



Jack's Tips to drive word of mouth business

Your contacts won't generally refer you business off their own bat just because you are good at your job. Yet many will be happy to refer you business if you ask them in the right way. Think carefully about how to motivate them.

People are not the same. Pay attention to behavioural styles and treat people how they would like to be treated, not necessarily how you would most like to be treated.

Don't go to meetings or other networking situations to sell. Go to meet people, and aim to come away having had one or two promising conversations, and with a handful of business cards in your pocket. It's then up to you to follow up after having made initial contact with these people.

The quality of your business network is not about how many people you know but about the quality of the relationships you develop. Focus on developing deeper relationships with a few people rather than superficial relationships with a lot of people.

A word of mouth or "referral" based approach to sales is very powerful, but does not come naturally for most. In fact, in the business world we are not taught to think this way at all.

Business growth is said to come from sales – and sales training focuses on "making a sale" with a prospect.

However, the real opportunity lies in your ability to build very effective and profitable relationships with key contacts who will identify and unlock sales opportunities for you.

Harnessing the power of your relationships to drive fast, sustainable growth.

Anyone who has been in business for any length of time knows that it is much easier to engage and convert a prospect who has been referred to you by one of your contacts, than it is to close a cold prospect.

Yet strangely, while many modern business people understand the value of word of mouth and business networks, few look to actively drive word of mouth in their sales efforts.



Indeed for most people, “referred business” means the occasional, passive, sale that comes in from a recommendation by an existing client or customer. They rely on doing a great job, and hope that word will get out, and the sales will come in.

They will. But if you do it this way, it will take a long time to build up a business by word of mouth.

Even some of the most talented business people are receiving far less referred business than they would expect given their skills, experience and reputation in the market place.

So where is everyone going wrong?

The first thing is that with word of mouth, human nature comes in to play. Generally speaking people only do something for someone else when they are motivated to do so. It makes perfect sense when you think about it. Your contacts will only refer you business where you have motivated them. The fact that you are good at your job will seldom be enough motivation for someone else to look for business for you!

The second point is that we are all different. That means **people have different motivations; and unless you can read these motivations quickly**, you won't succeed in getting people to help you.

Adopting an approach which harnesses the power of your relationships and actively drives word of mouth will deliver more, better quality appointments for less effort, and significantly shorten the sales cycle.

Some Hints and Tips for Networking:

- **Know your focus** - When attending an event, don't try to meet as many people as possible, trust isn't built from a stack of business cards.
- Have an adequate supply of **business cards** and make sure you get a business card from every person you meet - This will allow you to not only follow up but will help build your database.
- **Listen and ask questions** - You have two ears and one mouth so remember to use them proportionately, also don't assume that your target person already knows your business.



- **Give referrals** whenever possible - A good networker should believe "givers gain!" So because most successful businesses grow from referrals, be the person that does the referring \$ Remember the fastest way to get referrals is to give them.
- **Don't try and close any deals** - Networking should be used to develop relationships with other professionals and not an event to hit businesspeople to buy your products or services.
- **Write notes** on the backs of business cards you collect - This will help jog your memory when you make contact with them and will help in building rapport.
- **Follow Up** - If you've discussed catching up with someone, call within 3 days of the meeting that person. Otherwise, just write a brief hand written note (to keep it personable) saying it was great to meet them.
- **Keep promises** - If you've made a promise, keep it! No one likes to do business with an unreliable person.
- **Think differently** - Focus on just meeting people and not finding new customers because that's what everyone else is probably doing.