

Repair Shop Referral Blueprint



STRATEGIES FOR ADDING 10 REFERRALS PER MONTH

REASONS FOR UNTAPPED REFERRALS

1. Taken for Granted-based on the assumption that “because we do a good job”, we’ll get referrals. We often assume that people will refer us because they rave about what a great job we do or how honest we are. In most cases they won’t without us nudging or helping them too.
2. False Satisfaction-rarely enough referrals. Reason for that is they (our customer) take a risk asking for them, because if the person the referred didn’t have a good experience, we’ll hear about it. They fear that if their brother-in-law comes and isn’t treated right they may hear about it for the rest of their lives. We have to assure them they will be taken care of.
3. Fear that you/your shop can’t handle any more business- i.e. nobody goes to that restaurant anymore because it’s always too busy. They don’t want it to affect the level of service they have gotten used too. You must let them know that you can handle the additional business. Let them know that you are not always busy like they see when they come in that day.
4. Out of Sight, Out of Mind- they aren’t thinking about you at the right time. You must frequently remind them, help them to keep front of mind consciousness. When business is great we can afford to let a few opportunities slip by, but it’s not that way anymore!

CREATING A REFERRAL CULTURE

It is important that you create a culture within your shop to be able to secure referrals on a regular basis this is especially important that your employees understand that this is an important part of your shop. One of the best ways they can affect getting a referral is through GREAT customer service. They need to understand that these are the best customers that you can have.

It is also important that your customers/clients are aware that you want and encourage referrals for your shop. In many ways this can be done very subtly. As you will see we will give you ideas to make sure this is the case.

Repair Shop Customer Referral Blueprint

\$\$ Strategies to Add 10 referrals a month to your repair shop \$\$

The first thing to understand it is best if you can use all of the strategies, having as many in place as possible is ideal, if not use as many as possible. Using just a couple of these helped me to gain 32 new customers via referral in one month! I always had a steady stream averaging more than 10 per month.

1. Employees & customers understand what is supposed to happen.
They need to see evidence that people are referring. Acknowledge and reward those customers/clients who are referring. Make employees aware of what you expect from them. How many referrals per month, per day that you want the shop to realize. Recognize and reward employees also for referrals. Make the company responsible for referrals (set goals each month for how many you want). Give them ways to help get them, post the goals and monitor the progress. Do you have signs in your shop?
2. Customer newsletters work best when they're done RIGHT.
Newsletters are great for acknowledging customers when they refer. You can use it to recognize them as the Client of the Month. This is a great way to train them to refer to you without them realizing that you are doing so. People love to see their name in print. Many people will even ask what they need to do to be client of the month.

3. Communicate frequently and consistently.

Do so with subtle reminders about referring. Don't worry about over communicating, use different media. If you are not always just selling them something once a week is acceptable. Remember there is a lot of competition for their attention.

4. Give them Pass along Resources.

A pass along is something your clients is likely to pass on to someone that they would refer. Your customer may be a great source for referrals but they usually are not skilled enough to be your sales force. You need to equip them with tools such as specific (different than your normal cards) business cards a flyer or well-done tri-fold. It is good for it to have the customer's name that is referring them so that you can recognize that person and so that you know where the referral came from. Example: We have a client that give his customers a poker chip with his info on one side and a discount for the person they give it too when they bring it in.

5. Conversational basis for referrals.

Find a way to fit it into the conversation. **Some owners won't do it because they think it makes them seem needy.** Some are not comfortable talking about it (talking to bill collectors is not comfortable either). You should have scripted material for that conversation so that you can practice it and get comfortable, it should not sound scripted. Tie it into your promotions; tie it into something relevant that also ties into your shop, like a recent news story or something that is 'water cooler' conversation. Diagnose when is the right time to seek referrals, it should be part of your follow-up system.

6. Lead Generation Type.

If you sense that they would not be comfortable talking to their friends or relatives collect the names from them and you follow-up with the referral. Don't leave it up to them. Let them know what you will do (send them something for free, send a letter, email, make a phone call, etc.). Put goals in place for your salesperson (customer service rep or service writer) to collect a certain amount of referral information each month. Post it for them and track

it. Set goals for referrals even for yourself, it helps keep front of mind consciousness for everyone.

This is a favorite of mine!

7 & 8. Have an “In the Shop Event: Have a “Social Event”

Create an event for your shop especially for your clients to attend and bring people with them: Example.-Wine Tasting, Customer Appreciation Day, Shop Anniversary, etc. You can combine this with a sales event as long as other things are going on: Free giveaways, drawings, caricature drawings, etc. You may have a factory representative (expert) there, give away food, even have a celebrity on site.

Encourage people to bring a friend; include “and guest” or “bring a friend” on the invite. **Be sure to make it a “WOW” experience.**

Just the exposure of doing something “different” and “special” will generate more business, it will provide exposure for the shop. Try to make the event as festive as possible such as a tent with vendors, factory reps, food, balloons and giveaways. It can be strictly social, a common example is in martial arts they will have a bowling night, putt-putt golf night that they host with no pitch given, just used to create interest in your their business.

****Be sure to collect information from people attending & use for follow-up****

Offer something free to all guests.

Some owners have a customer appreciation event as often as quarterly.

9. Incentive Based Campaign & Rewards.

This is the first thing many owners do, create an ongoing Rewards Program. You can offer clients several choices of gifts every time they refer or maybe accumulate points towards a bigger gift. Another idea is that everyone who refers has their name put in for a drawing each month/quarter for a large giveaway. One repair shop used a gas grill for this and displayed it for the entire month before the drawing-- this was highly successful. Do this in conjunction with other strategies. **Important** --- *The reward works best if it is not something that you offer. People have a tendency to place more value on it if it comes from outside your shop.*

10. Recognition and Rewards.

Recognition is more important for some people than a reward. When recognized, most people will then become your advocate to prompt other to refer. This is especially true of affluent clients, they would more often rather be recognized than rewarded. They can easily buy what you are giving as a prize but they thrive on the recognition. People don't usually get recognition, especially at their job, if they refer people at work and those people see their name/picture mentioned in your newsletter it can be a big deal for them. Post a "client of the month" in your waiting area with their name and picture, this works for everyone, no demographic is immune. Be sure to make a big deal with the person when they give their first referral. Be sure you always thank the person who refers. In a lot of cases a simple handwritten thank you card will work.

Keep in mind; referring can become very viral because we know that...

****The person most likely to refer is the person who was referred by someone else ****

Something else to keep in mind is if you have great customers/clients they have a tendency to refer great people. People generally associate with people like themselves. Harley owners hang with other Harley owners; golfers hang with other golfers, affluent people associate with other affluent people.

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