

## What Referral Networking Can Do For Your Business

### CONTINUED REFERRALS

Referrals are a crucial part of growing and maintaining any law firm. When you network you begin to build relationships with those around you who will know your clients before you do. Did you know that 85% of all referrals result in closed business? That's money in your pocket! Compare that to cold calling with results in approximately 1%-2% of closed business. Are you someone that likes to pick up the phone and randomly call people, especially during the dinner hour when you know they'll be home—and eagerly anticipating your phone call? Most lawyers deplore the idea of cold calling, and under certain circumstances, might very well be in violation of your state's rules of professional conduct.

However, if you are out networking, meeting people who need your services (or more importantly, know lots of people that need your services), think about how much “rain” you could make, simply by going out and being social.

### BUILDING YOUR NETWORKING BASE

If I pass a referral to you, aren't you inherently inclined to want to reciprocate with a referral in kind? The more people you meet, the more people you know. The more people you know, the larger your networking base from which you can tap into for more business. If you are an estate planning attorney and don't have a life insurance agent, financial planner, mortgage broker, Realtor, and funeral director (just to name a few) in your cell phone's speed dial, you're missing the boat. Don't you think their people are going to know your clients before you do? Don't you think they'll need an estate planner on hand for any legal concerns they might have? If for no other reason, a home is most people's largest single asset. They probably need Revocable Living Trust to minimize their tax liability and avoid probate court.

If you're a divorce attorney, have you made friends with a psychologist, clergyman, apartment manager? Think about what an individual is likely to do once they decide a divorce is inevitable. The psychologist and/or clergyman will attempt to assist the troubled couple, but what if all attempts resolution fails? The apartment manager is going to be the first person to know someone has left their spouse and marital home—do these people have your business card to pass when they meet your client?

Forget getting direct and immediate referrals from your network, think about what you can offer your clients with a large network at your fingertips. Imagine if a client says, “Hey can you recommend a [fill in profession/product/service here]?”. What if you became the gatekeeper for your clients. If they looked to you as the person who knows credible individuals, your status with both your client and your referral partner increases. Sure, they could have grabbed the phone book and hoped for the best, but instead, they turned to you, their trusted counselor for guidance.

## INTRODUCES YOU TO PEOPLE

Let's face it, no one is successful on their own. You can do your research on a file alone on your computer or in the law library, but if you don't have any clients for which to do that legal research, you're going to be mighty hungry. The more people you meet the more well rounded you become. Not only will you meet people within your own profession (this gives attorneys the ability to stay up on current legal trends, rulings, and the like) but you also learn more about what's going on in professions around you. While this may or may not be relevant to your business, again, this idea of being a gatekeeper makes you the "person to know".

## EXPANDS YOUR CHECKING ACCOUNT

You make money every time you tell someone what they do and they respond back with, "Hey, I've been meaning to get my Limited Liability Corporation's Operating Agreement put together. Let's meet for lunch next week and discuss what I need to do!". Many times people will not seek out an attorney until one (figuratively) falls into their lap.

Plus, as already noted above, it takes time to get to know, like and trust an attorney enough to fork over a couple grand and all their personal information. Why do you think personal injury attorneys flood the television airwaves during the morning hours? Because they know people laid up in bed aren't at work and, with enough (expensive) commercials, those people will eventually see their commercials enough times to feel comfortable making that call! What you, on the other hand, already had a relationship with a group of people who felt comfortable passing your name and number to someone when they learn they need your services? Think that might be worth the time you'll spend eating cheap finger food and sipping cheap box wine from a 4 ounce plastic cup?