

100 Marketing Referral Ideas

Strategy # 1 - "Evaluate why your customers come to you, then give them more than they expect and you will have a willing referral work force."

Strategy # 2 - "To receive referrals from word of mouth advertising, you need to work on stimulating them on a regular basis."

Strategy # 3 - "Give customers a gift and you will get passive customer referrals when they either display the gift or talk about it to their friends."

Strategy # 4 - "One way to stimulate passive referrals is to give a customer rebate following a large purchase or job. Let your customer know that your savings through volume discounts are being passed down to them."

Strategy # 5 - "Another way to stimulate passive referrals is to choose an obscure event or holiday to celebrate annually and give discount cards or gifts to your customers. If they're not talking about it to their friends the first year, they will be by the second year."

Strategy # 6 - "Another passive referral approach would be to package 2 items together for the price of one. Then include a card suggesting that the customer share the 2nd one with a friend."

Strategy # 7 - "Think of a free service you could occasionally provide to your customers that is related to your business. For example, if you sell insurance, arrange to have house numbers painted on the curbs of your home owners."

Strategy # 8 - "Another passive referral approach would be to package 2 identical products together for the price of one. Then include a card suggesting that your customer share the 2nd product with one of their friends."

Strategy # 9 - "Use a gift phone card to generate passive referrals from customers who have used your travel agency or car rental services."

Strategy # 10 - "Creating recyclable gift boxes or bags with your company logo will show you are concerned about the environment. When your customers re-use the box or bag, they passively advertise for you."

Strategy # 11 - "Make sure to keep your target audience in mind when creating your referral marketing plan. Not all referrals are of equal value."

Strategy # 12 - "Create a souvenir or unique gift that will peak conversations which will evolve to discussions of your business. Wearable art, coffee table books, or collectables to name a few."

Strategy # 13 - "Arrange to bottle or package a generic item with your product labeling. Whether it's sunscreen, soap, lip balm or eye glass cleaner, if you give several to your customers, they will share the wealth and information about your company with their friends."

Strategy # 14 - "Determine a unique aspect of your business and find a way to create a smaller version, or sample of this to give to customers to share with their friends, family and business associates."

Strategy # 15 - "Referrals do not generate themselves. Since a referral is the best kind of lead, you should spend time to develop a solid referral marketing plan."

Strategy # 16 - "Whether you are thanking a customer for a referral, or trying to get them to provide referrals, do it with flare and in such a different way that it will be remembered and a source of discussion. How about paying all your referral fees with \$2.00 bills!"

Strategy # 17 - "If you give away postcards in your tourist related business, consider creating a perforated, double postcard that has a large version to mail to a friend, and a smaller version to tear off and keep as a souvenir."

Strategy # 18 - "Matchbooks used to be a great pass along referral idea. Try something similar by advertising in small scratch pads that your customers can have, and share with their friends."

Strategy # 19 - "Have holiday and birthday cards printed that open on the left side. Then create a message that refers to the backwards printing and relate it to a unique aspect of your business. This card will get shown to friends and associates."

Strategy # 20 - "Consider sending home samplers of your best desserts, sauces etc. When patrons leave your restaurant. Not only will they consider ordering those items next time they come, they may just tell a friend about this unique dining perk."

Strategy # 21 - "Offer a free dessert certificate that your customer can use on their next visit when they give the name and address of a friend. Then mail that friend a coupon for a 'free' menu item. Explain that their friend enjoyed their dining experience so much, they asked for the coupon to be sent to their friend."

Strategy # 22 - "To have your customers become more focused on spreading the word, send them home with a free sample and a gift certificate for a friend to come receive the gift as well."

Strategy # 23 - "Send a coupon by direct mail or cyber mail to your customer and thank them for their business. Invite them to share the coupon with a friend or associate."

Strategy # 24 - "Give a free sample of your product to a local or national celebrity. This type of exposure often elicits comments or recommendations that will result in referrals to your company."

Strategy # 25 - "There are a variety of creative sales messages you can put on clocks that can be given to satisfied customers who will display them in prominent places for you."

Strategy # 26 - "Clocks can also be created with messages for your customers who need annual or regular service reminders that creatively say, 'it's time for....'"

Strategy # 27 - "Luggage tags are highly visible in airports, train stations, bus depots and taxi stands. Give away tags with unique and easily remembered messages that will invite conversation and referrals."

Strategy # 28 - "Restaurants could name, or re-name, a dish after one of their long-term customers. Have a night to unveil the dish and invite the customers' special guests to attend."

Strategy # 29 - "Have a customer appreciation day for your best customers and their friends. Provide special sales, discounts and offer additional discounts if they introduce their friend to one of your employees." (who will get their name and address)

Strategy # 30 - "Provide customers with a free planning check list that includes your services. Depending on your business, it could be a helpful list for special events, selling or buying a home, moving, etc."

Strategy # 31 - "Wear something unique to a trade show or special event that will create an opportunity for discussion. Something as simple as a medal can be very effective in stimulating questions and referrals."

Strategy # 32 - "Give customer awards for referrals, quality improvement suggestions or anything that helps your business. These awards could be a banner, trophy, pin, badge or anything with an interesting shape or design. Your customer will enjoy showing his friends and telling them about your company."

Strategy # 33 - "When you send flowers as a 'thank you,' don't just send a seasonal bouquet, send something exotic that lasts a long time. Everyone who sees the bouquet will comment and give your customer an opportunity to sing your praises."

Strategy # 34 - "Invite or 'empower' your customers to give away company products, awards and privileges. This will endear them even more to your company, while creating new customers."

Strategy # 35 - "Rather than inviting one of your faithful customers to join you in the use of your season tickets. Give the tickets to the customer and let them invite a friend. Follow up with the friend to see if they enjoyed themselves."

Strategy # 36 - "Have a drawing for one of your bigger ticket items and then give lottery tickets to your customers to give to their friends and associates. The ticket stubs need to be filled out and returned to be eligible for the drawing."

Strategy # 37 - "Consider a joint venture with a lawn and garden store. For any customer that purchases \$10 or more of lawn and garden products, have the store give them a free rain gauge with cleverly written information and a contact number for your lawn service."

Strategy # 38 - "Consider a joint venture with a hardware store or special order air filter company to give away a free outdoor thermometer with any \$10 purchase of air conditioning filters. The thermometer would have a clever slogan and contact information for your air conditioning repair services."

Strategy # 39 - "Place comment postcards near cash registers, customer service desks and waiting areas and encourage your customers to send a comment to a friend or associate about some aspect of your company. Capture the contact info. And mail the postcard plus a thank you to your customer."

Strategy # 40 - "Create vouchers with a free or discounted service you can offer to prospects to begin a business relationship. Then give these vouchers to current customers to share with a friend or associate."

Strategy # 41 - "Print your business contact information and a favorite saying or defining goal of your company on a shirt, hat, decal, refrigerator magnet, bumper sticker etc. Then give these items to customers to use or share with friends."

Strategy # 42 - "Provide your customers with new, important or funny information that they will share with others."

Strategy # 43 - "Create a sheet of stickers to send out annually with reminders or valuable tips to be placed on phones, computers, light switches, smoke detectors etc. Include your contact information on each tip and a duplicate sheet for them to give to a friend or associate."

Strategy # 44 - "Create an interesting tour of your business and invite local schools on the tour. Provide a souvenir at the end and you will find that many students will discuss the tour with their parents. This free advertising will promote new business and goodwill that will more than pay for the program."

Strategy # 45 - "Similar to the sheet of sticker tips, send a reminder postcard to slide behind a light switch until the reminder tip is completed. Reminders could include fire extinguisher, tire pressure, replenishment of emergency food supplies or spreading fertilizer."

Strategy # 46 - "Send a card, letter, fax or e-mail with information about product updates or improvements and how this benefits their life or business. Great information is always shared with friends."

Strategy # 47 - "Create and name an organization of complimentary, non-competitive businesses in your area. Have everyone pay dues to cover the cost of an informational booklet and small free gifts for customer referrals. Display these booklets at all the businesses in the organization to encourage referrals."

Strategy # 48 - "Word of mouth referrals can be generated when your customer has a positive experience with your staff. By rotating the boss and your most knowledgeable employees to the 'front lines' each day, you will improve the skills of your less experienced employees and provide your customers with a positive experience."

Strategy # 49 - "Train all levels of your staff on how to handle basic customer service questions and issues. If they know your business philosophy, then your customer walks away with positive rather than negative things to share with future customers."

Strategy # 50 - "Send out a monthly or quarterly newsletter with valuable information, not just advertising for your business. You will keep in the forefront of your customers mind, and they will share tips they learned from your newsletter."

Strategy # 51 - "Recycle your posters or other large advertising by giving them to blood banks, hospitals, etc. Where people spend time lying on their back. Suggest they be attached to the ceiling to give them something to talk or think about."

Strategy # 52 - "Send your customers a joke on a postcard and encourage them to share a smile with as many friends as possible by passing on the joke."

Strategy # 53 - "Following a long-term or high dollar business transaction, send a thank you note and another stamped card that can be forwarded to a friend or associate to recommend your services."

Strategy # 54 - "Create a profile of your customers preferences and refer to them in direct mail and personal contact. Your customer will be impressed with your attentiveness and their word of mouth advertising will take on a whole new meaning."

Strategy # 55 - "When creating slogans to display on bumper stickers, shirts, pins, etc. Begin the phrase with something to encourage discussion like...'ask me...check with me...' this will stimulate your word of mouth advertising."

Strategy # 56 - "Work of mouth advertising can be a double edged sword. If your customer has a negative experience, solve the problem as quickly as possible and provide generous restitution."

Strategy # 57 - "To have ongoing referrals you need to turn suspects into prospects, prospects into customers, customers into clients and clients into friends. Friends will do regular business with you and refer all their friends."

Strategy # 58 - "Leverage your time in obtaining referrals by participating in public speaking engagements. Provide a comment card following your presentation that will generate referrals for your 'free' information or sample."

Strategy # 59 - "Plant referral suggestions with your customers by discussing how rewarding it is to have built your business on referrals of satisfied customers. Then highlight what makes your company worth referring."

Strategy # 60 - "Always reward your customers for their referrals. Whether it's a note, a phone call, a gift, or monetary compensation, if you show your gratitude you will be rewarded with repeat business and additional referrals."

Strategy # 61 - "If you give rewards for referrals, be consistent in the value and timeliness of rewards to customers who provide repeated referrals."

Strategy # 62 - "Send 2 discount cards to your customer. Offer one to them and encourage them to share the other card with a friend."

Strategy # 63 - "Ask for referrals from satisfied customers who have just made a purchase. Whether it's at the cash register, or a few weeks after they have enjoyed their purchase. A satisfied customer is a great resource."

Strategy # 64 - "To help satisfied customers think of valid names to refer, suggest they consider business associates, friends, church members, social groups, neighbors, relatives, professional group associates, and friends through sports, clubs or hobbies."

Strategy # 65 - "Not only is a prospect a potential customer, they can be a treasure chest of referrals if you treat them well. Even if they don't make a purchase, ask them who they know that would benefit from your product or service. Your prospect may not need it, but they have at least one acquaintance that does."

Strategy # 66 - "Whether you have a service and parts department, or can determine the 'average' lifecycle of your product, keep abreast or when your customers will be looking for a replacement of your product. Then be the first in line to share the benefits of your latest and greatest model."

Strategy # 67 - "The more confident you appear to your customers, the more willing they will be to refer their friends to you."

Strategy # 68 - "If your company does not have a direct marketing advertising budget and only markets through referrals then openly enlist the assistance of your customers. By letting them know that they help you keep prices down by being a part of your marketing plan it's easier to ask for and receive quality referrals."

Strategy # 69 - "Your referrals grow the more you are published. Whether it's pamphlets, letters to the editor, articles or books, your writing can earn you the reputation of an expert in your field."

Strategy # 70 - "You may have clients who could co-author an article or news column. As you pursue joint publishing, your referrals increase dramatically because your co-author is also distributing the article with their friends and associates."

Strategy # 71 - "Know who your key referral sources are so that you focus the majority of your referral efforts where you get the majority of your results."

Strategy # 72 - "Participate in volunteer opportunities that match your interests or talents. Do it with a sincere heart, not a business head, and as you give back to your community, your circle of influence grows too."

Strategy # 73 - "Always have plenty of business or information request cards when you are at a networking event. As you get acquainted with new contacts, trade cards and note follow-up or personal information on the back of their card. Then be sure to follow-up!"

Strategy # 74 - "In addition to regular networking efforts, also network with reputable competitors. If your goal is to best serve your customer, then when either you or a competitor are overloaded, or it's not your expertise, both you and your customer will benefit from a referral and your competitor will reciprocate."

Strategy # 75 - "Consider doing 30 minutes a day of personal development in your field. This will help you become the expert in your field and give you an opportunity to communicate regularly with your customers by sending them articles or information specific to their needs."

Strategy # 76 - "Always have an interesting and informative 60 second commercial ready that extols the benefits of your amazing company. Pique the interest of your listeners and you will be remembered during referral opportunities."

Strategy # 77 - "Consider putting a positive twist on all you say. Even discussing your competitors product with a customer can have a few positive comments before you launch into how your product benefits will fit their needs better."

Strategy # 78 - "Be prompt in arriving to appointments or responding to phone or letter requests. Promptness shows you're professional and can be depended upon and those are the kind of people who receive referrals from customers."

Strategy # 79 - "If you provide quality referrals to your prospects and customers, they will be more inclined to provide referrals to you."

Strategy # 80 - "Get to know people of influence in your community. As your circle grows, so will your quality referrals."

Strategy # 81 - "Even if you don't need the business, prospect for new customers everyday. The stream of 'new blood' will keep your business going strong."

Strategy # 82 - "Update acquaintances from the past and you will find many valuable referrals and customers. Consider finding past acquaintances from school, jobs, neighborhoods, clubs, church, or sports."

Strategy # 83 - "Send out newsletters with creative and useful information and include a section on referrals and incentives. It's a simple process of informing and asking so that the referrals will role in."

Strategy # 84 - "When your business gets to a point that you can't work all of your referrals. Refer the ones you can't accommodate to someone who can. Rather than throwing them away you are passing on goodwill to all involved."

Strategy # 85 - "If you want to get regular referrals, you need to show common courtesy and provide feedback to the source of the referral. You will be surprised at the number of new referrals you can receive while providing feedback on a previous referral from your source."

Strategy # 86 - "It's important to admit a mistake to a customer and explain how you will fix the problem. If your customer gets action and not apathy to the problem, they will send more business your way."

Strategy # 87 - "If your business is in a temporary down turn, don't appear desperate or your customers will not have enough confidence to provide you with referrals."

Strategy # 88 - "Never make assumptions that the person you are talking to would not want or qualify for your product or service. Treat each person respectfully and with interest, and even if they don't need your product, they will know someone who does need your product."

Strategy # 89 - "If your product or service is related to food, clothing or healthcare, contact women's groups and offer to give a talk on an issue that is important to them. By talking to the right groups for your product or service, you'll stimulate more qualified referrals."

Strategy # 90 - "Consider getting involved in a seniors group and give a talk on a product topic of interest. Take the time to listen and discuss, and not only will you benefit from their insights, they'll give you referrals as well."

Strategy # 91 - "If you network in social or service clubs, plan on arriving early or leaving late. Then you will have the time to interact with the members of the club or you've wasted your membership dues and opportunities for referrals."

Strategy # 92 - "Use a referral fee as your last ditch strategy. Money has never bred loyalty. Friendship, trust and a positive relationship are what drive loyalty to you and your business."

Strategy # 93 - "Create a one-way cross-promotion in which you have someone send out a letter to their customer list promoting you and your business. You then give them a referral fee for those people who buy your service."

Strategy # 94 - "A powerful referral program is a two-way cross promotion using endorsements from other well-respected people. An associate sends an endorsement letter about you and your product to their customer list, and you do the same to your customer list."

Strategy # 95 - "Your business needs word of mouth advertising to obtain referrals, but don't mistake that with developing a methodical system for your business referral prospecting."

Strategy # 96 - "Customers that give referrals become more loyal to you and your business. Once someone makes a public statement about you, psychologically they will become more loyal to you and your business, so it's a 'win win' situation."

Strategy # 97 - "When asking for a referral, narrow the frame of reference for your customer to think about. Don't ask for a general name, get specific with the type of person or associate, and they will be better able to give you referrals."

Strategy # 98 - "Approach a complimentary business and educate them with special reports you have created that will be tools to help them help their customers. As they give out these reports, they are more inclined to pass on a referral to you as well."

Strategy # 99 - "Provide gifts to complimentary businesses that will teach them how to grow their business. These gifts are always welcome and they will know that you are interested in growing your business as well."

Strategy # 100 - "Take the time to clearly explain to acquaintances what you do. Share stories about results your customers have experienced with your products or services. Ask them if they know people who would benefit from having similar results or experiences."