



Connect!

REAL RELATIONSHIP MARKETING IDEAS



The Referral Promise

by CHAD RUEFFERT

One of the main barriers to convincing your sphere of influence to refer their friends and family is their fear that the person they refer to you will be dissatisfied. That dissatisfaction can harm their relationship with the person they referred and reflects poorly on their own judgment.

If you want to build a referral-based business, your goal should be to alleviate this perceived risk and make your sphere more comfortable with making a referral.

Unfortunately many real estate professionals don't understand just how powerful that "referral risk" is, and therefore don't address it with their sphere when asking for referrals.

Real estate agents have been trained to use phrases like "I'm never too busy for your referrals" and "I appreciate your referrals" or "The sincerest compliment I can receive is a referral from past clients." These ubiquitous slogans were created as alternatives to the more pushy form of actually "asking" for a referral. They are reminders rather than requests. But telling people how busy you are, how appreciative you are or how complimented you feel just doesn't cut it if your goal is overcoming the perceived risk of making a referral. You have to explain that not only do you WANT referrals, but exactly what you'll do to earn them.

To overcome the perceived risk in making a referral, you have to be willing to make a PROMISE. A promise is a personal commitment and contract, and it will help assure your sphere of influence that anyone they refer to you will have a satisfactory experience. Every real estate

professional should have a written Referral Promise that covers the following items.

1 - Timely Follow Up

When someone refers a friend, family member or co-worker it's because there is a current and possibly urgent need. They want to know you'll follow up immediately.

2 - Personal Attention

People refer YOU, not your assistant or your partner or your spouse. You must promise to deal with the referred person personally.

3 - A Resource for All Things Real Estate

Don't require your referral sources to pre-qualify the people they refer—you may miss out on opportunities that way. Instead, offer to answer any question related to real estate, even if it doesn't seem likely to lead to a listing or buyer. Your willingness to provide your expertise in any way is what gives people confidence to hand out your number. By telling them you're willing to answer ANY question, they won't worry that they are wasting your time.

4 - Special Attention

Your sphere of influence are the people you have a special relationship with. That means they also expect special treatment. They want to know that if they refer someone to you, that person will also get the VIP treatment. Assure them that they will!

5 - Reciprocation

A referral to you is a valuable commodity. When someone increases the value in your life, you need to reciprocate and

in some way increase the value in theirs. How you do this is up to you, but writing it into your Referral Promise provides an incentive for your sphere of influence.

An example of a written Referral Promise might sound something like this:

MY PROMISE TO YOU...

My business is built on referrals from people who know, like and trust me. If you have a friend, family member or co-worker with any type of real estate related question or concern, no matter how small, please have them contact me! When you refer someone to me I promise to...

- Connect with them personally and immediately
- Respond to all their needs in a timely and efficient manner, with VIP treatment
- Apply all my resources and experience to accomplish their goals
- Return the favor to you in any way I can!

I encourage agents to publish their Referral Promise in all aspects of their marketing, from their website to their social media to the back of their business card. It should be the cornerstone for all your relationship marketing, and the basis on which you build your referral-based business.

Chad Rueffert is president of Braintree Marketing, Inc. and the creator of the From Your Friends Relationship Marketing Program.

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