

Guide to Asking for

and Getting

Referrals

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Rome wasn't built in a day

Whether you're in your first or tenth year in the business, you've downloaded this guide because you want to grow your referral business. Stay with us here. Building a referral process takes time. If you invest in developing and refining that process now, your future business will be solid. As you read the following pages, keep an open mind and be thinking of ways you can make the following strategies and talk tracks your own.

According to a Nielsen study, 82 percent of Americans seek recommendations from family and friends when considering a purchase so it makes sense that 64 percent of real estate business is generated from referrals and past clients. Staggeringly, most of that business goes to only a fraction of the real estate workforce and it's time to secure your share.

To maximize this huge opportunity that already exists within your network, you need to put effort into maintaining relationships, staying top-of-mind, and knowing how – and when – to ask for referrals. As any good salesman can tell you, the answer is always “no” until you ask.

Want to get your sphere to send you everyone they know? We've consulted with top agents and sales coaches to bring you the best referral practices, templates, and strategies to turn your business into a referral-making machine.

The Four-Step Strategy for Getting Referrals

Surprisingly few agents have a strategy for getting quality referral leads from their sphere. Simply adding “referrals appreciated” to your email signature and website will do little to actually generate them. Follow this proven strategy to drum-up referrals.

1

Ensure Past Clients Are Satisfied

This is an essential prequalification before asking for referrals from past clients. If your client is dissatisfied in some way, they might not actually tell you – unless you ask. If you skip this step and the client isn't happy, you'll never get a referral. If you prequalify by asking if they're satisfied with the services and value you provide, and they're not happy, you have a chance to correct things before asking for referrals.

Understand that if you're really good, people will want to help you by referring you to their friends and family.

The best way to solicit this information is via email, as it allows the person to reflect on their experience and process what they want to say. Asking questions about someone's experience working with you in person or over the phone puts them on the spot and they're less likely to be honest or take the time to deliver a thoughtful response.



Hi [first name],

I've really enjoyed working with you to [services provided]. Helping clients like you with some of the biggest decisions they make in their lives is not something I take lightly and I always want to be sure I'm delivering the best service I can.

My business is built on client satisfaction and an important part of that process is getting feedback. Would you mind telling me how I did helping you [buy/sell] your home?

Did I meet or surpass your expectations? What went better than expected? If you have friends, relatives, or associates that need real estate assistance, would you feel comfortable referring them to me?

Thank you so much for allowing me to be a part of helping you [specific services provided; e.g., "find your dream home," or "relocate"]. I look forward to [mention something personal to your experience with them; e.g., "seeing your new home once you're settled!"]

Best,
[your name]

2

Ensure the Referrer Knows How You've Benefited Them

It's important to **talk about the benefits of your services**, not the features.

For example, you can have an ace back office, but it does no good to brag about that fact if the client doesn't understand all the benefits they got from it. Explain that because of your back office, the deal went smoothly, all the paperwork was done on time, and you had a lot of interest in the house all at once, causing buyers to bid against each other – resulting in a higher sale price. That's the conversation you want to have. Always look at things from your customer's perspective.

Once you've established the breadth of your services and how they help your clients, you can plug the referral-based nature of your business. Be upfront with people early on and let them know that your business operates on referrals so when the time comes to ask them to refer you, the seed has long been planted.

Remember: This is a plug, not a sales pitch.

"As you know, I've been working hard to help you [find/sell your home] and you understand how I operate and the services I provide – I'd love your help in the future! As a business that operates on referrals, I could use your help in referring us to others you might know who want to buy or sell a home!"



3

Always Be Closing (for Referrals)

Whether it's a past client, former colleague, or family member, it's important to lay the groundwork from day one.

Let people know what you're going to do for them, what being their agent means to you, and what they can expect along the way. This transparency not only sets expectations, it builds trust and confidence in you.

"My business is built on referrals, and it's my job to give you the best possible experience so you want your friends and family to experience the same level of service if they buy or sell a home."

4

Implement Your Pitch Strategy

It sounds intense, but developing your pitch strategy is simple: identify possible referrers and set time aside to get in front of them. To maximize the potential of the conversation, try to set up referral-requesting conversations in-person.

Unless you have a unique relationship with someone, asking for referrals isn't something you should do over the phone or email. You are asking them to entrust their friends, family, and network with you – and that conversation should take place in-person. The previous steps have helped you qualify people for referrals and, now that you've established who is likely to be an advocate, it's time to ask.

Once you're in front them, allowing the conversation to flow organically is crucial.

- Take interest in their lives: ask about their jobs, family, and home.
- Find things you have in common to connect personally.
- Invite them to your events: fundraisers, community gatherings, client appreciation events.

You'll know when the right time to pitch will be, but it should always come after you've spent a few minutes talking casually first.

Note: Always leave your business cards with anyone you can – not only do they keep you top-of-mind, they give people something tangible to hand off and refer leads directly to you!



The Referral Pitch

Remember to make this your own and tailor it to the individuals you're talking to!

"As you know, I am committed to going the extra mile for my clients. My number one goal isn't just to make my clients happy, it's to make everyone you know happy.

In my experience, when [buying/selling] their home, most of my clients talk about it with their friends and family and find other people are thinking about [buying/selling] too. During those conversations, would you mind telling the person about me and why you chose me to be your agent?

Referrals from clients like you are what drives my business – I really appreciate it!"

Building a Referral Program

Client:

Develop a program to incentivize people to refer business to you. For example, Keller Williams agent and BOLD Coach, J. Michael Manley, has developed a rockstar referral program that gives each new client free access to homeowner resources once their transaction has closed for one year. These resources include a moving truck, pickup truck, dollies, outdoor power equipment, staging furniture, even his wife who is also an interior designer. His referral program offers access to these resources for an additional year, and the only qualifier is sending his team one referral. This program offers value, incentive, and keeps past clients happy indefinitely.

This is just one example of how valuable and fruitful a solid referral program can be. Get creative and give people even more reasons to refer you to others!

Affiliate:

Partner with contractors and vendors to create a referral network in your community. A little networking can go a long way when it comes to referrals. Remember that for an affiliate referral program to work, it's got to go both ways. If you refer people to your affiliates or vendors, they're much more likely to refer people to you.

Be strategic and develop relationships with vendors whose scope of work aligns with real estate:

- Lenders
- Home inspectors
- Stagers
- Appraisers
- Home insurance agencies
- Contractors
- Interior designers
- Landscapers



Qualifying Referrals

To be worthy of the name, a quality referral should possess as many of these traits as possible:

- The referral should have respect for and confidence in the referrer's judgment.
- The referrer is willing to introduce you to the referral on a favorable basis.
- The referrer understands what it is you do and your unique value proposition.
- The referral is financially qualified to begin shopping for a home, or has a home and an interest in selling it.
- The referral is not currently working with, or loyal to, another agent.

Once you've qualified your referral leads, you can accurately prioritize and label them. You know who to put on high-touch drip campaigns, who to send what resources, and who to set appointments with.

The Dos and Don'ts of Asking for Referrals

Referrals are inexhaustible lead sources: each referral can generate countless more referrals. But actually getting referrals is much different than simply asking for them. Put in the time and effort to develop and implement a referral strategy now to avoid experiencing the peaks and valleys of real estate in the future.

DON'T	DO
✗ Assume clients are satisfied with your services	✓ Ask how their experience working with you has been
✗ Assume people know what to expect	✓ Set healthy expectations
✗ Employ an element of surprise	✓ Prep people before you ask
✗ Ask over the phone ✗ Ask via email	✓ Use the phone and email to check-in, set appointments, follow up
✗ Assume anyone would refer people to you without knowing the nature of your business	✓ Tell people your business operates on referrals and ask for them appropriately
✗ Expect people to refer you just because they know you or have worked with you in the past	✓ Develop a win/win referral program that is mutually beneficial for those participating
✗ Go silent post-sale	✓ Give closing gifts, put clients on a post-sale drip email campaign, and check-in periodically to stay top-of-mind
✗ Assume someone will work with you just because you were referred	✓ Qualify referrals and respect any professional relationships they might already have in place
✗ Think referrals just 'happen'	✓ It's up to YOU to make them happen

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