

[Making Introductions that Generate Referrals](#)

March 21, 2011 by [Stephen E. Seckler](#), President, Seckler Legal Coaching



As a consultant, I'm always looking for ways to give referrals to other professionals. I do this because I like being helpful. But I also know that making introductions that may lead to referrals for one of my contacts is one of the most effective ways to generate referrals for myself. When you help someone in a meaningful way, it is human nature to want to return the favor. For a professional service provider, getting a lead for potential business ranks high on the "meaningful" scale.

Making an introduction can be done in a number of ways. The simplest thing you can do is to tell someone in your network that they might want to contact person X because person X may have need of their services.

But there are more effective ways to make connections for the referral sources in your network. Sharing a lead with one of your referral sources may certainly help that individual, particularly if you give that individual permission to use your name. In a sense, telling someone to use your name is a way of lending some of your own credibility to the person you are trying to help.

Making a direct effort to help an individual connect with a lead is even more valuable for your referral sources. For example, a few weeks ago, I contacted a partner at a regional accounting firm and told him that I was interested in seeing if there were any opportunities to do some marketing coaching with his partners. I had been introduced to the partner by someone else in my network and I wasn't even sure that this individual had any role in marketing or business development at his firm.

As it turns out, he does not have a lot of involvement in the marketing function at the firm. But he did something that I truly appreciated. He could have simply told me the name of the Director of Marketing and suggested that I contact this individual. He could have sent an e-mail on my behalf introducing me to the marketing director. That would have been better.

Instead, he invited me to meet him for coffee and he asked his marketing director to join us. In other words, he actively facilitated the introduction.

I have not generated any work yet from this introduction. It is a new connection. But I honestly believe that my chances of doing some consulting with this firm are much greater because the partner was there. He not only took the time to speak with me and respond to my e-mail, but he made time to meet with me. And through his actions, he demonstrated to my real prospect (i.e. the Marketing Director), that he thought I was important enough to meet.

It is certainly more convenient to give someone a name and tell them to follow up on their own. But if you really want to deepen your relationship with a referral source, make the extra effort to stay involved in facilitating the introduction. If you can't join them for a networking meeting, then at least make sure that you are the one who makes the e-mail introduction (or phone call). Then follow up with your referral source and ask him or her how things worked out with the introduction that you made. Doing so will not guarantee that you get referrals in return. But for a very small investment of time, you will greatly increase your odds of getting something in return.