



best practice guide for referrals

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- The Three Types of Referrals
 - How to Ask for Referrals Without Fear
 - Why & How to Get Online Reviews
 - Referral & Review Tools to Use

THE THREE TYPES OF REFERRALS

1. Traditional referrals

These are the referrals we're most accustomed to. They happen when someone is looking for a solution to a particular problem. This problem leads them to reach out to their network (people they have built a personal relationship with) for help. Each company will have different types of referral sources, it will be your job to find out who these people/resources are.

Today these referrals aren't just face-to-face interactions. They can happen both in-person and online.

2. Testimonials

Testimonials are a form of referral that can continually work for your business. They can be used strategically to promote your business and to overcome objections from potential customers.

They can live on your website, in your email marketing, in print, and in any other form of promotion you do for your business.

3. Online recommendations and reviews

Many online networks such as Facebook or LinkedIn and review sites like Yelp or Google allow customers to leave recommendations or reviews for the businesses they love. These recommendations and reviews come into play when potential customers are searching for businesses online.

Glowing recommendations or reviews have the potential to sway the decision in your favor.

ALL PART OF THE REFFERAL MACHINE

These referrals expose your business to potential new customers. And because your business has come highly recommended, these potential new customers are already eager to do business with you.

HOW TO ASK FOR REFERRALS IN PERSON WITHOUT FEAR

The main reason asking for a referral creates a sense of fear is simply because it feels like a selfish act. But the reality is... it's actually not that selfish at all if you're asking in the right way. What you're really doing is trying to help someone else find a quality solution to their problem.

Here is an example...

Let's say you're speaking with a current customer and they're telling you how pleased they are with your product/service. That's the perfect time to say, "Thank you, I'm so glad you're happy. I know how hard it can be to find the right (your product/service).

At this point, your customer will either agree with you or share a story of their own or of someone they know. That's your cue to listen, empathize, and then say, "Well, if you know of any other people having a hard time finding the right fit, feel free to pass along my name. Or if you have anyone in mind, I can contact them myself and save you the trouble."

See how this changes the situation?

There's nothing to fear, you're being helpful. Not that scary now is it? You just need to make a commitment to asking for referrals when your customers are pleased with your business.

This is the perfect time to ask for a testimonial, too!

Again, let your customer know how glad you are that they're pleased. Then say, "I'd love to find out more about what you liked about your experience. Would you mind if I asked you a few questions?"

Most people will be happy to answer questions for you.

If possible, record their answers so you don't have to take notes. You can then transcribe the audio later. You can even email the questions if they'd rather answer them that way.

Once they've answered the questions ask, "Would it be okay if I used your comments in a testimonial?" Then you'll have some great feedback you can use on your promotional materials..

6 QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU GET GREAT TESTIMONIALS

These six questions can help you get great testimonials and give you insight into what hesitations people may have had before they became your customers.

1. Was there any hesitation that would have prevented you from working with us?
2. What specific feature do you like most about our products/services?
3. What other features do you like about our products/services?
4. When working with us, what did our team do that was the most helpful for you?
5. Would you recommend our company to others? If so, why?
6. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

"7 out of 10 customers will leave a review — as long as they're asked. Don't assume your shoppers, even the most loyal among them, will take the initiative to write a review for you."

WHY ONLINE REVIEWS?

Online reviews are important for a number of reasons, and have major implications through their ability to affect:

- Your rankings in local search engines
- Which search results actually get surfaced (and clicked on)
- Consumer purchasing decisions

Customer reviews impact sales and conversions:

- 84% of people trust online reviews as much as a personal recommendation.
- 54% of people visit a company's website after reading positive reviews.
- 74% of people trust local businesses more after reading positive reviews.
- 58% of people believe the "star rating" is the most important metric to them.

HOW TO GET ONLINE REVIEWS

1. Bring it up naturally in conversation.

If you're talking about your business with someone, or if they tell you how they feel about one of your features, ask them if they would be willing to write you a customer review. Of course, don't force your mom to write a raving review (unless she actually purchases a product/service and loves it ... and says she's your mom) since that would be a conflict of interest. All of your reviews should come from legitimate sources.

2. Ask in response to praise.

When someone tells you how much they love your product/service or their experience, whether it's in-person, over the phone, or online, ask them to share that information in a review. Make it easy for them by providing a link to your business review page.

3. Send an email blast.

This is just one of the reasons why obtaining email addresses is important. You can send a message that asks for honest feedback. Provide email recipients with easy-to-follow directions on how they can complete a review. And since the reviews aren't anonymous, you can always provide reviewers with a reward of some kind to say thank you!

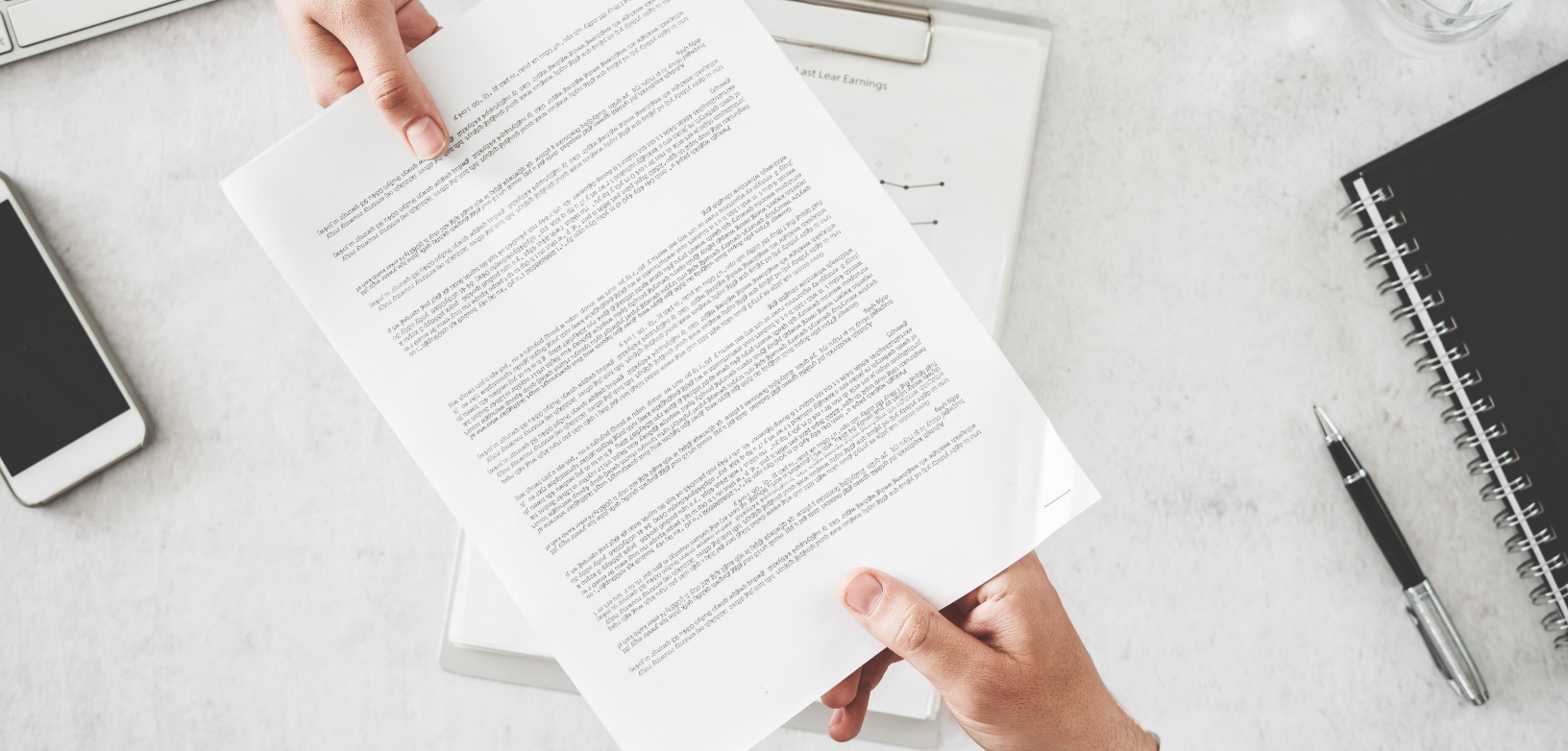
4. Request a post-purchase review.

After someone purchases your product or utilizes your services, ask them for feedback. Stores do this all the time - you often see a prompt to write a review or provide feedback at the bottom of your receipt.

THE MORE YOU ASK, THE MORE YOU'LL GROW

Remember, most people like to help other people they know, like, and trust. Remind yourself that the worst that can happen is that your client says, "No." Not that terrible when you think about the benefit from those who say, "Yes."

Make asking for the referral part of your routine. When you've completed a transaction with a happy customer, that's the perfect time to ask for a referral.



online review handouts



GOOGLE REVIEW HANDOUT GENERATOR

FACEBOOK REVIEW HANDOUT GENERATOR



When it comes to sales and marketing for your business, we are here to answer all of your questions!

PERSONALIZED SERVICE

We understand that each business is unique. We offer personalized service plans that focus on getting the most out of your budget. Our services range from full brand consulting to one-on-one leadership coaching, this means we can help your business grow from the ground up.

FREE SALES & MARKETING CONSULTATION

Let us sit down with you and get to know more about your business. Do you have questions about your current plan? Do you just need a helping hand with an upcoming project? Maybe you don't even know where to start? With a consultation, we can get you on the right track!



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