



## Generating Referrals: Three Ways to Help Referral Sources Remember You

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In a previous article, we talked about how referrals are the “holy grail” of sales and marketing for most Los Angeles and Southern California business owners and entrepreneurs. A referral effectively “pre-qualifies” you in the eyes of a prospect, giving you a tremendous leg up on the competition when it comes to turning that prospect into a new client.

In the article, we identified three things that must occur before anyone is going to refer a potential new client to you: The referral source needs to *know* you, *like* you and *trust* you. But there’s one more thing to add to this list that’s just as important: The referral source also needs to *remember* you.

### Staying Memorable and Top-of-Mind

So what are some things you can do to be memorable and stay top-of-mind among potential referral sources when businesses and professionals they know have a need for your products and/or services? Here are three suggestions you can implement to help make yourself more memorable among referral sources:

**1. Be fully engaged when interacting with others.** When talking with others, it’s easy to let your attention drift and your mind wander and start thinking about other things — whether these are pressing concerns in your business or situations you’re dealing with at home. You might be looking at the other person and even nodding your head in agreement, but what they’re saying is literally going in one ear and out the other.

Don’t be fooled — most people pick up on this, whether you realize it or not. And they don’t appreciate your inattention to what they’re talking about. So make it a priority to block out all distractions when conversing with other people and listen carefully to what they are saying. Look them squarely in the eyes and really *listen* to them. This alone will set you apart from many other people and help make you more memorable to potential referral sources.

**2. Make valuable contributions to conversations.** This follows on the heels of the first suggestion. As you discipline yourself to listen intently to what others are saying, be prepared to contribute to the conversation yourself with whatever valuable insights, advice or anecdotes you can offer.

Instead of listening when conversing with others, some people are just thinking about what they’re going to say about themselves when the person stops talking. So they often end up spouting off about something that has nothing to do with what the other person was talking about — literally speaking just to hear themselves talk. This leaves the other person wondering why even carry on the conversation at all?

Instead of thinking about what you’re going to say about yourself in a conversation, listen carefully and think about what you can say that will help the *other* person. You probably have a wealth of experience, knowledge and contacts that you can share with others to help them meet challenges, both business and

personal. When you share these with potential referral sources, you will stand apart in their minds and be more memorable to them.

**3. Be distinctive and tasteful.** Many businesspeople don't give as much thought and attention to this as they should. For example, I'm surprised at how many businesspeople show up at meetings and networking events shoddily or inappropriately dressed, or wearing loud and obnoxious ties and jewelry that call attention to themselves for the wrong reasons.

Before attending any meeting or networking event, make sure you find out what is the appropriate attire for the occasion. If it's business casual, that's fine — but remember that business casual usually doesn't mean torn jeans and flip flops. If it's suit-and-tie, make sure you're wearing a modern, pressed suit, an ironed shirt and a tasteful tie. No wide-lapel, double-breasted jackets from the 1990s or screaming neon ties! And at networking events, wear a distinctive name badge that will help people remember who you are.

You should also be distinctive and tasteful in the way you carry yourself at a meeting or networking event. Pay attention to your posture — stand up straight instead of slouching, smile and laugh easily, and always offer a firm handshake to both men and women. Exude an air of confidence, but not cockiness. People tend to notice and remember others who carry themselves in this way, which helps these kinds of people remain top-of-mind for possible referrals.

These might sound like “soft” suggestions, but they are anything but soft. While your knowledge and expertise are obviously important factors referral sources will consider before referring you to prospects, these more intangible factors are usually just as important. When you put these suggestions into practice, you will make yourself more memorable — and increase the number of referrals you receive.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

Referrals are the “holy grail” of sales and marketing, but people won't refer you to prospects that need your products and/or services if they don't know you, like you, trust you and remember you. The good news is that there are practical things you can do right now to help make yourself more memorable among referral sources. These include being fully engaged when interacting with others, making valuable contributions to conversations, and being distinctive and tasteful. By mastering these intangibles, you will make yourself more memorable and boost your referral business.

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