



UNIQUE REFERRAL TACTICS

To get more and better business leads network with those clients you already have a relationship with.

1. Create a referral form.

A fill-in-the-blank referral form that is distributed quarterly to the names on your database is guaranteed to land leads. To help customers zero in on appropriate prospects, ask questions that relate to your niche: "Whom do you know who's retiring in five years?, Who just bought a new home?, Who's launched a business?" Send a thank you note to everyone who sends you a referral. If you win a large account, send them a basket of flowers, bottle of wine or a magazine subscription.

2. Host a wine and cheese event.

A wine and cheese event is a business mixer for the sole purpose of garnering new business. Invite your best clients and ask each of them to bring a friend along. Because it is not easy for customers to think up prospects names when they don't know your market, send a list of the type of client you are trying to target along with the invitation.

3. Ask during delivery.

No matter what you sell, your clients are most likely to be enthusiastic at the point of delivery. This is an excellent time to leverage yourself. In fact, ask for referrals at any point in the sale.

4. Offer incentives.

Rewards for referrals that turn into business can range from free estimates, samples, consultations, coaching sessions to a discount on future purchases, etc. Just be careful to not give more than the referral is worth.

5. Sponsor a contest.

Enter everyone who sends a referral that coughs up a lead in a drawing. Make the prize substantial. "Make giving referrals fun,". Examples might range from a meal at an elegant inn to a mini-vacation or such.

6. Give leads in return.

This is one of the best ways to get referrals. But be absolutely sure that the referrals you give are competent and reliable. Remember your reputation is on the line. You don't want good intentions to jeopardise your relationship with your existing clients.

7. Pump prospects who've passed up your services.

Most potential client/customers feel bad when they have to turn your business down, so why not make them feel better by requesting leads. They do not see this as a burden. Just be sure to acknowledge them when the referrals come in and especially when they become a customer.



8. Swap leads with rivals.

If geography or time restricts your ability to service all your potential clients, simply pass along jobs you can't handle to other businesses and ask them to do the same. Giving these referrals scores you points with potential clients who may come back to you some day.

9. Cultivate reciprocal referrals from non-competitors.

Find out who is compiling a database of related business and ask to be included. The opportunities occur in businesses that are somewhat collateral to your own.

10. Tap suppliers.

Constantly remind vendors of your need for referrals. Send out a letter or brochure which says, "When my business grows, your business grows." Likely, reason you don't get more referrals is because you don't ask. So, ASK!