

Dear Friend,

Generating referrals from your best customers is one of the simplest prospecting tools you can use to increase new customers because they are relatively free. If you offer your customers excellent service and provide more value than expected, they will be more likely to refer you to their friends, especially if you make it easy for them to do so with business cards, flyers and incentives.

While there is no doubt that all businesses need word of mouth advertising from happy customers, the real power of referrals comes from developing a methodical system for prospecting that will produce results.

The power of referrals really grows when you reach outside your customers to individuals or businesses that are directly related to your practice in some way. This would include animal related businesses that provide complimentary products or services.



Below are a few tips for developing a practice outreach program to take your referrals to the next level.

A Practice Outreach Referral program is a methodical process that you have to actually put in place in order to capture qualified prospects through your association with complementary businesses.

Tips to Grow Your Referrals

Practice Outreach Program

Think about how many pet shops, grooming salons, training centers or boarding resorts there surrounding your practice. These businesses are animal related and will most likely share the same customers as you, which could lead to a new stream of referrals for your practice.

1. One strategy is to call the owner of the pet store on your street to introduce yourself and begin to develop a relationship.

2. Next, you could invite them to lunch followed by a tour of your practice.
3. Third, you could hold educational seminars for pet store owners and their employees on topics such as first aid for animals or signs that an animal is in distress.

Over time, the number of new clients you could attract from the pet stores in your neighborhood could be significant. When customers ask the pet store employees which veterinarian they recommend, they can share their positive experience with your practice.

Keep in mind that if you offer a competing service such as boarding or grooming, then you may not want to approach pet grooming salons or boarding resorts. Also, be sure to approach reputable businesses with high quality service.

Tips to Increase Customer Referrals

Improve Your Customer Referral Program

Referral programs can be a great tool to add to your marketing mix. A referral program helps provide the most valuable kind of marketing you can get for your practice because it is from a satisfied client. People who come to your clinic for the first time because someone they know told them about you will have a higher level of trust than a new customer who found your practice another way.

"The reason referrals are so powerful is because they come from a credible third-party that has experienced first hand the benefits of doing business with you."

Get to Know Your Customers

Asking for a Referral - The Wrong Way

Imagine that you are talking to one of your favorite clients who is pleased with your services and you ask the following question:

"By chance would you know someone who needs veterinary services?" The customer may think about it and say, "Well, not off the top of my head, but I'll let you know."

This type of question is too broad for most people so you might as well not even ask.

Asking for a Referral - The Better Way

Another way to ask for a referral is to provide a narrow frame of reference to help the customer think of specific referral candidates. For instance, imagine that you are talking to one of your good clients who is not only pleased with your services but you have also a developed a relationship with and you ask the following:

"You're a member of the Local Realtor organization right?" If they answer yes, you can follow up with "Do you attend the monthly meetings?" If so, "Who in your organization might have a new pet at home that could benefit from our veterinary services?"

In this instance, there could be one or two individuals that come to mind as a potential referral candidate which is a stronger start to building your referral program.

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