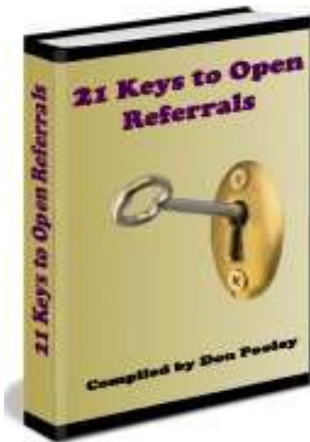


21 Keys to Open Referrals



There are many more than 21 referral concepts in this ebook because some articles include more than just one idea. But read them all over once, and note those you want to put into practice immediately, and those you'll use later.

Instead of reading this book from your computer monitor, print out the pages. And, as you read them, underline or highlight any ideas that seems useful to you. This will triple your retention of that particular idea, as well as making it easier to find later on.

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Introduction

You need keys to open up both your attitude towards asking for referrals, and your clients' awareness of the benefits of referring you to their friends and colleagues. You also need keys to open them up to how they can refer you comfortably, and without embarrassment.

So, if you want:

- ▶ to prospect easily and comfortably,
- ▶ to never have to cold call again,
- ▶ to easily attract referrals,
- ▶ to pre-qualify your prospects,
- ▶ to have clients volunteer to refer you,
- ▶ to work only with the type of clients you like, and
- ▶ to have high quality clients seek you out,

then this collection of key referral articles from **TIP*** is for you!

So, enjoy!



Don Pooley, CFP, CLU, CHFC, with over half a century of experience in the life insurance and financial planning businesses, shares the marketing knowledge he acquired, and what his friends tell him works for them in his FREE email newsletter, TIP and in ebooks such as this.

** TIP (The Insurance Professional) is a FREE email newsletter on marketing financial services published twice monthly by Don Pooley. To subscribe, and get your free ebook, "Secrets of Soft-Fact Sales", go to <http://www.eTIP.ca/>.*

If you bought this ebook for \$29.95, a better deal is to join the TIP Ebook Club. It's purpose is to provide its members with ebooks on effective ways to market advisory services, and build their practices. For more about it go to: <http://www.eTIP.ca/EbookClub.html> .

Keys to Referral Marketing

by Kirk Lowe

Referral marketing is as much a science as it is an art. There are intangibles that are difficult to put your finger on. For reasons we can't be sure of or measure, some professionals just get referred more often than others. It could be their level of confidence, their look or image or simply their charisma. That's the ART of getting referred, the intangibles, there's no school or certificate. But there are ways to increase referrals that you can control and influence. Here are several factors that will undoubtedly increase your odds of referral success.

There are several factors that influence a number of different variables leading your clients through the referral process. They're all important and each needs your attention. Collectively they create a synergy that's necessary to achieving referral-marketing success; alone they'll not help you maximize the opportunity.

The YOU Factor:

1. Strong Relationships - People need to feel comfortable with referring you.

In addition to feeling you'll do a good job for their friends or colleagues, clients are more likely to refer you if they have a close relationship with you. This can be either a close personal or professional relationship. Keys to developing strong relationships are centered on your communication skills; how well you listen, understand, apply and explain.

2. Perceived Value - You need to be referable.

How much value do you provide your clients? This is as important as any other factor. If clients don't perceive any real value in your services they likely won't be clients for long and they certainly won't refer. But do they see real added value? Do you exceed their expectations? The more value your clients see in your services, the more likely they'll be to refer you.

3. Perceived Need - The most important thing is that they see a need for your service regardless of how wonderful you seem.

Clients need to fully understand how you help people, who you help and how it'll benefit those people. Then they can easily identify friends and colleagues you can help, they'll present your target market to you and people who're more likely to fit your profile of an ideal client.

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The INITIATING Factor:

4. Consistent and Continuous Referral Process - You need a process to ensure you follow through with referrals and that they're all treated equally.

You need to make referring top of mind in your preferred referrers' minds.

It's also important to let your clients know that you've been getting referrals for years, you've built your business this way, you've followed through and have provided good services to those referrals in the past. This will give your clients the confidence that you've great experience in this process and have done it effectively for years.

5. Client Referral Base - Target those clients who are more apt to refer and who are in positions of influence.

This is simply a matter of putting your effort and resources where there's more opportunity to reap the benefits. You should also focus on ideal clients, as they're more apt to refer other ideal clients.

6. Peer Referral Base - You need to refer to these people in order to be referred to.

This is a great opportunity to leverage your services. If you build professional relationships with several successful peers (lawyers and accountants) you not only promote your services but you provide better service to your current clients by referring them to these professionals.

The SUPPORT Factor:

7. Sales Support - Provide clients and peers with a resource center for referring. This includes brochures, business cards, CD business cards, audio interviews and much more.

Providing support in the form of resources helps clients and peers refer you. They look professional in doing so, as do you. It's difficult enough to put yourself out there for a friend or colleague, make it easy for them, and make them look good in doing so.

8. Referral Options - Provide number of options for referring.

This includes referring people to meetings, seminars, phone calls, or simply mailing them your newsletter. You also need to explain this to the potential referrer before asking

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them for a referral. They need to know the options available to them and the person they'll be referring. This makes referring easier as they don't necessarily have to refer people to your office for a meeting with you. Think of how many people would like to refer but aren't comfortable with the process. I'm certain you'll build a larger list of referrals this way, then you would by just offering a meeting.

The FOLLOW THROUGH Factor:

9. Follow Up - Make sure you follow through with referrals.

Clients want to know that if they put their name on the line for you, you'll at least follow through with contacting their referral. Adhering to a systematic process of following through and dealing with referrals works best here.

10. Thanks - Make sure you thank your clients appropriately for referrals.

You don't necessarily have to give gifts to show your appreciation but if you do a thoughtful gift always go further. Try to buy them something that is meaningful. The best sign of appreciation is to simply thank them personally.

11. Keep Them In The Loop - Try to keep you clients informed about the referral they gave you.

This isn't the most important follow through but it adds to the process and your client's confidence in your follow through. Let them know that you contacted the client, what the next step is and if they later become a client. Don't ever imply that you're looking for them to persuade their friend or colleague into becoming a client.

12. Service Clients - Treat a referral that becomes a client, as you would treat the client that referred them.

Clients talk, and if you treat them differently they may find out. Try to treat clients as equally as possible, especially referrals.

The BRANDING Factor:

13. Training Your Sales Force - Your clients need to understand whom you work with, what you do and how the client will benefit from working with you.

If clients don't understand or can't articulate what you do, whom you work with and how

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people benefit from working with you, how can they actively market your services to their friends, colleagues and family? This all stems from your ability to brand yourself and your services. You need to engrain this in your sales team, your clients. Provide them with consistent messages in all communications with them and provide sales support for them.

Providing support in the form of a sales message and resources will help your clients refer you. As I said earlier, they look professional in doing so, and so do you. It's difficult enough to put yourself out there for a friend or colleague, why not make it an easy decision for your clients when contemplating referring?

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Kirk Lowe shares his marketing know-how in his FREE eNewsletter for financial advisors, (go to <http://www.freedommarketing.ca/> and look for "a touch of Freedom") and in his FREE eBook, "Building Your Business In The 21st Century - For Financial Advisors". Call him at 888-677-8946, or email Kirk@freedommarketing.ca for more tips on building your business online.

8 Roads To More Referrals

Book Review

86% of surveyed customers would refer their broker to their friends, yet only 12% were even asked!

And a referral is up to 15 times more likely to do business with you than a cold prospect.

TIP's surveys found the top marketing method to be *Referrals from clients, and non-clients*.

The book, "**Business by Referral**" by Misner and Davis, reveals even more in its survey asking 2,350 business professionals to rate the effectiveness of these referral methods:

1. Networking groups..... 81%
2. Ask orally..... 72%
3. Ask in writing..... 33%

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- 4. Incentives..... 23%
- 5. Seminars/Speaking..... 21%
- 6. Recognition..... 19%
- 7. Internet/online service..... 8%
- 8. Subscribe to referral service..... 2%

Networking groups can be sub-divided into:

- **Casual-contact networks:** members from different trades, and professions, e.g. Chamber of Commerce;
- **Strong-contact networks:** only one member per profession---meet to exchange leads;
- **Community Service Clubs:** such as Rotary, Kiwanas, etc.;
- **Professional associations:** single industry groups (CMA);
- **Social/business groups:** dual purpose combining business with pleasure, such as the Jaycees;
- **Women's business groups:** paralleling old-boys networks.

As no single group will serve all of your needs join more than one, but of different types.

Asking orally and in writing, is best done with an open-end phrase such as **"Who do you know who...?"** that invites the listener to suggest names. It will garner more leads than **"Do you know anybody who...?"** which can be answered with a yes or no.

Incentives can range from a simple oral thank you, all the way up to monetary rewards based on business generated.

Online networking is a new and rapidly growing source of referrals, as there is an Internet site for almost every subject, where people interested in it exchange opinions. Use a search engine to find a few you like, and join in.

Referral services are nothing more than paid advertising on demand, requiring the prospect to initiate the contact, which is why it has such a low effectiveness rating.

"Business by Referral" provides a systematic way to generate more referrals, and make more money. And promises that ***"You'll never, ever have to make another cold call."***

3 Referral Strategies

In their book, "Getting Business to Come to You", by Paul & Sarah Edwards, & Laura C. Douglas, under "Five Lessons from \$100,000-Plus Businesses", are these referral strategies:

1. Get clients and customers to refer others to you,
2. Network through your clients' networks, and
3. Use letters of reference and endorsements.

It details each of these strategies (6 pages on the first, one alone), so to find out more, borrow the book from the library, or buy it.

It also offer these "Three Referral Taboos":

1. Never focus on your need for business,
2. Never dump lots of promotional material on referrers, and
3. Never speak poorly of a competitor or client.

Referrals - Easy As 1-2-e?

by Kirk Lowe

GETTING REFERRALS is arguably the best way to build your financial advisory practice. There are basically two kinds, solicited or unsolicited. Unsolicited referrals are best; they imply your client is confident in your services, and the referred is in need of your services. Although there are many different approaches to soliciting for referrals, it may be difficult to find a method that you're comfortable with that works well.

Here's a referral method that's as easy as 1-2-e. Use an eNewsletter (email newsletter) as a referral target instead of a meeting. Slowly build your email list over time, and use the eNewsletter to begin building relationships with referrals until they are ready to meet with you. Although this is a long-term approach, it fosters building strong relationships with both clients and prospects. It's easy to implement, and sustain, is non-threatening and doesn't put you or the client on the spot.

Here's an easy plan to help financial advisors get referrals, more referrals!

1. Strengthen your relationship with current clients with:
 - Constant Communication

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- Consistent Communication
 - Superior Client Services, and
 - Sound Financial Advice
2. **Make sure you have a website** with pertinent information about you, your philosophies and your services. Highlight what sets you apart from others and how your clients benefit. An eNewsletter can drive traffic to your website where potential clients can learn more about you and your services.
 3. **Build your pipeline** (list). Instead of asking for referrals for a meeting, ask if you can send an eNewsletter. You'll have greater success asking for something that requires little commitment from referrer and referred.

Why eNewsletters? They're easy to implement, effective, easy to refer (email addresses at fingertips) and easy to sustain given their low cost and ease of distribution. Best of all, you don't have to ask them directly if you don't want to. You can also supplement this type of campaign with others provided they don't conflict with one another.

4. **Begin building relationships.** Communicate with your clients and prospects regularly via your eNewsletter. Offer content that's interesting but not necessarily about their finances. You can also communicate information about 'Appreciation Events' and 'Administrative Reminders' which will be seen by both clients and prospects.
5. **Continue building your list and sending out your eNewsletter.**
6. **Your expectations and analysis** of success should be based on client satisfaction (loyalty), number of eNewsletter subscribers, number of opened eNewsletters and finally how many new clients you receive. Adding short-term marketing initiatives is okay provided they work in concert with this long-term approach.

In the worst-case scenario you have added more value to your relationship with current clients. This, in itself, can contribute to you receiving more referrals.

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Kirk Lowe shares his marketing know-how in his FREE eNewsletter for financial advisors, (go to <http://www.freedommarketing.ca/> and look for "a touch of Freedom ") and in his FREE eBook, "Building Your Business In The 21st Century - For Financial Advisors". Call him at 888-677-8946, or email Kirk@freedommarketing.ca for more tips on building your business online.

How To Get More Referrals

by Greg M. Bowen

I learned very early in my career that though many of us can sell life insurance, the truly successful agents are great at prospecting. They also use more than one prospecting tool.

I also learned through direct experience that some methods are better than others. I tried cold calling, newspaper ads, radio advertising, and trade shows, and none were effective.

My most effective prospecting technique is getting referrals from clients. But I have had to work hard over the years to make myself referable. Now, I haven't had to ask for a referral in close to a decade, but still get several every month.

To make myself referable, I:

1. **Tell everyone that I work on a referral basis.** Just as they'd recommend a good restaurant to their friends, so they should recommend me if they are happy with my work.
2. **Call every client on their birthday and anniversary** just to wish them a happy one. They appreciate the personal touch, and often bring up business or give me a referral.
3. **Send a newsletter to everyone**, both clients and orphans. I actually got a phone-in from an orphan policyholder this spring, and he is now my biggest money client.
4. **Ask for names of people who would benefit from receiving my newsletter.** Not asking directly for a referral to sell to builds trust, in both the client, and the prospect.
5. **Keep in regular contact with every one of my clients.** The easiest sale is to someone who has already done business with me. Even just a phone call to say hello is appreciated, and often leads to questions that lead to sales.
6. **Offer clients, prospects, and policyholders information, and service on my website,** www.rrspguy.com. Yesterday I set up a free classified ads service on my site, and emailed my clients. Got a call right away from a client for an RRSP.
7. **Send all clients a wall calendar.** Almost 75% of the clients' homes and businesses I visit have my calendar on their walls. It's important for my name to become a household word, and for clients to have easy access to my phone numbers and email address. They see them every day.

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When I find something that works, I incorporate it into my business process and make it a steady routine. It provides consistency for my clients and makes me referable. To quote an old friend of mine, Wayne Cotton, "If you have a problem, make it a process and it won't be a problem anymore."

Greg Bowen, CFP, CLU, CHFC, President of Bowen Financial Inc., has been protecting the lifestyles of middle-income Albertans since 1978. Greg also publishes a newsletter for life underwriters to mail or email to their clients, and prospects. For more about it see <http://www.lifeletter.ca/>

Getting Referrals

This list is in my 'How to Get Referrals' file, and I have no idea of its source. I must have saved it because it's a good reminder of things we should be doing all the time to keep referrals flowing to us.

- Look for referrals when you don't need the business, not just when you do.
- Prove that you're worthy of referrals
- Let contacts know you desire referrals
- Ask current clients to refer potential new clients
- Consider prospects as referral sources
- Develop referral sources by asking for advice
- Avoid direct solicitation
- Convince referral sources that prospects will benefit more than you will
- Maintain good relationships with referral sources
- Make sure referral sources are enthusiastic

As you look over this list ask yourself "Do I do this?" If your answer is "No," ask yourself "Why not?"

If you answer "Yes" to every one you should have a good flow of referrals coming in. If not, use this list to analyze exactly what you are now doing to acquire referrals on a regular basis.

How To Get Even More Referrals

by Don Pooley

Your clients may not realize that they can provide you with referrals. Even if they do, they often won't refer without some signal from you.

So tell them, "I get most of my business from referrals. It is the best way I know to spread the word about what I do, so your recommendations are important to me."

Some may be happy to refer you, but not know how to. An idea used by some professionals is a sheet titled "When to Refer" telling how to recognize when someone needs their services.

I ask clients to tell me who they feel would benefit from my newsletter. Then I send it to them with a note such as: "Bill Johnson thought you'd appreciate my monthly newsletter, so you'll get it free for as long as you wish. No obligations are involved, and you may contact me to discuss anything in any issue, also without any obligation."

If you run regular seminars you could do the same thing. Ask your clients if they'd like to attend and bring a friend. Or if the client has been to a previous seminar of yours, tell him/her when you are running another, and ask him if there's anyone he would like to invite to it.

Listen to what your client tells you about his/her friends. Open your ears for phrases like "My friend is about to.....", or "My Dad plans to". This is a signal you can turn into a referral by offering, "I might be able to help them with that". Suggest a next step, "I'd be glad to call them," or "Would you like me to send them some material?", or "...invite them to a free introductory meeting?" or "... seminar?"

Do everything you can to get referrals (but never pressure, beg, or imply an obligation). Your ultimate goal is to get ALL of your clients through referrals.



Referral Tip

Here's an idea that Pamela Yellin calls her "Client Feedback Survey":

1. Call your clients and tell them you want to get feedback on how you are doing, so you can become better at serving them. Do this yourself, at least the first few times, and don't send a letter.
2. Ask the person to be honest and to tell you specific ways in which you could improve the way you do business. Listen carefully and take notes.
3. Thank the referrers, even for negative feedback.
4. Then ask what they have liked about doing business with you. Most important, ask what is the biggest benefit they have received from working with you. Turbo-charge your results by asking feeling questions.
5. Tell them you are glad they feel that way, and ask who else they care enough about that they would want to see them benefit in the same way.
6. Describe your ideal prospect, to prompt them to give you the highest quality prospect. Also, show them a list of people they would be likely to know (neighbors, friends, etc.) and ask who on the list would be worth contacting.

Generating Referrals From Clients

by Martin R. Baird

Imagine if you knew about a time-tested technique that would bring you into contact with prospects, but seldom used it.

That is precisely what many financial advisors do every day, missing untold opportunities in the process. They readily acknowledge referrals are important for generating business, but in the next breath they admit they don't often ask for them or don't ask at all.

Advisors dislike referrals generation. They fear rejection. They think it's unprofessional. They worry that it will make their clients uncomfortable. The greatest stumbling block is that advisors don't know how to seek referrals effectively.

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There are several ways to go after referrals: Use interviews to learn who clients associate with. During a meeting, a client may say that he enjoys golf. Ask who he plays with.

This will help you learn about his circle of friends and business associates. Later, you could invite the client to a round of golf and suggest that he or she bring some of those people. Each of those friends is a potential client.

Listen for change. When meeting with a client, listen for hints of change affecting people they know. Change is a great opportunity to introduce solutions to their problems.

Most clients will unconsciously offer you insights into the relationships in their lives, and you need to be aware of these signals and recognize them as gateways to referrals.

You need to find a way to meet these people. When you do actually meet them, chat with them about their lives and interests and don't push your business. At the same time, look for problems you can solve.

Offer the same quality service to a client's friend. Say your client is pleased with the retirement planning you've provided and tells you. Ask him if he has any friends who'd also like to know when they can expect to retire.

Instead of asking for new business, you're offering to make the client's friend happy. When seeking referrals, be sure clients understand that there is a benefit for them as well.

The benefit to the clients is twofold:

- you have more time to work for them, because you spend less time marketing and making cold calls, and
- the clients have an opportunity to be a hero by helping someone else.

Use rewards. Psychology 101 says the way to get a person to exhibit a desired behavior is through positive rewards. Do you currently reward all the people who give you referrals?

Is it done consistently? The dollar amount of the reward is not as important as providing rewards consistently.

Build trust with your clients. Build trust by listening to their needs, and delivering what you have promised them.

If your clients trust you, they will give you referrals.

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Follow up. When you are given a referral, a person trusted you enough to share your name with a friend or associate. It is vital that you follow up with both of them. The prospect may never be a client, but you need to at least contact them. You also need to thank the referror.

Use other cost-effective referral techniques. Here's an easy one - all you need is a piece of string and a \$100 bill. Clip the \$100 to the string and hang it from the ceiling in your office. Every client who comes into your office will ask why you have money hanging from the ceiling? You explain that you will give them the \$100 if you forget to ask them for a referral.

And now that they've brought it up, you might as well ask!

Here's another: Ask clients to name the four people they would want to spend their retirement with. Their answer will give you the names of four prospects.

There are many techniques and strategies to gain referrals from your clients. The key is to find one or two you are comfortable with and use them.

Martin R. Baird is president of Advisor Marketing, a full-service marketing management firm helping financial advisors them improve their marketing methods and increase revenues, via seminars and conference speeches on referrals, marketing, client communication and transitioning to fee. Call Advisor Marketing at 480-991-6421, or visit www.advisormarketing.com

How To Get Referred

Tell a client, "Some of my clients say this about me...", and ask her what she'd say if she was referring you to a friend.

Then ask her if she's said it to anyone recently, and if so who? If she give you names, you're getting referrals. If not, you can tell her how best to refer you.

Endless Referrals

by Don Pooley

The intent and theme of Bob Burg's book, "Endless Referrals" is how to get people to know you, like you, and trust you. They should also want to see you succeed, and want to help you to find new business.

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Well that's what we all want, so does this book deliver?

Yep. And it's about more than just getting referrals. Take this, for example, "The four ingredients in a successful networking recipe are truth, justice, peace, and love."

Burg gives you more than the mere mechanics of obtaining referrals. He presents a philosophy---a philosophy that is in sync with permission marketing.

You'll see it in his [Seven Networking Disciplines](#):

1. Acquire knowledge.
2. Place yourself before potential networking prospects.
3. Be wise by learning from others---especially your networking prospects. Learn how you can help them.
4. Give unrequited referral. Help others in your network without expecting an immediate payback.
5. Be tactful. Tact is the language of strength.
6. Allow yourself to be rewarded with endless referrals after showing persistence. Follow through in gratitude.
7. Realize that discipline and networking are nothing more than learning how to benefit from being the 'boss of yourself' so that you can constructively help and influence others to network. We are ideally put on earth to help others. And, of course, as we help others we invariably help ourselves."

If there is such a thing as a 'bible' of getting referrals, and networking then this is it. Get it and become enlightened!



6 Steps To A Successful Referral Marketing Strategy

by Kirk Lowe

Ask any successful financial advisor, they will tell you that getting referrals, especially qualified referrals, is the best way to build your business. There are of course many ways to get referrals, but there are six key steps that you should focus on to ensure your efforts are most successful.

The six steps to be discussed are not meant to stand-alone. They will integrate easily with other referral programs in the market. They are flexible in how you wish to present them and you can apply many different referral programs to them.

Step 1: Set-Up/Establish Campaign

Prepare written details of your entire campaign including the next five steps and the scripts and processes that accompany each step.

Having a referral system in place before you start asking for referrals will help you in many ways. Your organization will make you more professional about it as well as more confident in yourself and your referral process. You should be able to answer questions to the following five steps and know exactly what you are going to say - you can refer to other referral programs here.

Step 2: Ask/Implement Campaign

How To Ask

You will need to prepare or review scripts that you are comfortable with and that you feel your ideal clients will respond to. Next you will need to implement the campaign. For some, this will be the hardest step. To make this step easier try scripts and processes that you are most comfortable with. If you use script and a referral program that you are not entirely comfortable with you will look uncomfortable asking for referrals.

Where To Ask

Consider various alternatives to asking. You don't necessarily have to ask for referrals at client appreciation events or in meetings with clients. You can ask for referrals via your email newsletter for instance.

When To Ask

Advisors who have strong relationships with their clients can ask for referrals at almost

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any time in the relationship. Make sure you consider the appropriateness for you (your service is valued by the client) and your client (it is a good time for them). According to Wayne Cotton, CLU, an industry expert on referrals, one of the best times to ask is when you complete the delivery of your products and services to your new client, they are most appreciative of your services and willing to participate with your referral program.

Step 3: Provide Marketing Support

Create and provide supporting marketing initiatives to your request for referrals. Make it easy on yourself to extend the value you provide by following up your referral program with a variety of other marketing initiatives. These initiatives might include an introduction to your web site, signing referrals up to your email newsletter, or sending a business card CD to introduce referrals to you and your services with links to other marketing initiatives as well.

Step 4: Provide Options for Referring

Both referrers and referrals may not be prepared to commit themselves or their friend(s) to a meeting with you. Most financial advisors ask for referrals, clients know that this means you will be asking for a commitment to a meeting, which they may feel obligated to since you forwarded their name. It can present uncomfortable situation for everyone. If you provide several options that don't make referrals or referrers feel obligated in way you are more likely to get more referrals. This presents a great opportunity to connect with more referrals and helps you build your prospects pipeline. You can then use other marketing initiatives to keep you in their minds, and present other opportunities for them to take that next step towards becoming your client.

Step 5: Follow A Process

It is important to all parties involved in referring that you have a defined tracking process you and your staff follow. This will help ensure no-one falls through the cracks and that everyone is treated professionally. If your clients know you have a well-defined process they will feel more confident referring people to you. It will also allow you to more efficiently and effectively process and follow up with referrals and referrers.

Step 6: Follow Through With Referral/Referrer

As important as it is to ask for referrals it is equally important to follow through with the lead and thank your client for the referral. Obviously, not all referrals will lead to a client. But it is important to investigate whether you can help the referral or not and then to keep the referrer updated as to how the introduction went or is going. This includes letting them know whether they became a client or not and thanking your client for referring you. This will help encourage continued referrals and will qualify their referral efforts. People want to know that you not only appreciate their support but that you made an effort to help their friend with their finances. If you do a good job here,

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your client will look good to you and to their friend or colleague - the best incentive to keep on referring.

Typically, advisors who have a well-defined referral strategy will be more successful than those who don't. There are a number of different variables that contribute to the overall success of your program. Not only do you need a referral program that is effective and that you are comfortable with, you need to have these other steps accounted for so that your efforts will be maximized. Approaching your referral campaign as professionally as you do financial planning and servicing your clients is a big part of the overall value and image you convey. If you're going to do it, do it right.

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Kirk Lowe shares his marketing know-how in his FREE eNewsletter for financial advisors, (go to <http://www.freedommarketing.ca/> and look for "a touch of Freedom") and in his FREE eBook, "Building Your Business In The 21st Century - For Financial Advisors". Call him at 888-677-8946, or email Kirk@freedommarketing.ca for more tips on building your business online.

How To Get Top Referrals

by Don Pooley

You can't do it hit or miss. You need a plan.

Think about it. You'll spend perhaps days, making a financial plan for a good prospect. Now do the same for yourself. But, instead of a financial plan, make it "Your Referral Plan".

Where to start? As you would for a financial plan. With pen and paper, or your fingers and computer.

You want quality prospects like the top 20% of your present clientele. As they associate with people of similar tastes, income, and standards, this is where to seek your referrals.

Write down their names. If you have 100 clients, list the 20 that you want more like. Now write down opposite each one how you came to meet them. Were they referred? If so, you have a natural way to introduce your requests to them for referrals.

As you consider these clients think of the relationship you built with each one. Strong, loyal relationships are rarely built in a day. This is something else you can bring to the attention of your prospective referrers---that you want to develop the same long-term relationship you have with them.

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Now you have to make it easy for them to refer you, without making it casual. It should not be an afterthought after a meeting about their affairs. It should be a meeting about referring you to some of their friends and acquaintances. You want them to realize its importance.

To make it easy for them to refer you, everything you want them to do for you must be planned so they have nothing to be concerned about. You're their tour guide arranging all the details for them to enter this new 'referring' country.

Show them how you plan to approach their friends. The best way to do that is to have a letter prepared---the letter that you will send to each of their referrals.

Have another letter prepared for them to send each referral in which they introduce you. Present it as the "type of letter you may wish to use to introduce me". If they like it, offer to have it typed on their letterhead, ready for them to sign, for each person they refer.

This makes it easy for them, and for you. You've made it easy for them to refer you, and you don't have to cold call the referral to explain who referred you and why. Nor does your client. Also, it's easy for the referrals to follow up on your client's and your letter, or not, as they choose.

If I were doing it all over again, that's the way I'd do it.



Referral Letters

by Don Pooley

The ideal beginning of a day is for a prospect to phone to say she's been referred to you, and would like to arrange a meeting.

Let's be honest. This rarely happens.

Next best is you get a referral from a good client.

Now, do you phone or write? A letter is less intrusive than a phone call, so write.

A letter is also more impressive than a phone call, and lets the prospect know more about you. For example, that you feel she's worth a lot more than a phone call, that you have a

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letterhead, a business address, and maybe even a degree, or designation, or two. So write.

As you don't want your letter to look like a mass mailing, write, don't type her name and address on the envelope, and stick a real stamp on it.

And don't pitch product in your letter, or it's just another piece of junk mail. Instead offer something. No, not a trip to Bermuda, but something ongoing that will help build the prospect's trust in you---your newsletter, for example. Like this:

Your name was given to me by Mr. Paul Porter who felt you would benefit, as he did, from utilizing my services.

To introduce you to my areas of expertise I've included the current issue of my client newsletter, and will mail you a few more monthly issues before contacting you directly.

If you would prefer to meet me before that, please call, or write me.



Get Referred By Email

by Bill Cates

A great way to be introduced to a new prospect is through an email that your referral source sends to the prospect.

As you and your referral source are determining the best way for you to be introduced to your prospect, you might suggest that he introduce you through an email, and cc it to you.

When you see the message has been sent, you can then follow up with the new prospect via email, phone, or both.

To increase the likelihood of this introduction being made, and make it easier for your referrals source, you can email a "suggested" introduction for them to consider. Of course, they can edit this introduction to suit their style.

Below are two introductions you can copy and paste into any file. Adjust them as you see fit and write some more of your own. But before sending them to your referral source replace

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the advisor's name with your own.

Email Introduction #1

"George - I'm writing to tell you about a financial advisor with whom I've been working. Monica Green has been helping me for about two months and she's done some great work. We had some holes in our plan that I wasn't even aware of. She's creative and quite sharp.

"I've given Monica your phone number and have asked her to give you a call. I don't know if you'll want to work with her or not, but I do recommend you take her call and chat with her for a few minutes. I think you'll agree that she knows her stuff.

"Let me know how it goes."

Email Introduction #2

"George - I've been working with a very sharp financial advisor the past few weeks and I really think you should meet him. Bob Smith is with XYX Financial Network and he's really gotten me on track. Through asking good questions, he found weaknesses in my financial plan that my previous advisor was not aware of - or didn't seem to care about.

"Not only do I think you should take his call, but I think you should sit down with him and get a glimpse into how he works. I think you'll be impressed.

"Either way, let me know how it goes."

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*Bill Cates, author of [Get More Referrals Now](#) (McGraw-Hill), and America's expert in attracting high-quality clients through referrals, has addressed MDRT twice. His Unlimited Referrals Marketing System® was featured in *Success*, *Selling Power*, and *Entrepreneur* magazines. For more of his ideas visit <http://www.ReferralCoach.com>*

Start A Referral Club

by Don Pooley

Peter O'Rourke began "City Club" in Mississauga in the fall of 2001 with two friends. It now counts 25 businessmen and professionals (lawyers and CAs) as members. Each business must have at least 5 employees, and professional firms at least 3 partners. There is only one member per category.

They meet every other Wednesday for a buffet lunch (so there is no delay waiting for the meal). In the intervening weeks each member is encouraged to lunch with another member.

At each meeting members are given 2 pages from the local business directory, and each member is asked to indicate if they have a contact at each listed company, or if they would like to get a contact at that company.

Peter says:

"The whole key is to run the club professionally and be very selective about new members. We interview every member at their place of business and new members have to be approved by the Board of Directors. Some have been rejected.

"Membership fees are \$300 per year. This is used for social events, development of a club website, and a paid part-time secretary. We registered with the government to protect our name, and to project a professional image. The operation of the club is governed by its constitution which is signed and approved by the City Club's Board of Directors.

"Our internet member is designing a website where we'll post local business changes such as new businesses, expansions, executive appointments, etc., as change creates opportunity.

"Some members are now presenting seminars together. One, who wrote a book on financial planning, runs seminars with the C.A. and lawyer, which has produced prospects for all.

"And in May we're holding a social event where each member is expected to bring two key business clients."



p.s. It's worth noting that Peter moved from Winnipeg to Mississauga shortly before starting "City Club". What a great way to market yourself in a new town!

Create Your Very Own Breakfast Club!

by Don Pooley

Mine began when I found a kindred soul in another profession who also wanted more contacts and referrals. We agreed that we'd meet for breakfast at 7:30 every Tuesday morning, and that we'd invite other professionals and businessmen to join us. Its aim was to develop referrals for other club members.

Ours was through by 8:30, so it took zilch out of our workday, and became a good source of referrals for many of us.

When you start yours, it's a good idea to set up some rules and put them in writing. You don't want two members from the same profession, for example. And you don't want members who drop by occasionally when they feel like it. Also, how do you want to qualify a prospective new member? Should he/she be recommended by more than one other member? And how do you dump one who fails to meet your standards?

You can discuss all of this at your first meeting with your prospective second member. Oh, and pick a meaningful name at that meeting, "The Business Breakfast Club" for example.

Discuss also the format of your meetings. Ours starts with the introduction of new members, followed by a brief review of the reasons for the club, and its rules, then a speaker---usually one of the members telling us about his business and the type of referrals he'd appreciate.

You'll come up with more ideas at your first meeting with the second member of your club.



You've Got To Give It Away To Keep It

by Don Pooley

One northern Manitoba February, Bert, a new AA convert, was driving me from Flin Flon to The Pas to work with another agent. Bert's enthusiasm for AA bubbled throughout the trip, and I learned many things that helped me improve my life.

One was that "You have to give it away to keep it". To Bert, at the time, this meant spread the AA philosophy. To me, it meant the sharing of all ideas.

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It also applies to referrals. To get them, give them.

You want referrals. And you know many others who also want them. Have you given them any? If not, why should you expect any from them?

Consider your accountant, your CA. How does she acquire new clients? Through referrals. Have you ever given her any?

No? Then take her to lunch. While you're eating find out as much as you can about her---the sort of stuff that anyone hiring a CA would want to know. And what you need to know in order to refer her.

When you get to coffee tell her, "I'm asking you all these questions because every so often someone asks me if I know of a good accountant. I'd like to be able to recommend you."

"But some of those who ask may not be what you want. So tell me, how will I know if they are a good prospect for you?"

Wow! Imagine if someone asked you that. Wouldn't you be elated? This is exactly what any prospect-seeker dreams of. Someone who is willing to feed her leads and asks what kind!

Listen closely her. You might even want to take notes. She may describe someone you already know, or have as a client. (Of course, you can't just recommend her willy-nilly, but you can let it be known, to those who are interested, that you have met an accountant who really impressed you.)

Don't push it, but be ready to offer your specifications for the prospects you're looking for, if she asks. But don't expect it. Wait for it to come naturally. It may take years, but eventually she will be giving you referrals.

Now visualize yourself having a lunch like this every week with a different prospect-seeker. Think of the various accounting specialists, lawyers, financial planners, even competitors, to whom you could be giving referrals. And who may feel obliged to return the favour.

But don't ask them to lunch with that in mind or you'll blow it. Be gracious. Give it away!



p.s. Schedule monthly follow-up phone calls to let them know you haven't forgotten them. So they won't forget you.

Collect Testimonials

by Don Pooley

One of the most powerful techniques top advertisers use to convince us to buy is to cite testimonials obtained from satisfied customers. You can do the same.

And by doing so, not only can you enhance your perceived value to your clients, but prepare them to offer referrals.

Collecting testimonials is amazingly simple!

Listen for words of praise during an interview. Things like "You're doing a great job!"

Respond by saying, "Thank you. May I quote you on that?"

Most clients will say, "Sure, but why would you want to?"

And you answer, "I'm collecting testimonials to use in a letter I'm writing to someone who was referred to me. But we'll talk about that later."

At the end of the interview, after you've summarized it for your client, say, "Oh, yes. I almost forgot about the testimonials I touched on earlier. Now I'd like to write down what you said earlier about my work---'You're doing a great job!' was one of your comments, as I remember. What were some of the others?"

As they think about how you've helped them, their perception of your value to them is recalled, and thus enhanced.

Don't push it, though. If they can't think of any more say, "Thank you very much. Your comments are much appreciated. May I show you the letter that includes them, before I send it out? Just to make sure I don't misquote you?"

Assuming the answer is "Sure" your client now expects you to meet with him again to show him your referral letter with his favourable comments in it. Which should help him to think of people he knows who should get that letter.

Keep collecting testimonials. And use them in your website, brochure, letters to clients, etc.

Third-party praise is a powerful convincer. So collect as many testimonials as you can, and keep on doing it.



Use Reverse Referrals

Here's an idea from Jack Fries' free e-letter (available at <http://www.jackfries.com/>).

Often you have coveted prospects that you would love to soften up before contacting. Comb your customer base, and ask them if they know the prospects, and if they could help you.

For example, "By the way, I've identified several members of your association as people we could likely help in much the same way we helped you."

"Do you happen to know Joe Jones at Jones Electric, or Mark Short at ABC Electric?"

When to Ask for Referrals

by Bryan Brandenburg

You should always be asking for referrals if you deliver a quality product or service. There are times when you'll get better results than others. Here are some guidelines for when to ask for referrals:

- After signing a contract.
- Periodically, with a letter; say once a quarter
- When successfully completing a project and your client signs the final approval.
- When a prospect turns you down. Guilt is beautiful!
- When you're doing a client satisfaction survey.
- When you're calling an inactive client.
- When you're calling an active client.

If you're unclear on how to ask for a referral, here are some variations to try:

"It was a real pleasure working with you and I look forward to our next project together. In

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the meantime, if you know somebody that needs qualified financial planning services, I hope that you pass on what a good experience you had with me and ask them to give me a call. "

"I'm glad things are going well for you. Do you have any acquaintances that might need my company's services?"

Keep Them Informed

Keep the referral source informed during the early part of the new relationship. Call and tell the source "Thank you" for the referral. Inform them that you've met, started a discussion, then ask them if they want to stay informed on the progress of their referral.

You should always send a letter thanking the referrer. It's polite and prudent. If it makes sense, you can send them a credit for your services, a dinner for two or tickets to a ball game. Show your appreciation.

Motivating Referral Sources

Motivating the referral source depends on the kind of relationship you have with them. If it's an existing client, it may be as simple as just providing stellar service and actively requesting the referral. For colleagues, and professional relationships, setting up a formal commission that is attractive may be more effective.

And don't forget to give referrals yourself. If you can comfortably recommend another practitioner or firm, you'll build reciprocal credits, and it doesn't take effort on your part. The key is to refer only businesses that can really deliver, and then make sure you follow-up with your referral to see how the relationship is going.

Bryan Brandenburg, CEO and Managing Partner of the Vertical Marketing Management Group, is the author of book "Million Dollar Computer Consultant", which the above article is from. For more information, go to: <http://www.Million-Dollar-Computer-Consultant.com/>

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