



the **sales** consultancy

Referrals: Are you asking?

Of your most satisfied customers of 2013, how many of those customers have you asked for a referral?

Most sales and business people never ask for referrals. Those that do often ask when it's too late - and make a fatal mistake when asking for them (more on that later). Yet referrals are just about the easiest, quickest and least expensive way to increase your sales and build your business.

But you must ask!

Most businesses never ask for referrals – ever. Maybe this is because they think asking for a referral is too close to 'selling'. If you're nervous about asking for a referral, remember that people usually like to tell others about good things that have happened to them, so why wouldn't they want to share how great you are with their friends or colleagues?

Secondly, if you're good at what you do, how sad would it be if you weren't able to help more people and businesses simply because you were shy about asking for referrals?

Ask early

Don't wait until after you've finished what you were hired for. On no account should you ask a few weeks later either. In both situations 'the moment' has already passed. You may indeed have done a brilliant job, but memories fade fast and it's likely you won't be as well thought of after a lapse of time.

The time to ask is as soon as the customer is starting to get results. They will often be at their happiest fairly early into your work with them. That's the prime time to ask for a referral. So pick a time when they are massively enthusiastic – and dive in!

Asking for referrals (the fatal error)



“Do you know anyone who would be interested in having similar work done?”

What’s wrong with this question? Well if you have been on any of my training courses you will already be shouting out “It’s a **closed** question”!!!. Correct. You can only have two answers to that question – yes, or no. And it’s more likely to be a no because that’s the easier answer to give – you’ll have directed their brain into shutdown mode.

So the question to ask (ensuring you have excellent levels of rapport beforehand) is ...**“Who else do you know that would be interested in achieving the sort of results you’re getting”**. Although I changed the end of the question a little, the main difference is the “who else” bit at the start. This takes the customer’s brain down a whole different pathway. Instead of encouraging their brain to shut up shop, you’ve opened up the ‘search’ facility in their mind and they will therefore unconsciously search much more intently for a worthwhile answer. A subtle but crucial change.

Get them to introduce you

So it’s all gone swimmingly so far. You’re doing a great job. You’ve asked the perfectly worded question – and your customer has thought of someone who you could help. In a perfect world **they** will contact your next potential customer initially. Ask them to do that for you. It’s so much better if, when you contact the new customer, they’re already expecting your call.

Offer a reward

If you can, why not thank your customer with flowers, or maybe a bottle of bubbly, even just a thank you card? That shows how much you appreciate their help – and might just nudge them into introducing you to someone else!

So who can you ask in the next few days?

Until next time.

Leigh

PS; [Click here if you have a fear of selling.](#)

results@sales-consultancy.com

[020 7903 5426](tel:02079035426)

www.sales-consultancy.com

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