



Connect!

REAL RELATIONSHIP MARKETING IDEAS 

Getting people to like you... the hardest part of the referral cycle.

Know. Like. Trust. Those are the “relationship steps” your sphere must go through in order to refer their friends and family to you. Referring a friend, co-worker or family member to a real estate agent requires risk on the part of the referrer and it’s your job to overcome that risk. People who know, like and trust you feel much less risk in referring you.

The “Know” part is the easiest, or at least the most straightforward. Advertising, websites, networking, social media—there are millions of ways to get your face and name in front of people. This step may cost the most time and money, but it’s not rocket science.

“Like” and “Trust” are different. These steps are more emotionally involved than mere acquaintance and familiarity, and are difficult to accomplish without a solid relationship marketing strategy.

Let’s leave “Trust” for a future article and talk about “Like” today. You can generate referrals from people who know and trust you, but people who “like” you will go out of their way to assist you, to impress you, and to help you succeed. Someone who trusts you will feel comfortable offering a referral, but someone who likes you will actually receive personal enjoyment and satisfaction from it, making them more likely to do it.

So what’s the trick to being likeable? Some of it’s easy stuff, like remembering names (duh), smiling until your cheeks hurt, wearing deodorant. If you’re a salesperson and not already doing the easy stuff to make people like you, I probably can’t help. Here are a few tips for the advanced student:

The Proximity Effect

I can’t spell it or pronounce it, but this social psychology principle states that the more we interact with people, the more likely we are to become friends with them. If you want people to like you, you have to have frequent, consistent interactions with them. Face-to-face, on the phone, social media, through the mail...the more you connect, the stronger the connection will be. Familiarity breeds friendship.

Schmooze

By “schmooze” I mean that you need to look at every interaction with your sphere as an opportunity to impress and influence, to move your relationship a step further. You have to WORK at it. If you think schmoozing comes naturally to you, you’re not doing it right. The first piece of work you should do is read “Mr. Schmooze” by Richard Abraham. It’s only 74 pages but you’ll be daunted and inspired by it and learn how to push and stretch your schmoozing abilities to become the kind of person everyone wants to be around.

Dig Deep and Do Something with the Buried Treasure You Find

Most conversations are just idle chit chat, designed to avoid actually saying anything of importance, to bore you into leaving the other person alone. When you have that

rare opportunity to interact with someone from your sphere you have to get out your shovel and dig deep. The more people share with you, the stronger their connection to you becomes. Knowing the name of someone’s kid is great. Knowing that he’s the star player of the local high school golf team is even better. That little golden piece of information gives you the opportunity to do something memorable like sending some monogrammed golf balls or a piece of signed memorabilia—something that will cement your relationship into friend status.

“Remember that time when...?”

Friends for life are created through shared experiences. If you can start a conversation with the words, “Remember that time when...?” you know you’ve started a friendship. A friend of mine, general sales manager for a group of radio stations, takes her top customers and spouses on an all-expense-paid vacation each year. Not only has her staff become friends with their customers, but the customers have all become friends, creating a community of people interested in promoting each other’s success. I can’t tell you how many times I’ve run into someone from one of those trips and heard the words, “Remember that time when Paul tripped over the giant sombrero and fell in the pool?” You may not be able to afford a trip to Mexico, but how about to the local minor-league ballpark, theater or fun center?

Getting people to like you takes some time and effort. But it can pay off big in referrals and repeat business. The main trick? Like the other person first. Treat them like a friend. Zig Ziglar once famously said, “If you go looking for a friend, you’re going to find they’re very scarce. If you go out to be a friend, you’ll find them everywhere.”

Chad Rueffert is the president of Braintree Marketing, Inc., and the creator of the From Your Friends Relationship Marketing Program. He has lots of friends, and all of them are annoyed when he uses words like “propinquity” or tells that story about the sombrero again.

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