

Ep #207: What Referral-Proofing Looks Like



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Stacey Brown Randall

***Roadmap to Grow Your Business* with Stacey Brown Randall**

Ep #207: What Referral-Proofing Looks Like

Stacey Brown Randall: Referral-proofing your business is a little bit like weatherproofing your home. You know, keep the bad stuff out, the good stuff in, but ultimately, it's all about protection.

You are not just another hustling salesperson. You are the expert, the resource, the valuable partner for your clients, and how you grow your business should reflect how your clients see you.

Welcome to the Roadmap to Grow Your Business podcast. We generate referrals without asking, build positive client experiences, and help you take control of your business.

Here's your charmingly sarcastic host, Stacey Brown Randall.

Stacey Brown Randall: Hey there. And welcome to episode 207 of the Roadmap To Grow Your Business Podcast. I'm your host, Stacey Brown Randall. Our quick shout out today goes out to my friend and BRB member Lindsay, who is an attorney. And I just want to share with you her amazing quarter one results. She received 31 referrals in the first quarter of this year and cultivated five new brand new referral sources. That's five new people that will continue to refer her in the future. She is doing an amazing job, truly putting the strategies in place to build a referable business. Congratulations, Lindsay. Here's something we have coming up on the podcast that I want to put on your radar now. So every summer I develop a summer series and we've had different topics over the summer. And in the past, these have been really short. And then last year I kind of went like all in and did a really long summer series topic.

And if you remember last year in 2021, the summer series topic was the client experience and making your client experience referable. And so we're going to do another summer series

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topic this year, but I thought before I mapped everything out and since we batch produced this podcast, which means I record multiple episodes at one time in advance, of course that's when I'm being really good at it. I'm not always perfect at that. But as I'm thinking through mapping out what this business development summer series is going to be about, that's right. That's our topic for this coming summer is business development. You know, it's like everybody's favorite topic in the world. No, actually your favorite topic is referrals like mine, but business development is a close second, I know. That's going to be our topic for this summer and we're going to talk about your messaging and we're going to talk about the sources of where your clients come from, pipeline closing, buyer's journey, like all the things, right?

But I was thinking through, as I'm building out this summer series for you guys, I was really thinking through, okay, but what am I missing? So if there's something you would love for me to tackle, whether that's something I will tackle myself, or maybe I will bring on a business development expert to help me with, let me know what you would love to know about if I'm doing a series on business development? What are your burning questions? What are the burning topics you want to hear about? I am planning on including something on social selling. So we definitely have a bunch of ideas percolating as we're building this out. And I would love to make sure that whatever it is you were dying to know about when it comes to business development, that I can help you with, that you go ahead and let me know. Just if you get emails from me, that means you're on my email list, hit reply on any of those emails and shoot me your questions or your thoughts on what you would love to see as a part of our business development series.

And of course, if you're on any of the social media channels and we're connected, shoot me a private message and just

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slide into my DMS as the kids say, and just shoot me a message and let me know, what else can I include for you on a business development series? Because we're going to do a number of episodes. Probably won't be as long as last summers', but this will definitely take us through July and probably most of August as well. So definitely hit me up. Let me know what do you want included in our business development summer series?

Okay. Let's dive into today's episode. When I think of referral proofing, I think of two very impactful and clear client stories that show you what referral proofing is really all about. Now, the truth is I could give you a laundry list of the success that my clients have in working with me and going through my programs when they do the work and then continue to execute on the work. Learning it is not enough. You then actually got to put what you learn, what I teach you into practice. So what I think about, I mean, there's so many that I could tell you. Like, I just did, at the beginning of this episode, the shout out was for Lindsay, our attorney friend, who's got 31 referrals in one quarter, that's incredible. Three months, 31 referrals. That's incredible. But when I think about referral proofing, which is the topic of today's episode, there are two stories that like jump out to me like two case studies, I guess I should say, that jump out to me of like, no, this is what we mean when we talk about referral proofing.

Yes, I love it that Lindsay and others have great success this quarter, next quarter, they have great success in a year. They have great success in two years. But when we talk about referral proofing your business, two clients come to mind with their stories.

And I want to tell them to you quickly, and then I'm going to break down what you need to know, like the two things you've

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got to do to referral proof your business. And I want you to do it now. Don't waste any more time. All right. But let me tell you what I think about when I think about referral proofing, I think about Katherine Taylor. She's an attorney, you've probably heard her on the podcast because she's been on a few times over the, I don't know how many years we've been doing this now four years, is that right? Over the four years, the 200 plus episodes we've done, she has been a guest on this podcast before a few times. So you've heard her journey. And if you go back and listen to some of her earlier interviews, you've heard her earlier journey and now I want to kind of give you an update on her current journey.

When I think about a business owner who was smart enough to recognize they wanted to do something with referrals in their business and to truly referral proof their business, I think if Katherine. Before Katherine started working with me, she would average about 12 referrals a year. That's not shabby, right? I mean, some of you aren't even getting any, so like 12 is not shabby at all, which is awesome, but she wanted more because she's smart, super smart lady. She wanted more and she knew she was capable of more, which is usually where people find themselves when they come to work with me. And in her first year we got her 40 referrals. That's right, we took her from 12 on average to 40 her very first year by being intentional about her referral strategy. But Katherine's really smart and really committed because she kept it going. And in her second year she got 60 referrals and in her third year, 72 referrals and in her fourth year 60 referrals.

Now you may be thinking, oh, that's a drop. Yes, it was also the year of COVID and she maintained 60. Yes, she didn't get to 70 again, but she maintained 60. And then last year, 2021 82 referrals. Think about that. That's over 300 referrals, I think if I just did that math right in my head, I probably should have

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actually added those numbers together. Maybe it's not over 300 referrals, but it's a lot, right? When you think about the referrals that she has brought in and what she has accomplished and what this ultimately looked like, yes, it is 314. If you're wondering, I totally just put out my phone and did the calculation, because that was going to bother me. And I'd be thinking about this for days if I put out the wrong math, but that's over 300 referrals that she was able to get through following my processes.

That's what I mean when I say referral proofing. It's like waking up on January 1st and being like, yeah, I know my average of referrals I'm going to get this year based on the strategies that I put in place that I've learned from Stacey. And so she did 40 to 60 to 72 to 82. It's pretty darn impressive when you think about that, that's referral proofing your business. Or I think about a Janelle, an interior designer who received a \$620,000 referral. You probably heard me talking me about this on social media a while back. \$620,000 referral that she received as an interior designer, but it took 18 months in the making of her being consistent with one of the strategies that I teach. It's the one how we identify new potential referral sources. I teach it in my program, referring machines. It took 18 months before she got it, but she was consistent. Another smart lady consistent and stuck with it and got that more than half a million dollar referral, even though she was willing to work the process for 18 months to get there.

That's referral proofing your business. Those are the two stories. Those are the two examples that I think about the two clients that my mind instantly goes to when I think about people who made the commitment to referral proof their business, because it wasn't just, hey, I'm going to have a great quarter and we'll see how it goes or I'm going to do this one hit wonder and see how it goes. I'll try this tactic for this year, right? It

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wasn't all of that necessarily. It was, I'm going to be committed and I'm going to do this and I'm going to work the process and both rewarded handsomely for it because they wanted to referral proof their business.

Now to me, referral proofing is like weatherproofing. Referral proofing your business is really a lot like weatherproofing your home. You know what I mean when I say weatherproofing, right? I'm talking about you put like the stuff on your door so that there's no air gaps, no air can get in or the cold air can get out or the hot air can get out depending on the season and none of the bad stuff can get in. It's like weatherproofing your home is about keeping the bad stuff out and keeping the good stuff in. But it's ultimately about protecting your home. Well, referral proofing is the exact same thing. Referral proofing is all about protecting your business.

Now, the last time I wanted to bring this up, because the last time I talked about referral proofing your business was years ago. Well, the last time I talked about referral proofing your business on the podcast is what I mean, was actually October of 2019. Can you imagine back then? Do we remember back then? The truth is that there was actually an impending recession and I'm using air quotes that you guys can't see. Actually funny, kind of a little bit like now, right? We're almost in the middle of 2022 and they're talking about the same thing. There's potentially another recession coming, that yield curve it's doing its thing where it likes to bring on recession. So we'll see. And that's not why I'm doing this episode. I actually thought this was just a topic that needed to be addressed. And that's why it was actually on the agenda at the beginning of this year.

But I thought back to the last time I talked about referral proofing your business. And I did it because it was an episode

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that was coming out in October of 2019, it's actually episode 68, if you want to go back and listen to it, but there was an impending recession coming. And instead of an impending recession, of course, you know what we all got, we got a global pandemic, right? So the episode still mattered because it was doing the things then that would help you protect your business in the future, whether that was a recession coming or what ultimately ended up happening being the global pandemic that we are still living in. And so I wanted to bring this topic back, but I wanted to break it down and make it even easier for you, and even more crystal clear for you to do two things for me friends, two things when it comes to referrals in your business to referral proof your business for the future, okay?

Now here's the thing, I recognize that for most of you, referrals may not be the only sales strategy or the only business development tactic that you have in your arsenal. It's not mine. There are other ways that I bring in clients. So I recognize that referrals may not be the only way you bring in clients, but it could absolutely be your strongest way, your biggest way, right? The where you have the highest closing ratio of how you bring prospects in to become paying clients within your business. So referral proofing, your business is important. It needs to be important for you. If you haven't ever thought about it that way, I want you to shift your thinking and start thinking about, hey, you know what? I need to referral proof my business. Now, yes. Is there lots of things that you can do to referral proof your business?

I mean, yes, inside building a referral business, I teach 18 strategies. Obviously not all at one time and people go at their pace and in the order they need to go in based on where they are in life and where they are in business. But it ultimately comes down or it starts with two main things that I want you thinking about to referral proof your business for the rest of this

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year and the future of your business as well. Okay, so number one, the number one thing I want you to do to referral proof your business is I need you to understand what's real with referrals in your business right now. Your referral reality, your referral data. What does it say to you? Do you even know what it is? Do you even know where to find it? Those are kind of important questions too, but I need you to understand like what's real with referrals in your business?

I don't mean the anecdotal evidence of the story you tell yourself, because you got one good referral recently, and then you're like projecting that on the fact that you've gotten lots of good referrals this year, because you think it, I want you to know it. What is your referral reality? What are the facts? What is the data? What is real when it comes to referrals in your business? Just being aware of what referrals looks like for your business can change the trajectory of decisions you make and actions you take. So you got to have the data to know it. Do not make decisions on referrals in your business because you think things are good enough or you're pretty sure you're getting a bunch of referrals. I mean, if you want to come back to me and be like, Stacey, I got it my referral reality is solid. I want it to be because you can give me the data behind it. And then we'll cheer lead with you and be like, "Heck yeah, go, go on with your bad self. I'm so proud of you."

But I only want you to be able to tell me, I got this referral thing figured out if you know you have it figured out. So the things to consider in that are like, well, what's the average number of referrals you receive? And an average means that you're actually able to combine multiple years together to get to an average. I mean, that's like sixth grade math I believe, I'm thinking that's what my daughter's been learning this year in sixth grade. Maybe it's seventh grade. Figuring out the average

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means that you actually have benchmarked data, which means you actually have hard cold numbers.

It means how many referrals did you get in 2021? How many referrals did you get in 2020? How many referrals did you get in 2019? Whatever you want to average it out by two years, you want to average it out by three years, four years, whatever it is. I usually want you to go back three years. But if you started your business last year, then I want you to use last year as your average. Now at the time of this recording and the time that this episode goes live, it's like smack dab in the middle, almost not really kind of close to the middle of 2022. Can you count those numbers too? Yes, but it's a half a year. Let's keep that in mind, right? Or it's five months. It's not a full six months. So just keep that in mind. It's not a full year, but how many referrals are you receiving every year? The hard, cold number, not a range and then what's your average number of referrals received.

And then I want you to be able to tell me is it consistent from year to year. Do you get 20 referrals every year? Or do you get 30 to 32 referrals every year, because that's your average, right? Like I want you to know this stuff. But if you got like 15 referrals one year and then three referrals the next year and seven referrals the year after that, whereas that's still going to give you an average, I want you to pay attention to like what the heck happened to where you went from 15 to three and then kind of get back up to seven. Because I know by looking at that data, you'll be like, oh my best referral source moved away. Or three people who referred me in that first year, I guess they were doing it because I was a newbie business owner and they felt bad for me and wanted to see me be successful, but they weren't doing it after year two and year three or whatever the reason is looking back at your data, reveals all this to you.

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And then here's the thing I want you to ask yourself, whatever your data reveals, whatever your referral reality is, whatever the facts are in your business of what your number of referrals you receive every year and your consistency or lack of consistency from year to year in your numbers and your average received, are you okay with it? Are you good with it? Is it enough? If it's enough, good, great. If it's not, well, my friend, we need to talk because if it's not enough and you want more or you want more of a system and a process behind making sure those referrals show up the way we want them to, then you're going to have to take some different action and you're going to have to do some things differently. And of course I would love to chat with you about that if you're interested, but you need to be able to answer the question, are you okay? Are you good with what you got? And if you're not, well, then you probably need to listen to point number two.

The second thing I need you to do to referral proof your business is I need you to have at least one strategy that is generating referrals for your business in place. And not only do I need it built and in place, I need it consistently executed on. And consistently doesn't mean a time like every day, every week or every month, it just means like whatever the process, the plan, the strategy that you put in place, that whenever that strategy calls for you to do something, you are doing it. That's what I mean when I say consistently executed on. Like when people are in my growth by referrals program and they're generating more referrals from their existing, their current referral sources, we talk like you're doing something like four or five, six, seven, times in a year, you're not doing something every single month. It's not 12 times. You may only be doing something five or six or seven times. So it's not about like doing it consistently, because that means you're doing it right daily, weekly or monthly, it's like when the plan says time to do it, but your execution is real.

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There's nothing that makes me go, oh no, is when I have somebody who's going through one of my programs and they've built this fabulous plan. And they execute on that very first touch point, which everybody does the same thing is called the kickoff guard. And they execute on that very first touch point. And then they execute on the second and then life gets in the way and maybe they miss the third or the fourth. And then they're like, "Oh, it's not working the way I wanted it to." I'm like, "Yeah, because you fell off the horse and you weren't consistent." You have to be consistent.

Now I mentioned earlier, there are like 18 strategies that I teach inside building a referral business, but there are three foundational ones. And for you right now to referral proof your business for the future, I need you to pick one of them and do it. And those three strategies are one, you need your client experience to be referable. You need to make sure you have the things in place that make your clients want to refer you and then tactics and strategies or processes in place where you're doing things or saying things to be able to generate referrals from your client experience. So you need a referral client experience. That's one strategy. Another one is you need to tackle your low hanging fruit. And that is those people who've referred you in the past, if you have referrals over the last couple of years, that means you have humans who have referred you, referral sources. You need to know who they are and you need to be taking care of them. Those are your existing referral sources and you need a referral plan in place to take care of those existing referral sources.

Now I'm going to come back next week and I'm going to tell you some of the things I think people do wrong, particularly my rookies, my beginners, what they do wrong when they're thinking about how we take care, right of people who've referred us in the past. I'm going to tell you some things they do

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wrong. But I just need you knowing that another strategy to consider is what you do for your existing referral sources. It happens to be what we teach in my growth by referrals or GBR program, but it's the existing referral sources, the identification of them, and then the taking care of them.

And the third strategy you could implement, again, I need you to pick one of these three. You don't do all three of them at one time. I don't even let anybody in BRB building a referral business, do all three at one time. We like do it and then we execute it on a month or two, before we then go implement the next strategy so that we know it's in place. But the third option for you to pick is potential referral sources. If you don't have enough people referring you, particularly if you're in your first two years of business, and you have less than five people like maybe you have like two or three, maybe four people referring you, you really ultimately are going to need more referral sources before anything is going to start happening.

So if you need more referral sources, you need to know how to cultivate people who've never referred you, into wanting to give you a referral. And that is of course what we call our potential referral source strategy. And that's the one we teach in our how to turn clients and contacts into referring machines. We call it referring machines for short, but that's what we teach in that program. Again guys, these are three of the 18 strategies, but these are three of the foundational strategies. The other ones are a lot of times like tools in your toolbox. It's like in this situation, use this script, right? Or when you find yourself dealing with this, this is how you want to handle it. They're much more situational or next level. Where everybody starts though, is in one of these three foundational strategies. I just, I need you to pick one and get it in place.

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And that doesn't mean you have to join one of my paid programs to get this in place. There are resources on this podcast where I've broken down parts of what these three strategies look like. I mean, we had a whole series last summer on the referable client experience, right? My book, *Generating Business Referrals Without Asking*, it tackles the strategy we teach in growth by referrals, which is the, what you do to get more referrals from your existing referral sources. And there's articles on my website that tackle the potential referral source piece. So there's resources out there for you. Of course, if you want to work with me, come on in, I want to have you too. But at the end of the day, I just need you to know number one, your data, your referral reality. What's real when it comes to referrals and two, I need you to pick one strategy, a strategy and I need you to put it in place and then I need you to consistently execute on it.

Now I'll link of course, to all the things that I've mentioned in this episode. So we'll link to our previous past episode on this episode 68, the one that we released back in October of 2019. We're talking about referral, proofing your business. You can go back and listen to how similar or different these two episodes are. And I'll also link right to some of those resources that we've been talking about, including some of my programs as well if you're interested, and we'll do all that on the show notes page for this episode, staceybrownrandall.com/207, that's episode 207, and Stacey of course has an E. But truly what I want you to take away from this is like, I got two things to do. I need to do it and then maybe I can even email Stacey as my accountability partner and tell her I've done it.

Know your referral reality, understand what's real in your business, number one and number two, pick a strategy and put it into place. Do that now. Make it something you focus on before quarter two has ended. And of course I always love it

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when you guys share your thoughts in our referrals without asking Facebook group. So please make sure to join us in there, just search on Facebook referrals without asking, the group will pop up. We have almost 2400 business owners in there wanting to learn how to generate referrals naturally without manipulation, incentivizing or of course even asking.

And coming up next week, we have episode 208. And like I mentioned earlier, we're going to be talking about some common mistakes that I see referral ninja beginners, my newbies, my rookies, my beginners, the common mistakes I see them make. But until then referral proof your business. And the other thing I always say, take control and grow your business and bye for now.

Thanks for listening to the Roadmap to Grow Your Business podcast. To access all resources and links mentioned in today's show, and to connect with Stacey, head over to www.staceybrownrandall.com.