The 12 Undisputable Laws for Highly Successful Referral Marketing

How to Effortlessly Receive Voluntary Client Recommendations for Highly Qualified Referrals from Your Own Clients

James McCracken

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Hi and Welcome.

You have been given an overview of the key steps and considerations that can be implemented by those who work in professional service to achieve a significant increase in your Client referral traffic.

All within 90 days. And the first results you will notice occurring after only 30 days.

After a significant amount of research, testing and measuring amounting to hundreds of hours of in the field of sales leadership, business development, account management and marketing James McCracken has shared a number of key strategies that high performing members of the professional services industry utilise to gain new referrals.

**What This Overview Will Do For You**

This will give you the major keys associated with creating a sustainable and successful referral system any individual or practice can implement and highly automate to attract additional referral clients.

**What This Overview Won’t Do For You**

Give you a magic pill or silver bullet. They don’t work, they never have. These strategies, like any other business strategies, require effort on your part to action and implement the ideas to achieve the results you want.

**How to Get the Most Out Of This Client Referral System Overview**

As a professional you understand the need for a methodical approach, and this was how this system evolved in our own professional development.

1. Read the content for each major key in this guide
2. Review the main points of each referral law
3. Notice what you need to **start doing or change what you’re doing**
4. Make a commitment to yourself to do this within 7 days
5. Do the previous 4 steps for **each referral law**

Email us at james@salesmastersinstitute.com.au and let us know if you have any questions or feedback. You will receive tips and suggestions via reply email to assist you.
An Important Introduction: Referrals So Important?

Right now, take the time to read this section. It sets the tone for the entire Client Referral Strategies. Read it and you going to get incredible results.

Glance, skim or ignore it, and you will miss the mindset behind why this system works so well. Let’s continue...

The ultimate purpose of any marketing initiative is to create a favourable impression of value that connects with your Ideal Client and gets them sharing this via word of mouth to many people in their own ‘people circles’.

![Referrals so important?](image)

Survey after survey reveal that the fastest way to influence your market, connect them with your service value and build their financial strategy (and your business at the same time) is through referrals that come from word of mouth marketing.

That said, the number one goal to measure marketing success is to discover how many people engage with the service and how many users share their experience and recommend it to their ‘life area’ contacts (family/professional/interests/hobbies etc.). If its low, you’re marketing is poor (you’re using inefficient communication systems to convey your high value). If its high, you’re marketing is good. And it can always be better.
Many professionals engaging in a referral program misunderstand the whole ‘referral marketing’ approach. The key is to create high levels of word-of-mouth recommendations with your Clients, instead of seeking to coax referrals out of your Clients.

The most successful way to achieve this is to create ‘advocates’ for your brand and service. Networks understand this and pump billions to make it happen. And here is the news flash...

Marketing has changed significantly in the last decade. Clients of professional services disconnected from the ‘push style’ marketing landscape and the way it was done around the 80s, and have increasingly become more informed of the intelligent questions and strategies to pursue in recent years.

Clients are now looking for experience and substance over promises and historical results. The results you are currently achieving are a reflection as to the value of the experience and solutions you provide to your clients. The greater your success, the greater the value you add.

Take Financial Planning as an example of a profession that relies heavily on referrals. The client of today is looking for a prospective Financial Planner to demonstrate ‘results in advance’ through professional knowledge and advice. They’re also looking for:

- A Planner who specializes in the area(s) of the Client’s financial interest
- A Planner who has social proof from other like-minded Clients
- A Planner who is part of a community that serves like-minded Clients
- A Planner who offers access to content that educates their Ideal Client
- A Planner who works with a particular type of client a.k.a their Ideal Client
- A Planner who understands the ‘lifestyle’ values of the Ideal Client

Whilst the variables may change depending upon your own area of speciality, once your Ideal client begins experiencing the many benefits available to them, they willingly advocate on your behalf the value of your service, the results you assist them to achieve and why you are the ‘Trusted Advisor’ in their eyes.

And most importantly, why their contacts should think of you like this too and share in the great service and results you provide.

Check. Advocate created. Word of Mouth marketing occurring. All on autopilot.

Finally...

How do you convert this initiative into tangible results that show you’re actively working with a higher number of referral clients?

That’s the purpose of this Guide, so let’s get started.
# 1: Be Referrable

Be adding value (massive value) all the time. You need to go above and beyond. Even those who can’t see you in action, they can still be referral sources if they have heard of you.

The referrer is putting their own relationship on the line, so they have to be confident that you are going to do a great job for whoever they are going to refer you to, as otherwise, you could damage their brand and potentially, the relationship you have with them.

Often, potential clients can be broken down into three groups.

The first group, no matter what you do, regardless of how good your service and value add, there will always be some people who will never refer you on. They just aren’t referral people.

Likewise, you have another group of people at the other end of the spectrum. These are the people who will refer anyone. They may have just met you and they’ll happily refer their friends to you. There is no need to focus on these people, as they will recommend you regardless.

The key group to focus on is the 80% of people in the middle – which are the people who need to be absolutely super confident that you do a great job; because the Ideal Client will take care of the person they are referring you to, as their reputation is on the line. These people want to know that if they are going to provide you with some great referrals to their colleagues, that they will be in safe hands.
# 2: Check Your Motives

If you think about it, people not only want to know that you have got credibility and that you can get great results, they also want to be sure that you have the best interests of those who they can refer you to at heart.

You may have all the technical knowledge and capabilities in the world but if they think that you are just in it for the money, they are not going to trust you with their best relationships.

You need to be able to demonstrate that you care. So, firstly only request referrals for people who you think you can do a great job for. Also, make sure you are getting that across when you are asking for referrals. Rather than just asking “can you introduce me to this person or that person”, you have to talk about it in words that describe how good a job and how much care you are going to take of the person they refer you too. You have got to get them clear on the fact that your motives are good, not that you’re just in it for the money.

Much the same as when someone wants to refer a person onto you. You want to check their motives as well. You might be wondering “how do they know them”, “why are they referring this person to you”. Is it because it is a family member who they love who they haven’t had a firsthand experience of seeing them in a professional context and they just want them to get the ball rolling, or are they in the same networking group, and they don’t really know how this person will perform but they feel obliged to give the referral across as part of the rules of the networking group. Are they expecting something in return? So when you are on the receiving end of a referral you want to check out the motives too.
# 3: Plant Seeds

It is OK to plant seeds often so long as there is congruency between the message you provide and the results you can deliver.

One way to plant a seed is to say to people that you are building your business through referrals, or you could weave stories in the initial dialogue you have with people about how you’ve received referrals, or you could talk about the successes you’ve had and how it came through a referral, or you can include it as part of your written materials where you might say “97% of our clients came from happy customers who trusted us enough to refer us into their network”.

The key is to express it in ‘language’ that fits in with your community or niche market.

There are a number of ways you can build referrals, not just at the begging on an interaction with a prospective client or referral source, but also all the way through. Thinking through on how you are building your business through referrals, and planting seeds at natural points throughout any kind of interaction and engagement with a client, will offer a more congruent business development mission in the Client’s mind, than just simply being ‘transactional’ and asking for a referral.

Your Clients will also really appreciate it as well.
# 4: Set Expectations

An effective way to establish what a good referral is for you is setting expectations right at the start.

So when you are working through with your client, also discuss your expectations for referrals. Mention how in 3 months or 6 months, if all is going well for them and they are happy with the service being provided, that you would like to come to them and request to be introduced or receive some feedback from them on the value you have provided and how this has improved their circumstances.

Some people can do this formally by including in agreements, and some people prefer an informal approach. Sometimes when included within an agreement, this makes it easier to revisit at a later point, because it can be easy to forget and what you don’t want to do after 3 months into the relationship, suddenly put them on the spot when they are not expecting to contribute to giving feedback on your service, which could result in unprofessional behaviour in the Client’s eyes. They didn’t know it was part of the agreement and they may not be used to giving feedback or referrals, so setting expectations will help to make it an easier process to visit.

That way, rather than deliver an excellent service and then asking “by the way, can you tell me the names of 5 people who you can introduce me to”, you should give them advanced warning to what you’re going to do, as it’ll be easier to then review the agreement with the client and refresh their memory about your client referral system. That way, they can think things over in the mind for the next catch up session and the more you can do up front to steer them and give them guidance as to the people you want them to be aware of that you’re best suited to assist. So, the narrower and more specific you request, the easier it’ll be for people to recommend and refer to you.

One way to set expectations verbally may be saying to a client, “As you know, I grow my business through referrals, and at some point, I may ask you to consider the value you have received and how you can assist others you know to become aware of this kind of service.”
# 5: Recognise people want to help

Recognise people want to help. As the trust is we don’t want to impose or seem pushy, however the truth is most people want to help, especially if we’ve done great work for them. Our clients are happy refer us if we’ve provided great value, they feel good and we can help them feel good, however, there is a fine line to ensure they don’t feel any pressure or obligation to refer on.

If you have done great work for people, often they want to help out and provide a referral and can feel bad if they are unable to provide a referral back for you. It can actually be something they appreciate if you give them the opportunity.

If we can form an assumption that people want to give us referrals, it helps, because if we don’t assume that, it makes it really hard to ask, so assume that people want to give you referrals. Much the same as when people have asked you for referrals. Don’t you want to help them out too? So assume that other people want to help you. People want to help you because it raises their cache as a connector, of having a valuable network, nowadays, relationships are a form of currency and people want to share their ‘wealth’, much as you would want to do for them.
# 6: Give Referrals

Of itself, another technique of getting referrals is to give referrals. Partly it would be wrong to simply expect referrals if you are not giving any. But giving referrals does two things, and something to bear in mind again is that many people just aren’t used to giving referrals, so when they see you giving a referral to them, it shows them how.

In some corporations, referrals may not be the main means for business development, so in these businesses, people may not be as used to giving or getting referrals. When people move across into an industry or a role which is much more reliant on referrals, this world can be new to them, and it can take people a while to realise this is how business gets done, and many clients are like that.

They are not used to giving referrals, and as you are giving referrals, it demonstrates this is a good way to do business (e.g., to an accountant who you trust), and it will also build up reciprocity and they feel they should do something good back. Now absolutely that shouldn’t be the primary driver why they give you a referral. They should have absolute confidence that you are going to do a great job, and they shouldn’t be referring you if haven’t been outstanding and that they feel some sense of obligation to return the favour.

If they have the confidence and think you will do a great job for the people they refer you to, you giving the referral and them being on the reciprocation side may just be the spur they need to get things started.

If you are able to give out referrals freely and to many people, that will build up a lot of good will on the part of the other person, but don’t expect immediate returns for every referral you give out, rather trust in the good will you giving out and that it will come back to you along the way at some point.
# 7: Getting the Timing Right

You don’t want to be requesting referrals off people who you just met. One of the best ways not to get referrals is to ask for them shortly after you meet someone or if you have just completed a sale – which would also be a big mistake, as even if you have completed the sale, you haven’t earned anything yet, so that’s not the right time to ask for referrals. Wait until you have demonstrated value through confirming the results your service positioned for the client.

![Image of a clock](image)

A natural good time to ask for a referral or plant a seed is when someone compliments you on your services or a skill in a certain area. That’s a great time to say “can I quote you on that”, or “who else do you think will benefit from that type of service”, so you can build on the compliment. Another time to ask is when you have provided value or service to someone whether or not they have paid for it. Sometimes, when meeting with you, people may understand that they aren’t prepared to move forward with you just yet, but they get so much value and have a great experience through that conversation that provided sufficient value for them to become a referral source.

So if you are constantly planting the seeds that you are building your business through referrals, that whether or not people actually sign on with you or not, they are going to think of that and they will think about how they can refer you, especially if they have had an experience of value.

Also, don’t wait for those complements to come in. Periodically, you can check in with people and ask how they are doing and identify things they have learnt, confirm they are still happy with how things are going with their plan, and at those points, you can ask for referrals. This way, you are not just waiting for complements; you are more in control of the referral process.

Another time we don’t necessarily think about is if there has been a breakdown in the relationship or service and you can handle that effectively, it’s a really powerful opportunity for referrals, because if you resolve a problem in a very powerful way for people, it not only repairs the relationship, it makes it stronger than it was before and then when you have returned to a moment of good rapport, you can ask for referrals, because they know that not only are you going to take care of people when things are going well, you are going to take care of people when things are not going well.
# 8: Ask

You need to ask for referrals. Referrals can be a bit like a contact sport. You can read all the manuals, and know all the theory, and lots of people are great at knowing the theory and will say “yes, I know that, I know that”, but of course, the big question is “are you doing that”, and very often it’s “no”.

You really do have to ask to get results. Lots of us hold back because perhaps we want to be independent, we want to build all the business ourselves without relying on others or maybe we don’t want to look needy and we want people to think we are doing brilliantly, and our businesses is a fantastic success and we don’t need any help from anyone.

Even if you don’t ask perfectly, if you don’t articulate it as well as you might like, or if the timing isn’t ‘perfect’, you are still better off asking for something even if you fumble it than not asking, as you are still going to get better results, and the secret is to know your Ideal Client profile. Who are the ideal clients for you? Who do you help? And then you can ask the people you are talking to if they know anybody who matches the specifics of who you best serve. So it might sound like “who do you know that has a young family and is interested in creating a more secure future for themselves and their children” or “who do you know that is a female between the ages of 45 to 60 who is looking to establish a strong retirement plan for themselves?”

Depending on what your niche is you can ask those kinds of questions that zero in on your client profile and that’s a way you can start to focus people’s referrals to you rather than simply saying “by the way who else do you know who I can talk to” because you will likely hear them say “nobody comes to mind right now” and that’s the end of the conversation.

It also helps you come across as both more professional and more able to help because even if you know and believe you can help absolutely anyone with your brilliant financial planning skills, often that doesn’t come across as a very credible position, whereas if you say “who do you know that has started a business and may need income protection”, that tells them this person has experience working with people that need income protection and they can have confidence in your ability provide that service for anyone they refer to you.
# 9: Acknowledge Referrals

So the important thing on the back end of receiving a referral is you want to keep your referrer posted about how it’s going and what happens. So you want to keep them in the loop, let them know how it went, circle back around with them, fill them in on the success of the referral or the status of relationships they brokered, and that also creates another opportunity to create a referral seed, and that you don’t just take things and run, you have to keep them in the loop.

![Thank you note](image)

This helps build the relationship and lets them know that you value referrals, and they’ll remember that the next time they think of someone they can refer to you, they’ll remember that they were kept in the loop.

And once that referral turns into business, you definitely want to close that loop by sending a hand written thank you note or maybe even a small gift pack to the referral source again to reinforce how much you value receiving your referrals, how you depend on referrals for growing your business and that you appreciate they trusted you that much to provide you the referral in the first place.

Sometimes, one of the questions that occurs is whether you should be incentivising referrals, should you be paying when you receive referrals. In some industry sectors, that is accepted business practice, but if it isn’t normal business practice, then trying to reward people for giving a referral can cheapen the experience for some people, and it can make people that perhaps the only reason they are referring you is for the money and usually, the relationship they have with the person they are referring to you is worth more than any amount of money they can give them for that referral, and can make people second guess themselves and just not feel right about it. For that reason, I find the best motivation for a referral is the belief that you will create superb value and the best way to thank them is a thank you card or a small gift spontaneously.
# 10: Be Authentic

When asking for referrals, don’t switch into sales mode and be someone other than you. If you are a great financial planner and you work the way you do and your personality comes through in that, then do the exact same thing you ask for referrals.

Just ask for them as you normally would speak with someone and you will be seen as authentic and genuine, which makes the person who you’re asking the referrals of much more comfortable about supporting you. There is little worse than having built a strong relationship with someone based on authenticity and mutual respect and when it comes to asking for referrals that you become a completely different person.

You have to use your natural strengths during this conversation as much as any other part of the conversation process you have with people. If you are someone who is naturally introverted as opposed to extroverted, you want to bring forward those strengths you have in the context of how you normally communicate. For example, an introverted person shouldn’t start asking for referrals in an extroverted kind of way, as you will only seem inauthentic to your client, which defeats the intent of the conversation you are having with them.
# 11: Nurture Relationships

Referrals require active relationship management. So you want to identify where are the fruitful and rich relationships in your referral network, and again, going back to acknowledging and appreciating your referral sources.

In addition, you can also establish referral sources with colleagues – it doesn’t just have to come from clients. So a great way to develop the relationships you develop with other financial planners is to understand what is your specialty, who is your Ideal Client you are looking for, and to keep in mind that if you run into someone that better fits the description of your colleagues client profile, you can refer them onto your colleague and vice versa – which creates good will all around and makes sure you are telling people how they can help you and that you are building your business through referrals and asking for referrals.

In addition, establishing referral sources with your colleagues expands your offerings to prospective new clients, because instead of saying “no” to potential new opportunities, you can introduce these people to your colleagues, which enables the client to have a better experience and provides your colleague with a new opportunity that wouldn’t have otherwise been available.

Remember to continue building those relationships over time. Most of us these days know that we should be keeping in touch with our client and nurturing the relationship so that it continues to prosper for both parties. This will ensure that even people who weren’t ready to commit to a plan initially are able to experience what it is like to trust you and get to know you better, which enables them to connect with you better and proceed at the point in time when they feel ready.

We should very much invest into relationships with referrers who advocate for you and refer business on. Whilst we all want to achieve referrals from our existing clients, sometimes, our referrals can come from other people who you haven’t necessarily become a client but still believe in the value of what you have to offer.
# 12: Detach from the Outcome

If you’re being needy in your mind, if you think that every time you ask that you ‘need’ that referral, then you will come across as being needy. It also affects your mindset as well. Clients can pick up on this. If you look at poker players, one of the things they do well is they don’t try and win every hand.

They know that sometimes it just isn’t possible to win each because for a variety of reasons. Instead, what great players do is they aim to play consistently well. That way, by having consistency to their approach, they will win over the long term. The same can be said of referrals. If you said “I must get a referral from every single person you speak to and ask for a referral from, then you will come across as needy or pushy, and they’ll pick up on that and they’ll feel you are not asking for the referral for the right reason. Instead, if you focus on asking for referrals when it the timing is right, with the right spirit, being authentic and referrable, then in the long run, you will get all the referrals you need.

If you go along with the mindset of being referrable and planting those seeds and nurturing those relationships along the way, and detaching yourself from the outcome, then your success will be a by-product of the mindset you have, the relationships you cultivate and the actions you take.

That leaves us with saying that when people are referring you to others, that is something that must be taken seriously. People are investing a significant amount of trust in you, and you therefore need to be referrable to earn that credibility. You need make sure you are building the relationships with people and demonstrating your capabilities. It all comes down as one fundamental principle of recognising how important giving a referral is and respecting the other person for their trust in you.
The Client Referral strategies are will create immense value and ongoing service that continues to exceed the Ideal Client’s expectations. The goal is to create an advocate of your service that is demonstrated by their ‘word of mouth’ communication with others about the value you have created for the Ideal Client.

Creating a strong ‘word of mouth’ marketing machine for your business is the best investment you can make to ensure you flourish and thrive. By providing your clients with such an exceptional experience that they feel compelled to want to tell others about you and actively encourage others to become involved means you will attract highly qualified prospects into your practice as well as giving your existing clients every reason to continue doing business with you.

If you are in a position where you can comfortably acquire new clients, and provide your existing clients with even more of a reason to become raving fans, then immediately start implementing the steps of the guide that are within your immediate grasp, and then seek to add to your existing approaches to provide more ways in which to attract new opportunities.
**Next Steps**

The next steps for you to follow through and start obtaining improved results are:

- Implement as many of the above 12 referral laws as is possible into your business. Begin with those strategies that you can most easily apply, and look to add to them so that you have a range of different means by which to generate referral business.
- Maintain consistency in what you do. Often, when a business generates additional work, they will slow down on the marketing, which then causes them to lose momentum. Maintain consistency in what you do at all times.
- Looking to grow? Many professional services practices choose to specialise in their area of expertise and see the value of structured systems they can implement to enable them to spend more time delivering valuable solutions to their clients.

We recognize the importance of complementing your professional skills with a system that allows your clients to consistently have an outstanding ‘customer experience’ so they become clients for life and raving fans of your business. By achieving this outcome, you will always have confidence and belief in the value of the solutions you provide, meaning you have the opportunity to spend more time doing what you are passionate about, which is to enable your clients achieve the best results they can.

To ensure you achieve the success that you are passionate about and have every opportunity to excel in your business, start implementing the above 12 steps straight away. If you want to take immediate action and achieve more clients via referral, book in a 10-minute (complimentary) consultation with James by emailing james@salesmastersinstitue.com.au where he will assist you in generating results in the next 60 days through referral strategies.

Wishing you great success,

James McCracken

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For all additional enquiries and feedback you can email us to james@salesmastersinstitue.com.au