

Ep #285: Industry Partner or Referral Source?



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Stacey Brown Randall

Stacey Brown Randall: If you're catching this podcast on the day it's released, that'd be November 28th, this is for you. It's your last chance to take advantage of our Black Friday sale bundle. So go to

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StaceyBrownRandall.com/blackfriday to get all the details. Okay, now let's get to the episode.

Hey there, and welcome to episode 285 of the Roadmap to Referrals podcast, a show about helping you build a referable business. I'm your host, Stacey Brown Randall. My journey from a business failure to a successful business now 10 years in, I know generating referrals naturally and consistently has made all the difference. Working with clients around the world, we leverage the science of referrals, protect relationships above all else, and help you build a referable business.

Lately on the podcast, we've been diving into some of the nuances of referrals, or at least it's felt that way. And recently at a conference, I was asked a question that I actually thought would be a really good one to dive into here on the podcast.

I know this isn't like a Q&A episode, it's not the 10th episode, but I just really felt like this was a good one to talk about based on some of the other things we've been talking about week after week here on the podcast.

And this particular conference that I was attending was actually for interior designers. So shout out to all my interior designers that are listening right now. But it really applies to other industries. And I'm going to give you some examples of what I mean by that in just a minute.

But I know that I've been diving into kind of like some nuances of referrals, like let's make sure we get the definition right, and we don't confuse things like word-of-mouth buzz with referrals, and don't call it referral marketing, because referrals and marketing are different.

And to some people, that's like nuance. It's like those are just words. But we all know words have power, and they have meaning, and they make you think about things differently.

And so when I got asked this question at the conference, I was like, wow, you could really look at this like two ways. The answer could be super

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nuanced or not. So I was like, yes, we're going to dive into this on the podcast because I think it's important.

So I'm going to talk about what the question was, and then I'm going to give some examples of how I see this happen in different industries, not every single industry, because I don't work in every single industry, and I'm actually not even giving examples from all the industries that I work in.

But I'm going to give some examples of how this works in different industries. And then I'm going to talk about what I think you need to be thinking about as you make a decision. Because by the end of this podcast, it will be your decision to make as to how you want to handle this in your business.

Okay, so why don't we just talk about what this is? Because I keep talking about like it's coming. So let me hit you with the actual question.

So at this conference, they did like a roundtable version on the last day. And as one of the VIPs there, one of the experts, we sat at a table and then people rotated around. So we had so many different rounds and they were asking questions.

And I just thought this question was like, oh my gosh, people probably get really stuck on this and I want to help them get unstuck because this question definitely like stopped this person dead in her tracks of like kind of figuring out how do I move forward and what do I do and how do I gage with what you teach versus what somebody else teaches and they were just like all up in their head.

So here's the question. The question was when another business brings you in to complete the job or maybe you're a part of the pitch to win the client, are you being referred or is it more of a partnership?

Let me just read it again. When another business brings you in to complete the job or you're part of the pitch to win the client, are you being referred to or is it more of a partnership with the company that's bringing you in?

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So I see this in different industries. It's like with a contractor, will bring in different subcontractors. With interior designers, I'll see it where they bring in a window treatment company. I'll see this with home builders where they will bring in like a flooring company.

Or an HR consultant will bring in maybe an assessment expert if they wanted assessments for the company employees to be a part of the project. Or maybe when a real estate agent brings in a home stager, meaning this means they don't do it themselves as well, right?

So in situations like these, is it a referral source relationship or is it more of an industry partnership?

Here is the good news. You ready for this? I want to make this super simple for you. It's however you decide to define it. But in your tracking and what you do to maintain and nurture that relationship must remain consistent.

Sometimes you need to decide how you're going to define what something is in your business, right? Like we just got to, like we got to label it. We need to decide, right? How are we going to define this? Nobody else needs to tell you exactly how to label and make decisions on everything in your business. And I think this is no different.

I think that's something important for you to really own and recognize and then, of course, own. And I know, because if you are a listener to this podcast, you know I'm really big on labeling. Like, I'm really big on labeling and labeling correctly. Because the label or the category, right, when you're labeling things, typically you are putting them in categories. That's going to inform what action you take.

But with a situation like this, I think the nuance actually matters less. What matters more is you making a decision you can stick with, like define the label and stick with it. So I think it would be helpful if I break this down just a little bit more so you can determine what this would look like in your own business.

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And my hope is by the end of this really short episode, you're like, I got my answer moving on, right? It's just like, check the box, did that. When this situation arises for me, if it does, I know exactly how I'm going to answer it. So I want to break this down so we can determine what this looks like in your own business.

Hey there, pardon the interruption. To make progress with referrals in your business, please don't go it alone. If you want to double, triple, or quadruple your referrals, then please let me give you the roadmap and show you exactly how to do it. It's all waiting for you inside my coaching program, Building a Referable Business. Find all the details of the program and the link to complete your application at StaceyBrownRandall.com/referable. Now back to the episode.

Okay, breaking this down. First, pick the label that makes the most sense to you. If you want to consider the interior design, if you're a window treatment expert and you want to consider the interior designer that brings you in to their clients as an industry partnership, call it that. If you want to call it a referral source, call it that. Just pick the label that makes the most sense to you.

Personally, if this were me, I think I would pick the definition or I would pick the label based on what point in the process I'm brought in.

So if I'm an HR consultant or a consultant of any kind and I am bringing in other consultants that are experts in their own spaces, and I am putting together a package or a pitch or a project proposal to then go pitch to a client, and so I know who these people are at the start, and I am pitching them on their expertise, and we have put together a proposal together, to me, that's more of an industry partnership.

But if I can pitch the project without them and then decide to bring them in at a later point, they may look at me as more of like a referral source.

So like in the HR consulting or just a consultant example, maybe in that regards, if you're part of the pitch, it's more of an industry partnership. But if

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the interior designer is bringing in the flooring company or is bringing in the window treatments company, and they're bringing you in, and sometimes they bring you in, and sometimes they don't, right? I think I would look at that more as like that referral source perspective.

But again, it doesn't actually matter. I mean, it matters to the point that you know why you're giving people the label you're giving people, right? So pick the label that makes the most sense for you. Define what does that label mean? You can have referral sources in your business, and you can also have industry partnerships. And then apply the label with absolute consistency. There's no gray area here. It's black or white. You're in this category or this category.

So in my business, referral source is the overall label. And I categorize everything based on the referral source category. So if you listen to what I teach, one of the things I say is that referral sources, their category is existing or potential, and then they have a type.

And so within my referral sources, I have types. And those types are clients and centers of influence. Now there's four types, but clients and centers of influence are the only two that matter. So that's the two we're going to focus on. But again, if you're a windows treatment company, then maybe your clients who refer you are your referral sources and the interior designers that bring you in to their projects are industry partners.

It's okay. Just categorize it. Pick the label, define the label, and then apply the label with absolute consistency. I think simple is sometimes easier. So in my opinion, if you're bringing business to me, you're a referral source. And then from there, I'm going to put you in a category like client or center of influence.

And I'm only taking the time to talk about this on the podcast because this was a question that when it was asked, I saw the other people sitting at my table. They were like, oh, my gosh, I never thought about it like that way. Yes. Does this matter? And I was like, oh, I want to be able to address this if this question ever comes up again. And I can just send people to this

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episode and be like, hey, you just need to go listen to episode 285 on my podcast, because I break it down for you.

And the truth is, the answer I'm giving you is it doesn't matter. I just need you to pick the label, define the label, and then apply the label with absolute consistency. Because when you add a label to it, that's when you're going to categorize it as well.

So again, just define it the way you're going to define it. But here's the actual most important part, regardless of the label or the category. And that is, what are you going to do to cultivate more referrals or opportunities from them? Whether you call them referral sources or industry partners, that matters most.

Even if the realtor or interior designer or contractor or consultant needs you, there will always be another you that they can rely on. So what you have to focus on is not so much what you're calling them, but really focus on the relationship that you're building with them, whether you define them then as an industry partner or a referral source.

And if you're listening to this episode and you're like, I still don't know which one to pick, then I'm going to give you permission to call everybody a referral source. Because I just think it treats your mind to like, or it focuses your mind to be like, referral sources I take care of. And I think when you hear referral source, they refer business to me, I've got to have a strategy to take care of them.

If that is what you have to take action with, because these are my referral sources, and of course I have to take care of them, more so than industry partner, more so like, hey, we're partners, I don't have to do all these things to take care of you and get more referrals, then I want you to label them as referral sources.

Because whatever you label them as should also direct the action that you take. And we all know if you're in this world, we have a strategy in place of

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how we take care of the people who refer to us. That's really, really important.

Okay. Shownotes page for this episode, StaceyBrownRandall.com/285. You may want to bookmark this episode. You may need to listen to this more than once to kind of have it sink in and kind of understand what this looks like.

But some of you will listen to this episode and be like, ah, this is not my problem. I don't need to worry about this. Great. And some of you do. Some of you will need to spend a little bit of time thinking about how you want to label or categorize the people who refer to you.

Again, I'm giving you permission to label it however you want as long as you define it and then apply that label with absolute consistency. I'm also giving you permission just to call everybody a referral source and move on with your day.

All right, my friends. We're back with another great episode next week, created with you and your needs in mind. Until then, you know what to do, my friend. Take control of your referrals and build a referable business. Bye for now.