



Leveraging your referral network

Developing trusted referrers is crucial to building a great book of business.



10 ways to leverage your referral network and win more work

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Every professional services firm is fundamentally a person-to-person business. As a result, a large part of our ongoing book of business relies on the referrals we get from our [trusted relationships](#). Ensuring we have a network of trusted referrals is, therefore, crucial to making sure we can develop a great book of business.

All of this is easier said than done. After all, unless you went to private school or did an MBA, understanding how to build a referral network doesn't come easy. But, [with the right coaching](#), you can achieve your goals.

Maintaining focus on your goals

What are your 'goals'

Start off by defining what your business goals are. What do you want to be doing? And what would success look like if you ended up doing what you wanted to do?

Past, present and future connections

Once you have an idea of your goals, draw up a list of past, present and future people within your network you'll likely need support from to achieve these goals.

Who do I know from my past who might be able to help me get to where I need to be?

Who do I know right now who can help me achieve my goals?

Who do I need to connect with in the future who can help me achieve my goals?

From that list, you can start your referral network-building journey.

10 ways to build your referral network

Alumni network

The best way to start any referral network is to look at who in your network from the past can help you achieve your goals.

Why? Because with people from the past, you've already done all the work and built trust. As we have previously blogged, trust is a core component of doing business. QED, if your alumni network can help you, then you don't need to spend a lot of time trying to build a trusted relationship. It already exists.

Volunteer work

The second place to look at building a referral network is the people you do volunteer work with.

Why? Because you clearly have a shared interest. You do the work pro bono, so a level of trusted relationship exists, and the network you have built here is very likely going to support referring work to you.

Blog / newsletter / podcast subscribers

If you have a blog or newsletter, look at who the subscribers are.

Why? Because if you have people who are willing to listen to what you have to say, then they are much more likely to support referring you to their contacts (and may already be doing so).

Professional associations

If you are in professional services, then there is a very high chance that you are a member of a professional association. If so, use them to build and elevate your network.

Why? Because you have a shared professional interest, with shared concerns around issues such as professional indemnity. As such, this is a much easier platform to build trust and ask for help with referrals.

Industry associations

You'll see that it is a common recommendation of GSJ that you niche into a particular industry area of expertise.

Why? Because doing this shows people that you're truly a subject matter expert and will get them on board with recommending you to others in their network.

Join a local chamber of commerce

Our next suggestion is that you join a local chamber of commerce (if you are not already a member).

Why? Because local chambers of commerce have common interests in developing the business of local businesses and are a great platform for building a referral network.

Leverage social media

My own view is that leveraging social media to build a referral network is difficult. But, it can and should be done.

Why? Because it is relatively inexpensive and while LinkedIn and Facebook can be time sucks, done properly they don't require huge investments of time in order to build big followings.

Based on the funnel theory (or even the darts in a dart-board theory), eventually, something is going to stick!

Public speaking

I hear people telling me all the time that the public speaking tour is a good place to build a referral network.

Why? Because it's old school. People get to meet you and talk with you and get to know you. People who know you are far more likely to refer you!

Attend conferences

Attending conferences is always a good way to build your network of referrals.

Why? Because you have invested time in a shared interest!

Join a network

If you don't think any of the above are working for you, join a network of referrers.

Why? – Because while it's highly likely this will cost you money, it should also produce results as it's in the financial interests of your referrer to refer work to you.

So, there you go; 10 ways to leverage your referral network and win more work.

As always, if you need help with any of this, reach out and talk to us – we may even become one of your business advocates!

The information contained in this article is of general nature and should not be construed as legal advice. If you require further information, advice or assistance for your specific circumstances, please contact us.