

# The Art of Getting a Business Referral

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**Every business needs a few influential people willing to speak glowingly about what you do and regularly send a business referral or two your way. Here's how to cultivate these gems so both parties get great value from the relationship.**

Sometimes known as 'centres of influence', once you have these people, you should bend over backwards to make sure they continue to think positively about you. But how do you find and connect with these people? Here's an Action Plan that will help make the business referral letters and recommendations move faster.

### **1. Let them know they are special**

Tell them they are a top client, and let them know about any special treatment or offers you think this entitles them to.

### **2. Keep them updated about your business**

If you want them to continue to refer ideal business to you then you need to let them know what a perfect client or opportunity looks like. If you take on a new direction or change your products and services, why not take them out for coffee and give them an update on what's happening?

### **3. Surprise them regularly**

Always give them a reason to love your business. Find ways to add value to their business at no or low cost. Send relevant articles or information. Identify web sites of interest. Send them some free product for no reason.

### **4. Expand their networks**

Arrange for them to meet others in your network or invite them to a workshop, seminar or function where they can make valuable new contacts themselves.

### **5. Design a 'Stay in Touch' system**

Once you've established the foundations with your 'centres of influence', you need to keep your ideas and value in front of them. How will you do that? A newsletter, personal mailings, telephone calls or in-person meetings?

### **6. Reward them for business referrals**

When they send you a lead to a new potential client, make sure you show your appreciation. A phone call, a handwritten note and even an appropriate gift lets them know you that you don't take their assistance for granted. Also, keep them in the loop with your progress with the lead they gave you.

If you don't think you have any centres of influence, try identifying a couple from your existing or former clients. I have worked with people who have developed relationships with just two or three individuals who have subsequently brought them hundreds of thousands in new business referrals. With a focused, intentional plan you could be doing the same.

***Megan Tough** runs Complete Potential, a company that helps businesses solve their strategy and people problems. She loves being a solopreneur, and when she doesn't have her nose to the grindstone, is fulfilling her other passion of fitness and health.*