

Getting Referrals *by Cathy Kuzel*

Suppose for a moment that you were planning to contact your clients and ask each of them for at least one referral.

What can you do to increase the results of your efforts?

Here are three things that can make the world of difference for you and your business.

(1) Count On Reciprocation

It's simply human nature to return the favour when someone gives you something of value. So, to increase your chances of getting something of value, give something of value first.

Do you, perhaps, know of companies that can use your clients' products or services?

Do you have information that could make their job easier?

Is there an event that they would benefit from attending that you can invite them to as your guest?

(2) Get Conditional Commitments

Ask your new client:

"Comments from satisfied clients are very important to my marketing efforts. When we're finished with this project, if we've accomplished everything we set out to accomplish, would you be willing to give me a referral, act as a reference or write me a testimonial?"

Most, if not all of your clients will agree to this, after all, they want positive results and their goals achieved. If they feel that agreeing to give a testimonial will encourage you to deliver . . .

After you complete the project, and assuming the client is satisfied, follow up like this:

"When we started this project, you agreed to give me referrals, act as a reference or write me a testimonial provided we accomplished everything we set out to do. Are you still willing to do that?"

Using conditional commitments and doing quality work will get all the referrals you need. (the key here is 'quality work'!)

(3) Timing is Everything

Think about how you feel on each of these days, and see if this makes sense:

Monday:

People are more apt to be demanding and disagreeable because the weekend is over, and because they're too busy taking care of what was left on Friday, catching up on what has happened over the weekend and planning for the week ahead. Do something to help alleviate their stress, and leave your requests for later in the week.

Tuesday:

Most people are more productive on Tuesday than any other day of the week. They also tend to be very stingy with their schedules, because they don't want to get off track too early in the week. So, unless you're already on the schedule, be wary of asking for anything.

Wednesday:

This is a swing day – earlier unpleasantness will slowly begin to subside during the day. Since it's a swing day, you need to learn your contacts' unique behavior patterns, before asking for anything on Wednesdays. Sometimes appointments made on this day have a habit of falling by the wayside.

Thursday:

Most people are relaxed and compromising on Thursdays, because the end of the workweek is in sight. However, they also pay close attention to business because Thursday is still far enough away from the weekend. **This is typically the best day to ask for anything.**

Friday:

A good-mood day for most people. Friday is a great day to socialize and build relationships. However, many people don't want to deal with new things on Friday because they're looking forward to the weekend.

People usually have last minute items that need to be taken care of before they're gone so instead of asking for something that requires thought and action, simply ask if you can get on next week's schedule. (You'll probably end up scheduled for Tuesday!)

Pay close attention to the responses you get when you ask for things, and see which day of the week works best for you. There are always exceptions to everything but generally speaking, these insights to each day could come in handy when you're planning your appointments.

Have a great week!

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About the Author

Cathy Kuzel, author of Are you a Collector or a Connector, publishes "Connect!" a monthly ezine providing free information and resources for entrepreneurs. She is a professional speaker and trainer on sales, customer service, professional development and a guru at networking.

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