10 Ways to Ask for Referrals

1. **Use the "Who do you know who...?" format to ask.** Be sure to conclude it with specific indicators of a need for your services.

   "Who do you know who isn't getting the level of attention and service they're looking for from their accountant / ad agency / lawn service? Would you mind giving them my card the next time you see them?"

2. **Mention referrals in your printed materials,** such as writing on the back of your business card: "Oh, by the way, I'm never too busy for your referrals."

3. **Help perfect clients clone themselves by articulating exactly what makes them perfect.** "Mike, you are a perfect client. What I appreciate most about you is that you implement my suggestions in an action-oriented way and acknowledge my contribution to your results. Can you think of other generous entrepreneurs like you who are motivated to make some positive changes in their businesses?"

4. **Tell people exactly how to have their referrals contact you.** "I help men and women leaving the military to transition into fulfilling civilian careers. If you know someone who is about to leave the service, please recommend they get the free report from my website, "5 Things to Know Before You Hang Up the Uniform."

5. **Agree in advance that you'll be asking for referrals.** "Thank you for bringing me in to work with your company on this project. I'm very excited to make a big difference in your business. My business grows by referral of trusted colleagues to one another. When this project is complete and we've achieved the objectives, can I count on you to refer me to three other decision makers?"

6. **Follow up once you've fulfilled expectations.** "Mr. and Mrs. Chambers, when we started working together on your finances, you agreed that you'd be willing to refer me to others if I was able to deliver you the level of service you'd been missing and better advice on your decisions. Because I've done what you requested, I'd like to ask you to introduce me to some of your friends and colleagues whom you think would benefit from what I do."

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7. **Remind them why they bought and what they're getting. Then find someone else who meets that description.**

   "Congratulations on your decision to purchase. You seem very happy with the value you're getting. I would love to help someone else who needs [what the person needed or wanted which drove their purchase] and would like to get [the benefit of your product or service]."

   For example, an organization and productivity coach signs up a client for a three-month package of coaching sessions. She could say "... I would love to help another busy mom who's looking to streamline her life and get organized once and for all. Do you have friends or acquaintances fitting that description that you could invite to my introductory teleclass?"

8. **Help people jog their memory with specific suggestions.** "Do you get together with colleagues for golf, business lunches or nonprofit board meetings? Are some of the members of the nonprofit boards business owners who might benefit from the services that I've provided to you? I'd appreciate it if you could introduce me to them."

9. **Use the Internet for referrals.** "Please forward this ezine to another business owner who really wants to grow her business."

10. **Turn competition into co-opetition.** "Melissa, because I'm in the marketing business like you, some people think that I also do PR, which is really your specialty. I'd love to refer my clients who need PR to you. If you have clients who need help with branding or marketing strategy, I'd love it if you would send them my way."

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