

The Defining Mark

Barrier Free Business Development Ideas

This issue: RaBBiT Hunting (or Referral Business Building Techniques)

In this day of uncertainty, most organizations are interested in creating an increase to the bottom line. How either "increase" or "the bottom line" is measured can vary greatly depending on your company's values and goals.

A satisfying method of creating increase is the development of more referral business opportunities. The satisfaction comes from the knowledge that you have people who are happy enough with your service that they will tell someone else. You also have a chance at business which you did not need to find on your own.

How you deal with referral business will be based directly on what you think about them. Do you consider referrals a by-product or "bonus" for quality work? Or is it the result of a planned approach toward business marketing?

If, in your organization, referrals are simply something that happens because you do good work, you need not read on. Going forward, some people will refer business to you and others won't but all you need to do is continue doing good work. If on the other hand, you have decided to make referrals a part of your marketing model, these simple tips may help.

First accept the fact that you have control over the quality and amount of referral business that you receive. Referrals which you receive from your contact sphere can be measured in two ways: quantity and quality. The degree of each is a direct reflection of the level of trust/confidence the source has in your ability to fulfill the promised service.

There are several factors involved in the creation of consistent referral business. The three biggest pieces I see are:

1. Be Generous "What goes around comes around" is how my Dad explained it. If you keep others in mind during your normal course of business and refer business to others as appropriate, people will in turn think of you and your business. (Even if they don't, you will get a great feeling from helping others.)

2. Be Grateful Learn to say "Thank you" to others and mean it both for business they give you and business opportunities they refer to you. (A referral is not a business guarantee, but a business opportunity.)

3. Be Professional If someone refers business to you, they are in fact having you replace them in providing service to their friend or colleague. If you don't fulfill expectations you may never hear about it, but you can almost guarantee that whoever referred you will.

While the first two factors should be the simplest, sometimes they seem the most foreign to us. Oddly enough, I think it is the combination of all three which will make the difference in developing consistent referral business opportunities.

Referrals aren't "hunted". They must be planted and cultivated like fine seed. Yet the harvest they can return is more than worthy of the time and effort.



Jim Carty, CSP

*You are the most powerful tool
for business success.
Make contact.*

- MaxPitch Media

Action Plan:

- Be purposeful in developing your network
- Become a centre of influence for your network
- Be proactive in giving referrals
- Contact AltiMark to assist with any of these issues