

Ep #257: Do This, Not That For Referrals

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to
REFERRALS



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Stacey Brown Randall

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Stacey Brown Randall: I'll admit it, I can get a little fired up when it comes to the really bad tactics and strategies that other people teach on how to generate referrals. And for this episode, I'm going to break down a few of them.

Hey there, and welcome to episode 257 of the Roadmap to Referrals Podcast, a show about helping you build a referable business. I'm your host, Stacey Brown Randall.

Alright, if you saw the title of this episode, you know that this is a do-this, not-that episode. So, let's have a little fun, shall we?

These are real world examples — oh yeah, cringeworthy stuff. But these are real world examples, mostly pulled from the stuff either that I receive or the stuff that my clients receive and then send me so we can have a nice little chuckle together, because of course, they know a better way.

But here's the thing; once you know a better way, you really can't help but see the ridiculousness in these tactics. So, let's dig in, you're ready? Here comes number one of do-this, not-that. Let's start with the don't, the not-that. Let's start with the don't.

Don't email blast everyone you know or anyone asking for referrals. Alright, let me break this down for you before I give the do-this instead. So, here's the don't: don't email blast anyone asking for referrals.

So, here's the email that arrived, the subject line said, "Referrals are always welcomed and appreciated."

Well, my first response to that is, of course, they are. They're the best and easiest way to grow your business. It's kind of like captain obvious, stating the obvious, captain obvious, thank you so much. But it gets worse.

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The next thing said, and you're going to be able to tell what industry this is from, and this is prevalent in this industry, oh my gosh, more so than others, but it's out there in all.

“Do you know someone looking for a home? If you have any friends or family who are looking for a home, I'd appreciate the referral. I'll shop multiple lenders to find a tailored solution for their needs, and I can get them to the closing table and into their dream home faster.” Dah-dah-dah-dah, more information, more information.

Here's the thing; yeah, this is really prevalent in the real estate industry. And while this happens to be done by a mortgage broker, it could have very well been a real estate agent or a multitude of other business owners in other industries, because this is not the first time. I have seen this.

I have seen this in the travel industry by having a travel company blast out, “Hey, we love your referrals,” is their subject line and then that's the message within the email.

So, here's the thing, that was the subject line of the context of the email. I know what folks are trying to accomplish. I do, I really get it.

And I know what everyone who does this or tries this is trying to accomplish, is really mix a shortcut solution, though it's not a solution. Let me just focus, alright.

So, what people are trying to do is they're trying to mix or pair together a shortcut solution with what they believe to be the directest approach to what they want.

So, they're just using email, which is the shortcut, it's extremely also impersonal, and they're mixing email with the directest approach they know to try to get what they ultimately want in this case is referrals. So, they're making an ask for referrals via the easiest way possible with, let's be honest, zero personality in an email.

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Now, here's the thing; you may be thinking to yourself, "Oh yeah, I get those from time to time and I read them," great, I read the emails that come into my inbox too. But do you do anything with them?

Will you actually remember not maybe today, but in four days or three weeks from now or two months from now, when you're actually talking to someone who, in this case, needs a mortgage broker, needs a loan officer to help them get a new loan. Will you think about this person and the email they sent you four weeks ago?

I won't, you know who I'll think about? I'll think about the people that I know that are mortgage brokers, that are loan officers, and I'll refer to them because those are the people that I have a relationship with, and they are occupying space in my mind. This is about your ability to be recalled when the opportunity presents itself. That is really what referrals are all about.

Are you going to be recalled? Are you going to be remembered? Are you going to be the one that comes top of mind when your referral source is having a conversation with your ideal prospect? And are they going to think of you or somebody else? Sending an email like this is not going to do it.

Now, could it maybe shake the trees a little bit? And on the day that you send it, you get a few people who respond back, "Great, thanks for reminding me?" That is empty hollow feedback. It isn't actually doing anything to produce referrals.

Now, could your email hit on the exact day that somebody knows a friend who is looking for a loan in this case? Of course, and it may actually produce a brand-new client for you through referral, but the odds, my friend, are not in your favor, they're just not.

And I know that sounds terrible because let's be honest, I don't know, like it's not just business owners, it's like everyone. I mean, I see it in a lot of situations, personal and professional. It's like we're just part of this shortcut nation. We're like, "What's the fastest, easiest way to get to what I need?" I get it.

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I made this comment on a podcast that I was on recently, and we were talking about the shortcut nation. I was like, “Yeah, I do it with exercise.” I'm like, “Can't it just be like some like thing a hook up to me that'll just magically make me be in shape and — can I just take some magic pill? It'll just magically melt the fat away and here comes all the muscles.”

I know we all do it but thinking that a strategy like this blasting out to your entire database or to your entire network that referrals are welcomed and appreciated, isn't going to produce the results you want. And in fact, what it is going to do, which is unfortunate, is it's going to actually just become more noise in everyone's inbox.

I know we want the fastest, simplest, directest way to get to what our ultimate objective is, in this case, referrals. And I know the strategies and tactics that have been taught for decades and decades and decades (all the ones that I teach against) make it seem like that's the easiest straight-lined, get there as fast as you can, just ask, just offer to compensate.

I get that that's some of those strategies that you're taught. But that doesn't mean they actually work because they don't, and you know they don't. Because when you receive emails like that, how do you respond?

Now, maybe you do get an email from someone that you really know and care about and you see that, and you respond back, and then maybe you do kind of keep them top of mind for 24 or 48 hours. But the majority of people don't because we're just so busy doing our own things, worrying about our own lives.

And that doesn't mean we're bad people, it means we're people. Sending an email like this, making a direct ask is impersonal and referrals are personal. Let me say that again: sending a direct ask for referrals via email, like this example, is highly impersonal, but referrals above all else are personal.

When I refer someone to you, I'm putting my reputation on the line, and so the relationship I have with you is kind of important. And the other thing

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with this noise in the inbox coming from this email blast you just sent out, it won't be remembered. And that's going to impact the memory runway of what we do lasts for a certain amount of time.

It's why when I teach people to create a strategy to get more referrals from their existing referral sources, it's the strategy I teach in my Growth by Referrals Program. We teach a four-part framework based on science of what you want your outreach, your touchpoints to your referral sources to be. And one of that four pieces of that framework is this thing called memory runway.

And so, things that you do at the top of the runway are just remembered longer and have greater impact than the things you do at the bottom of the runway. Which means the more you do at the middle to the top of the runway, you get to do less of which is fabulous when you're busy and still produce results.

You know what's at the very, very, very dead bottom of that memory runway? You guessed it, email. I almost never let a client create a strategy to do outreach to their existing referral sources through their touchpoints that's going to contain emails, never going to happen. And if they do do it, they're probably going against what I told them to do.

So, what should you do instead? If you are at a place where you are willing to hit send on an email like this, blasting out your request, you ask for referrals, then more than likely you're out of place and of mind where you're just looking to take some action.

Now, what I'm going to tell you to do instead, will not feel like you're taking as fast of action as a blast email, but that blast email didn't work, so what does it matter that you took fast action? What should you do instead? Write thank you notes.

Yes, there are specific ways that I teach people to write thank you notes when they receive referrals. But in this case, what I'm telling you to do is resist the urge to blast out to your entire database that you're open to

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referrals and maybe pick 5, 10, 20 people a week and just write a thank you note that you appreciate them being a part of your network.

You appreciate them being a part of your business journey, you just appreciate them being a part of your world. And don't say anything else in the card, just thank them for being a part of your world. Maybe you send five a day, maybe you send five a week and you just do one a day. It doesn't matter to me.

But resist the urge to mask blast out everybody to become more noise in their inbox and be annoying and do something that's actually going to have impact that will be highly personal. And that my friend, is writing a thank you note. Be remembered, that's our first do-this, not-that.

Hey, pardon the interruption. When it's time to double, triple, or quadruple your referrals, you need to join us inside the Building a Referable Business Coaching Program, BRB, it's just waiting on you. Go to staceybrownrandall.com/referable to learn about how I can work with you, come alongside you to help you create the referability in your business that you are craving.

You can learn more about everything we provide inside BRB, understand exactly how I am able to support you, which in that support, my favorite thing to do is to remove your roadblocks, which means answering questions when you don't know what to do and helping you overcome indecision, those will kill your motivation.

And in BRB, because I'm with you in a Q&A every week answering questions, we get to overcome those and blast through those roadblocks pretty darn fast.

So, the first thing you need to do if you're interested in joining Building a Referral Business Coaching Program, is you got to submit your application. The link again to learn more about BRB and submit your application is staceybrownrandall.com/referable.

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We're back with do-this, not-that number two. So, this one is a lot like the first one, but what you're going to do instead is different, so that's why I've separated these out.

So, the second don't that I want you to consider, that I want you to understand of what this will ultimately look like for you, is don't directly ask somebody for referrals in person.

Don't say at the end of a coffee meeting, "Oh, by the way, if you come across anyone you know that would be perfect for me, could you please refer them to me?" Don't do that, don't, stop it. Just don't let those words roll out of your mouth. Push them back in and push them down, and just expel them from your system because it's not doing you any good.

All it's doing in that moment is making the situation awkward and uncomfortable and the person all of a sudden think, "Great, now I've got homework to do because I got to think of somebody." Or you're making them feel awkward and they're like, "Oh yeah, let me think about some folks and I'll get back to you," and they never do. You know it, I know it, we all know it.

So, if you're not supposed to directly ask in person for referrals ever, actually you're never supposed to ask. First one, wasn't don't do it in email, now I'm telling you not to do it in person. What can you do in person? What can you do and what should you be doing from a referral perspective when you're in person with folks?

Okay, you ready for this? It's going to sound a little bit backwards like the first one did, but what should you do instead? Ask how you can help them Record scratch. What? It's true. People believe that for someone to refer to them, they have to know everything they do.

They have to understand all the services they have, who their ideal clients are, they have to understand how they work, all the things. And while some of that is important, yes, like I need to know you're a real estate agent and

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not believe in my head, you're an interior designer, that's weird. I need to know what you do to be able to know who I could potentially send to you.

But at the end of the day, I don't need to know everything, and that isn't what's actually going to propel me in the moment to consider. It's not going to move me in the moment to consider referring you. What will is the relationship we have. And the fastest and the best way to build a relationship with someone is to actually make that relationship about them. So, ask them how you can help them.

And then guess what? (Novel concept) Listen to the answer and actually think the things that they're sharing with you, how can you help them? Can you make a book recommendation for this problem they're struggling with?

One of my favorite things to do, and this was years ago when my kids were younger. I do it now, but not as much. But when my kids were younger, I was like, "How many books on parenting can I consume?" Because my ultimate goal was just to raise kids that weren't brats. Like how do I raise kids and do it well?

And so, I was constantly reading books and when I was a one-on-one productivity and business coach, my main target of who I worked with were business owners who were also parents. I was constantly making book recommendations.

Now, you would've thought in that moment, "Well, that's your job, Stacey, you're their business coach." I wasn't their parenting coach, but when we would have conversations and they would make mentions of something they were struggling with outside of what we were doing in a business relationship, I would make a recommendation.

And sometimes, I go get the book and send it to them. That's building relationship, that's impacting how much space you occupy in their mind, that is helping them. That's the question I need you to ask, how can I help you? Anything you're struggling with right now that maybe I can help you solve?

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You may not be able to help solve it, but you asked. And if you're genuine about it and authentic about it and you're actually listening to the answer and you show that you care, ding, ding, ding, that's when you look like a real human that somebody actually wants to think about, remember and invest in down the road. So, don't be asking people for referrals, ask how you can help instead.

Number three, here's our third don't, our final don't. Don't you dare believe the hype that you need to be “freed from inconsistent referrals” by some other sales tactic or lead generation. Again, as I mentioned in the beginning, I get emailed things from my clients and even some people who are like prospects, they're considering working with me, and then they have a conversation, then they start seeing all these bad tactics.

They're like, “Oh my gosh, look what I just found,” I'm like, “Yes, I know it's out there all over the place.” And I had somebody recently that forwarded me an email and the line in there was, “Let us free you from inconsistent referrals by ...” and then it was fill in the blank as to whatever their lead gen, SEO, pay-per-click, I don't know, make 30,000 LinkedIn appointments for you. Fill in the blank of some other lead gen tactic.

Now, I will always be the first one to tell you, you need diversification in how you bring in clients to your business, always. I don't just bring in clients in one way, there are multiple ways that I bring in clients. Now, I don't mean multiple, like I've got like 7 or 10 ways. I've got like three, maybe four.

And some of them are a little bit easier to control than others. And some have strategies behind them (like my referral generation) and others don't. Like Amazon deciding that this week they're going to highlight my book, and so a bunch more people buy it.

So, the reality of it is, is that you need diversification. I'm not against you doing other things to bring in business, bring in new clients. I'm against you doing things that A, don't work and you're not paying attention to it and you're just stuffing money into the black hole. And B, the things that actually won't mirror how you want to run your business.

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I had a company reach out to me one time and they wanted to talk about doing referral generation for their sales team. And they spend an insane amount of money, we're talking a couple commas every month on lead gen.

And the conversation we had was, can you redirect any of that towards referrals, supporting your team to get them the training that they need to make sure that you've got the strategy in place to support them. Because they already shared with me like what that was actually producing for them and how well or not so well, closing ratios and things like that.

And it just got me thinking that there's a lot of hype out there of the things you need to do from a legion perspective that work partially okay, that then we lean into and dive into more because we just don't take the time and the energy to find other ways to grow our business.

I don't need referrals to be the only way you bring in clients. If you want it to be awesome, I don't need it to be. And I think it's actually really smart to have some diversification in your prospecting and your marketing, and in your sales. I think that's actually smart.

Again, a couple of ways, not like dozens of ways. But I do think if you're going to make the decision that you want referrals to be a part of it, you're going to have to treat it like anything else you spend money on to generate business.

Now, maybe you're not going to ever spend nearly the same amount of money and referrals that you would spend paying somebody to manage your Facebook ads on a monthly basis. You're paying the Facebook ads manager and then you're paying for the ads. I'm not talking about that kind of money.

But you are going to have to be willing to put time and resources and energy behind to creating a referral strategy in your business. So, when people come along and they say to you, "Let me free you from the inconsistent referrals," and you think to yourself, "Yeah, my referrals are

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inconsistent, save me,” guess what? Here's the do, here's what you do instead.

You need to recognize that inconsistent referrals can be consistent, but you got to have the right framework and you still got to be willing to do some work. So, if you find yourself thinking, “Yeah, my referrals are inconsistent, I probably need to be looking at something else,” okay, maybe.

But more than likely what you need to be doing is figuring out, well what are you doing to help your referrals move from inconsistent to consistent? What does that look like for you? What are you doing? What are the strategies? What are the tactics? And if you have a team, what's your team doing?

Because referrals cannot be left to chance. I mean, they can, and then they're inconsistent and then you just don't pay attention to them and then you wish you had them and you don't. But they can be a viable way for you to grow your business. So, don't get caught in that trap, relieve the hype that you need to be freed from your inconsistent referrals by some other lead gen strategy.

Instead, recognize that inconsistent referrals can be turned to consistent referrals with the right framework and you putting in the time and energy to make it happen. I hope you enjoyed this episode as much as I did. You guys know I always love it when I get a chance to do a little ranting and a little soapboxing.

We did three do-this, not-that. Hopefully there's one in here you will implement today. I certainly, certainly hope so.

The show notes link for today's episode is staceybrownrandall.com/257.

Alright, coming up next week as episode 258 because that's how numbers work. And we're talking about power referral sources. Do you have one? Do you know what one is? And we're going to talk about it.

Until then, you know what to do, my friend; take control of your referrals and build a referral business. Bye for now.

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