



How you can get Consistent Referrals

By Patrick Zuluaga, [PMZ Marketing](#)

People generally want to help so why not ask them for their help in getting referrals? Let all your customers and network of contacts know that their referrals are important to your business. Make sure you can track their referrals, keep them updated and show your gratitude for their efforts in some way whether it is informal or structured as part of a referral program. Sounds easy enough doesn't it? However there is more to it, let me show you how you can get consistent referrals for your business.

Earn your referrals

This is absolutely crucial – you must earn your referrals. Make sure that the products and/or services you deliver to your customers are of high quality and meets with their expectations. This is the basic threshold to be able to get referrals from your customers. However, you can not assume that if you have done this well that your customer will be willing to give you referrals. Most customers will not give quality referrals just because you have done well for them. We are at the stage whether we leave it to chance like most businesses do or we take it to the next level and provide them with a reason to give you referrals. They need to understand why it is in their best interest to give you referrals. When a customer gives you a referral, they are putting their reputation and image on the line with the person to whom they are referring to you. So how should you ask for their referrals?

Ask for your referrals

Timing is essential and you need to consider your customer's situation before asking for referrals, your customer has to be given the opportunity to prepare for your request. This involves educating your customer about why referrals are important to you and is in their best interest. You will need to:

- Inform ahead of time that you will ask for their referrals
- Explain your definition of a referral
- Tell them why providing referrals is in their best interests
- Reassure them that their referrals are golden and will be treated as such

Next, confirm their willingness to provide referrals for your business, ask them to provide you with referrals, and, let them know how you will handle their referrals.

Implement a system to manage your referrals

Successfully business people understand the value of implementing systems to manage their operations. You will need to implement a process to track, manage and report on your referrals if you want to maximise referrals for your business. The process should track where the referrals came from, what action/s is required to convert the referral into a customer and report on your successes with these referrals. The system can be as simple as an Excel spreadsheet or as sophisticated as a sales opportunity management system. Whatever you use the bottom-line benefit allows you to build referral marketing into a very cost effective and powerful source of opportunities for your business.

Provide recognition for your referrals

Yes, absolutely do not forget to recognise the effort and trust that your customers have made when making referrals to your business. You must thank them and



acknowledge their referral and by keeping them informed on the status of their referral you demonstrate the value you attached to their contribution. Using your referral tracking system you will determine which customers are giving you the best referrals that generate profitable sales revenue for your business. You should reward these individuals. It could be very informal like sending them a thank you card, a bouquet of flowers, a box of chocolates or perhaps even a dinner for two with their partner. Or, it could be a formal referral process where successful referrals are rewarded with discounts or referral points that can be accumulated toward purchasing additional products and/or services from your business.

Nurture your influential advocates

Lastly, but certainly not the least is to establish networking relationships with influential advocates who are in the position to provide quality referrals for your business. Prepare a list of business professionals that can provide a source of quality leads and referrals for your business. These could include consultants, accountants, lawyers and other businesses targeting your markets but not competing. Nurture and build your relationships with these influential advocates and make the referrals go both ways. Often your own customers will require the services of your influential advocates at some point. Providing these contacts to your own customers demonstrates your value and willingness to help them.

A Final Word

Do not leave referrals to chance. You must leverage the vast opportunities available to your business from referrals. Implement a referral program that will become a vital and powerful component of your marketing strategy and plans.

PS> Go for it get Better Marketing Results with referrals!

[CONTACT PMZ MARKETING TODAY TO ASSIST YOU WITH REFERRALS](#)

I appreciate your feedback and would like to hear from you on how you are handling these marketing challenges, send your comments to patrick@pmzmarketing.com.au.

About the Author

Patrick Zuluaga has more than 20 years experience in marketing and business development roles with Australian and international companies. He is Director of PMZ Marketing, a consultancy focused on Small and Medium Enterprises to **help you succeed in business with better marketing results**. You can reach Patrick on 0403 436 889 or email at patrick@pmzmarketing.com.au or visit the web presence at www.pmzmarketing.com.au.