ask yourself what is this agent doing that you may not be doing? One thing is clear – He has mastered the art of Referrals and has set up a System to capture them.

Finding More Clients

Here is a list of some suggestions for referral strategies that you can put into place quickly and effectively.

1. See clients face to face two to four times a year for meaningful reviews.
2. Send out newsletters a minimum of six times a year and do targeted seasonal cards.
3. Have a system in place that will enable you to meet with about 4 appointments a day.
4. Make sure to spend enough time with clients and systemize everything you do. For example, here are some ideas on how appointments should flow: - First meeting - invest a lot of time in fact-finding to determine what the client's goals and priorities are. Do an analysis of what they have shared and then set up a Second appointment to discuss strategies and options. Third appointment should be a finishing appointment, where you



answer questions and review what has been accomplished and begin to put into action the strategies you have discussed.

Each one of these meetings should last about two hours. This is significantly more time than clients are going to get with many other financial services reps.

5. Build referral requests into your sales process.
6. Use Referral cards - A Referral card is the bridge to help bring you to your future customers. Design professional and visually appealing referral cards. Leave behind referral cards at the end of your sales or service appointment. Let your customers know you will pick them up in your next visit.
7. Help your clients understand the benefits of recommending your service to others they know.
8. Provide customer service that delights your clients – You have to *earn* your referrals.
9. Invite customers who have a business network for lunch. During the lunch talk about the customer but also talk about your career and business goals. Tell your customers that they are the key to your business success. State the types of referrals you need from them.
10. Exchange referrals with other professionals.
11. Exchange referrals with your clients who have businesses. You could form an exchange club and exchange clientele with customers who are lawyers, accountants or business owners. Referrals you get from this source will mostly turn out to be high quality customers. The referrals would trust you as how they trust your customers.
12. Have a reward system in place for referrals.

Weed Out The *Wrong* Clients

One of the most overlooked secrets for being successful in sales is having the *right* clients. For example, one advisor in the industry early in his career started working with doctors because he felt they were smart and having gone through years of schooling, should understand the concept of delayed gratification, which is what retirement planning is all about. To find these clients he does a series of educational seminars about goal setting, retirement and tax-favored investments, estate planning, and proper allocation. In this seminar he does not mention or sell



any products, instead it's all about giving people time-tested information and it's a weeding out process for him to be able to attract people who are motivated to act.

Referral S - Y - S - T - E - M - S

Systems are business processes that have predictable results and outcomes and they are set up to happen the same way every time, day in and day out.

Think of systems using this acronym:

S-y-stems help save ...

Y-ou

S-tress

T-ime

E-ffort and

M-oney

If you want to get more referrals you need to implement Referral s-y-s-t-e-m-s. This is where BCA comes in. Call our Marketing Department or your Business Development Advisor today to receive information on our innovative Referral Based Marketing Systems.

Conclusion

If you put enough effort and seize every opportunity to ask for referrals, you will always be in the business. You should always have people to see and never run out of prospects! What a wonderful reward for such a small amount of effort and organization.

Asking for referrals should be part of your sales process. Your next big case just might come from a referral given by one of your current clients. Not asking for referrals and not utilizing a system to gather with these referrals will be cutting you off from future business successes.

But before you ask for referrals, you must earn the business. First make certain that the level of service you have provided to your existing customers earns you the right to ask for referrals.



Insurance agents who frequently get quality referrals are always the ones who provide good, solid and quality services.

Referrals are the key to any business, and you will want to have a lot of interactions with your clients so that you will always be on the tip of their tongue for the person they will *go to* with any insurance or financial issues. This will not only help you to retain clients but they will most likely be willing to refer their friends and family.

Great salespeople get referrals without asking for them. Start thinking about how you can implement at least one referral system in your business today. Institutionalize that system of a referral process so that it happens consistently each time.

Remember to give an incentive for your customer or client to give you the referral. Then start watching the referrals pour in instead of watching your marketing dollars pour out.

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