

REFERME IQ™

Automated Referral Intelligence

**GETTING AND CONVERTING
REFERRALS IN “VIRTUAL WORLD”**

TOP 10 TIP GUIDE

Getting and Converting Referrals In “Virtual World” Your Top 10 Tip Guide

Let's face it - the marketing world has changed in a big way. Face to face referral opportunities have declined dramatically, there is more noise and content than ever competing for consumer attention, and emotions and fear are running hot. All of this has made an already difficult task of getting and converting referrals even harder. In many cases, people have just stopped asking (if they ever did in the first place). All of this has put the brakes on referrals and has negatively impacted revenue growth.

The good news? It is totally unnecessary. Here are 10 actions you can take now to get you back in the referral game, and increase referral activity and conversion, leading to revenue growth.

■ Step 1

Re-connect to your “why”

Having a strong “why” can provide the strength you need to stay persistent towards any worthy goal despite massive change and/or adversity. Here are some highly relevant “why” questions to answer for yourself:

- **Why does your business exist? What is your vision/mission?** Our mission is to help all of our clients achieve personal and economic freedom by building a high growth, referral - based business.
- **Why commit to client acquisition as a key focus?** We know that new client acquisition is the #1 differentiator with levels of production. Top producers simply acquire more clients per year.
- **Why a full swing at referrals as your #1 client acquisition strategy?** Well, 83% of consumers would refer if asked. It is also the #1 way consumers want to learn about a new product or service. For you, referrals are 400% more productive than any other lead source.

Tactic(s): Write down your answers to the questions above and review daily

■ Step 2

Have a marketing plan

During changing and trying times like these, having a plan can help you navigate better by defining the what, why and how. Doesn't need to be complicated or time consuming, but it can produce tremendous focus and energy towards your "why".

If you have one, why not revisit yours in light of the current environment and make some changes with the ideas in this guide?

Tactic(s): If you don't have one and need a jumping off point, download our free [Marketing Plan Template](#).



■ Step 3

Increase your touches with all layers of your relationships

Today, there are more reasons than ever for your clients and network to meet with you. This truly is the year of the "certainty of uncertainty". Risks abound everywhere – whether health, finances, business, family pressures and more. People are lonelier than ever and want connection and meaning. No matter what your value proposition is, people have more time to meet with you, and they have concerns you can help them with.

Tactic(s):

- Prioritize your highest value relationships.
- Write down your top 3 reasons why they should meet with you - a simple approach of a "check up" call can work well. Help them avoid mistakes and bad decisions during trying times, etc.
- Schedule as many 15 minute virtual meetings as you can – leave 30 minutes to allow time to extend.
- Find a digital system to fully automate this. [Here's one](#) that is perfectly designed for relationship nurturing.



■ Step 4

Optimize your virtual meetings

Your objectives are to discover needs that you can fulfill, add value no matter what, and to simply nurture the relationship. This will make you more referable and will lead to more business over time. Your agenda should be to ask questions, actively listen, empathize, then provide direction and help through your value proposition.

The challenge is to replace all the verbal and non-verbal cues that build trust and credibility face to face by being more purposeful in your virtual meetings.

Some key tips to make your virtual meetings most effective...

- Turn on your video – increases conversion significantly
- Pay attention to your environment. Tailor how you dress and what people see to the nature of your call and your audience
- Invest in a great microphone – can really change tone and clarity of your voice and messages
- Get closer to the camera to appear larger to increase your presence/impact
- Nod more and smile more to increase engagement and trust
- Slow speech, use pauses more and stay conscious of matching communication style
- Make eye contact with the camera
- Avoid distracting behaviors that take away from interaction such as tapping on your desk

Tactic(s): Record yourself in your virtual meetings and ask trusted advisors to provide feedback.

■ Step 5

Leverage technology - make it easier to ask for referrals in virtual meetings

If you are like most people, your virtual meetings may go like this. You plan to ask at the end, maybe you even practice what to say – then the demons enter your head and you find any reason not to ask. Sound familiar? There is a fun [short video on our website](#) you can check out that demonstrates what really goes on more often than not.

So, what can you do about that?

Tactic(s):

- **Don't wait until the end** – ask any time when you add maximum value - may be in middle or even the beginning of discussion.
 - **Keep it simple for you and them** – ask them if they may want to help others they care about and if you should be talking to them? (anything you say that focuses on them helping others by introducing them to you to learn more will work).
 - **Use technology to make it easy.** For example, with [our system](#) you can shoot them a quick referral form via email or text right then and there and tell them that you use a technology to make it super easy for your clients to refer others and make a difference in their lives. All they have to do is type in name and email address and you will take care of the rest. Our system will really take care of everything else for you (thank you notes, email/text from referrer to referral properly introducing you, Quiz to get referral interested, and more...)
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■ Step 6

Embrace the 5 key behaviors of referral success

No matter what system you use (if you have a system), you will only need to do 5 things to consistently generate and convert referrals to "ideal clients".

- 1. Ask for referrals in ways people prefer – consistently and over time**
- 2. Motivate them to refer**
- 3. Facilitate a proper recommendation**
- 4. Gain referral interest prior to contact**
- 5. Create an actionable path for referral to request contact**

The problem is, most don't do all or even some of these. Why? Simple human nature. We avoid pain and move towards pleasure. Because most people lack the skills and emotional competence to do those 5 things – this task can create awkwardness leading to anxiety leading to, well, you know. Because anxiety is higher than ever given the global pandemic (still going strong at the time of this writing) – for some, even thinking about asking for referrals can be paralyzing. This is true despite what we know - 83% would refer if asked, it is the #1 way consumers want to learn about you, 400% higher conversion for you, humans want to help other humans, your key to personal and economic freedom, etc. Doesn't matter – we are talking powerful emotions here so systematize it so it happens no matter how you feel in a given moment.

Tactic(s): Take the self – awareness quiz:

- Do you have a system that guarantees that these 5 behaviors will happen no matter how you feel in a given moment, no matter what your skill is? Y/ N
- Do you confidently ask for referrals with skill in your virtual meetings? Y/ N
- Do you actually believe you are highly referable, that you change lives for the better, and that you do others a disservice if you don't provide them the opportunity to impact another human? Y/ N

This can help assess where your roadblock(s) may be to referral success. Is it your belief system, skills, or lack of a system?

■ Step 7

Automate your referral system

Successful businesses of all types automate processes that are mission critical to the business – especially where there is dependency on human behavior that creates unpredictability. That is the foundation of the digital revolution that was accelerated with the Pandemic. The case for automating your referral process is beyond compelling.

- Referrals provide the highest value leverage driver of your business. It drives all 3 vital statistics of activity X conversion X sales size - at the same time!
- The behaviors needed to drive referrals and conversion are variable and dependent on human behavior – too much risk with so many lives/careers on the line – especially with today's additional challenges.
- The right automated referral system can do 80%+ of the heavy lifting for you – freeing up time for you to focus on delivering on your value proposition.

Tactic(s):

- Go check out all of the free knowledge that can help you build a referral - based business in the Resources and Tools sections you can find in our top navigation of our [website](#). We are passionate about helping you in any way we can.
- If you want to learn more about how an automated system can work for you, set up a 20 minute [live demo](#).



■ Step 8

Fish in the “Relationship Pond”

Most businesses spend too much money, waste too much time, and create too much complexity with too low conversion by fishing in the “stranger pond” vs. the “relationship pond”. I am not saying don't do it - doing “top of the funnel” type activities is important to brand awareness, test and learn, and can generate meaningful organic traffic to your business. I am talking email campaigns, social posts, paid media, etc. The issue is that so many businesses put disproportional focus and spend against that and miss the leverage of relationship marketing. Think of it this way. If you have 300 quality relationships that also have 300 quality relationships – that's 90,000 people just 1 introduction away! Why not focus on defining which ones represent your target clients and use use a system that facilitates a proper introduction to them? That will reduce your overall cost per client, improve ROI of your marketing spend, and free up lots of time to focus on your “genius”.

Tactic(s):

- Evaluate your marketing plan and tactics – evaluate your % time, money and resources you are putting against “stranger marketing” vs. leveraging relationships.
 - Work with your marketing professional to identify relationship marketing opportunities
 - Some high payoff “relationship” actions to consider:
 - a. Referrals and of course, ReferMe IQ™
 - b. LinkedIn mining services (we use WeConnect)
 - c. PR (Public Relations) – this can really create excitement and more credibility with your relationships and strangers.
 - d. Developing COI's and other referral partners
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■ Step 9

Leverage text/SMS for referrals

One of the emerging best practices in the referral game in light of the “digital revolution” is using text/SMS as a tool to generate referrals. With shorter attention spans and all the information noise out there, many people rely on it and other forms of “instant messaging” as their primary communication method. The reason it works so well for referrals is that it makes it so easy for your relationships to refer, works especially well in virtual meetings, and makes it easier to talk about. It is one of the top drivers of referrals in our ReferMe IQ system.

Tactics:

- Simply ask your relationships (email, phone, face to face) if it is OK (opt in requirement) if you send them texts from time to time with value added information. That opens the door for future texting.
- On virtual meetings, let them know that from time to time they will think of others they may want to introduce to you and that you make it super easy for them. Then ask them if you can send them a quick link via text that they can use to enter referral info and you will take care of the rest. Often, you can do that right on the virtual call and receive referrals into your system.
- Find an effective text/SMS platform that automates the process. Our [Pro+ solution](#) has it built in.



■ Step 10

Make sure you are referrable!

It is widely known that there are three primary drivers that influence how referrable you and your business may be. This is the "ante" into the referral game. Doesn't matter what system you use or how skilled you are at asking for referrals, if you are not referrable, you will face an uphill battle with this. Here are the 3 actions:

- a. **Consistent contact** – nothing shows you care more than staying in touch and checking in on your key relationships. The opposite is also true. This is not always easy when you have a lot of contacts to stay in touch with and with competing priorities.
- b. **Add value at every interaction** – this can come in many forms including asking great questions and actively listening, helping people clarify goals, providing relevant advice, connecting them to valuable resources, sharing helpful information or simply providing humor and entertainment in difficult times.
- c. **Demonstrate the 4 values of refer-ability** – according to entrepreneurial guru, Dan Sullivan:
 - Show up on time
 - Do what you say
 - Finish what you start
 - Say please and thank you

Tactic(s):

- Seek out and implement a system to increase contact with your relationships while adding value.
- Write down the values of refer-ability on a notecard or on your smart phone screensaver to stay conscious of them.
- Survey your relationships to ask them how you are doing with the above.

The bottom line: anyone can make significant progress stepping up their referral game by having some self-awareness, a plan and a system.

ReferMe IQ™ is passionate about helping organizations build high growth, referral-based businesses with their "state of the art" automated referral platform. Peter S. Velardi is an accomplished senior executive and entrepreneur who has impacted thousands of individuals and organizations to build a fast growing referral based business.
