



The Don Hutson Report

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Are you Getting the Referrals You Deserve?

Most people aren't... because they don't ask. Years ago I was on a program with the legendary Jim Rohn. One of his comments that day was, "If it is important, work from document, not just thoughts." Whether it is goal-setting, a daily to-do list, or a referral campaign, a document guided process will help you enjoy more success.

If you are conscientiously serving your clients and being a trusted advisor to many of them, they will most likely give you referred leads. But not unless you ask them. To ignore this opportunity is foolish. It is a lot easier to build your "Book of Business" with the assistance of those who know, like, and trust you than it is with strangers!

So here are seven principles of gaining referrals that will help:

1. **Have a documented area in your planning process** on your computer or day planner that is designated for referral data. I recommend two sub-items: *referrals asked for* and *referrals gained*. Your goal should be to have daily numbers revealing that *referrals gained* always out-number *referrals asked for*. At the end of a recent consulting session at one of my client's offices, I asked him for referrals. Since he was very pleased with the results of my work, he pulled out the roster of an organization to which he belonged, flipped through the pages, and gave me eight referrals!
2. **Always ask** "Is it ok to use your name?" Most of the time, satisfied clients will say, "Sure." This enhances the probability of your getting an appointment.
3. **Your goal should always be** to secure a very strong referral as in, "You tell John I said he will get great benefit from talking to you!" When you make contact with the referral say, "John, Rex Bailey asked me to contact you and I promised him I would." This is a high percentage technique for securing a "get-acquainted" appointment.

4. **Discipline yourself** to stay in touch with past customers and prospects at regular, pre-planned intervals. This is a major part of building your Book of Business over time. As you build your “Book”, keeping these people in the loop regarding what you are currently doing and new information they need to have, your underlying objective should be to grow the size and accuracy of all entries in it. Having a good CRM system can save time and add to results.
5. **Ask clients and friends to send an email** introduction to people on your target list you are certain they know. It’s a painless activity and most people are happy to do it.
6. **Networking is essential** to gaining new business and more specifically, referrals. Any time that I contemplate whether to attend a meeting or social gathering, I usually decide to go because I never know who I might meet. Then, I take my business cards, get the cards of others in attendance, and follow up professionally. When I joined The Downtown Memphis Rotary Club I really didn’t expect to get a lot of business from it, but I have gotten multiple clients and referrals there. These new contacts are to go into your database (“Book”) where you have existing clients and prospects. The more people in your book, the greater the source of referrals over time.
7. **Special Event Marketing** can be a powerful way to meet new prospects. A top consultant, and good friend, Bill Cates, says this is one of the best approaches for meeting new potential clients (and potential referrals) that exists. Invite them to a sports event or a wine and cheese reception. Assure them there will be no sales presentation – just an opportunity to get to know each other better. Also, have them invite a guest to attend with them. Suggest that they bring some business cards for the networking aspect of the event since they may meet someone interested in what they offer.

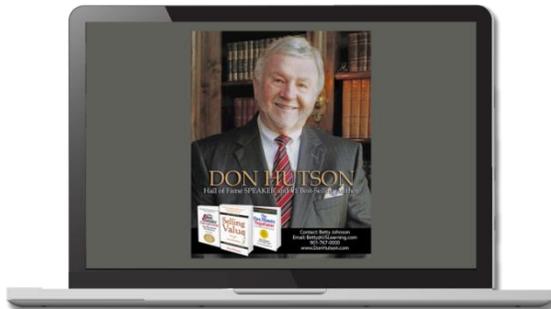
When employed consistently, these ideas will be helpful to you. They should also serve to heighten your awareness of the potential business just lying there to be cultivated. *Just don’t forget to ask.* Sure beats making cold calls on total strangers!

Good luck in asking for and gaining more referrals.

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