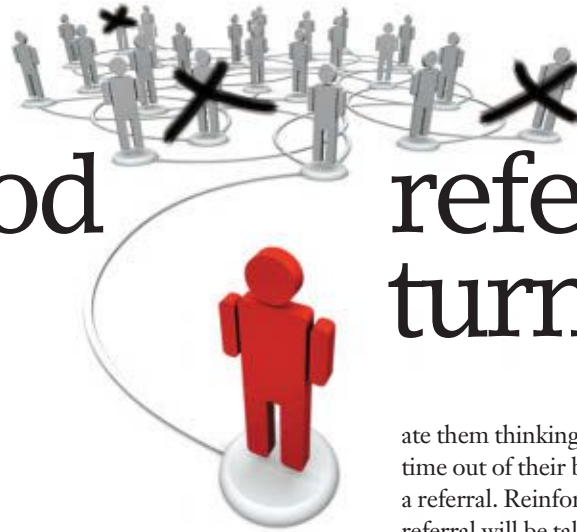


[SALES & MARKETING]

When good referrals turn bad



WITH ALL OF the effort you are putting forth to excel in your career, there's nothing worse than wasting a perfectly good referral that was hand delivered to you by a happy customer (associate, friend, family member, and so on).

There are a few things you can do to destroy a referral and any possibility for a sale: poor follow up, poor service, a comment you made to the referral that you were better off keeping to yourself, or a sales tactic that turned the warm referral into a cold fish.

Think about what destroying that referrals costs you. The most obvious cost would be the loss of a perfectly good selling opportunity. However, there's much more at stake that you stand to lose.

Think about the person on your referral team (a select group of individuals who provide you with a steady stream of referrals). This person is putting their neck on the line for you. Once your referral source gets wind of what happened, you can bet this will be the last time that person ever sends you another referral. It not only costs you one possible sale but all of the potential future sales that you have lost because you compromised the relationship you have with your referral source.

To take it one step further, what if it was a customer who sent you this referral? How does this customer now perceive you? Demonstrating this less than admirable trait to a customer may change their once positive perception of you and tarnish the trust and confidence they had in you. Not only have you lost the chance of getting any future referrals from them but you now run the risk of losing this customer's future business that you would have normally earned.

How to protect and encourage continued referrals and sales.

BY KEITH ROSEN

Just like your customers, referrals are a privilege, not a right. You don't automatically deserve referrals, you have to earn them regardless of how long you've been in your position, known someone or how much work you've already done for a customer.

Keep in mind the players on your referral team are doing you the favor, so make sure you appreciate their efforts in a measurably visible way. They are the ones who are taking time out of their busy schedule to help you.

The biggest blunder people make is, once they start getting referrals, they forget to thank the person who provided them. Thank each person on your referral team when you:

1 Get the referral. Call with words of thanks or send a thank you card letting them know how much you appreciate

ate them thinking of you and taking the time out of their busy day to send you a referral. Reinforce the fact that each referral will be taken care of and given the exemplary service and attention that every one of your customers deserve.

2 Meet with the referral. After you connect with the referred prospect, call or send a thank you card as well as an update on where each referral stands as it relates to your selling cycle.

3 Turn the referral into a customer. Once the sale is made and the referral becomes a customer, rather than waiting until you have completed this project, immediately call your referral source and send a thank you card. This way, you are the first person to let them know their referral is now a customer of yours, rather than having your referral source hear it from the person who they referred to you.

Before you know it, you may not have to market or prospect as much as you think due to the influx of referrals you are generating. **LM**

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GROWTH GOALS 1. Ask for referrals. 2. **Protect your referral team, thanking them regularly.** 3. Follow-through with referred potential customers. 4. **Turn referrals into customers.**