

**Ep #326: Why Your Referral Efforts Aren't Working**



**Full Episode Transcript**

**With Your Host**

**Stacey Brown Randall**

**Stacey Brown Randall:** There is one deep-seated hesitation that people have when it comes to making the decision to start working on their referral

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generation, to make the decision to take control of their referrals. I wonder if you share in this hesitation.

Hey there, and welcome to episode 326 of the Roadmap to Referrals podcast, a show that proves you can generate referrals without asking or manipulation. I'm your host, Stacey Brown Randall.

My journey from a business failure to a successful business now 10 years in, I know generating referrals naturally and consistently has made all the difference. Working with clients around the world, we leverage the science of referrals, protect relationships above all else, and help you build a referable business.

When I talk to business owners that are considering joining one of my programs, they want to learn my referral methodology, which is the referrals without asking methodology. They have, sometimes, one deep-seated or deeply-rooted objection. And sometimes they can't even articulate it until we talk through it.

But that deeply-rooted objection is, it sounds something like this. I'm curious if you've ever thought this thought as well.

I've been doing the relationship thing and trying to cultivate referrals with the thank you notes and the cards and the gifts with all these people. And it hasn't worked, meaning it hasn't produced referrals. For every 10 referrals I give, I get one. No matter how hard I try to get these people who know, like, and trust me to refer to me.

Summing that up, the big concern is if it hasn't worked for me historically, why should I spend even more time trying to see if it will work? That's a big question and it is absolutely legitimate and real and needs to be addressed.

When I talk to people about putting money, like when you work with me, there is money involved, just like when people work with you. When I talk to people about putting money into learning the strategies and the trainings I

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do, whether that's at my starter program, or it's in my coaching program, or it's at that VIP level of working with me where I build it for you.

There is always some objections in terms of making sure you understand what's included, making sure you understand how it works, making sure you understand and believe that it will work, and understanding how it's worked for others.

Those are legitimate questions that every person who sells a product or service should be able to answer. Those are questions you have and should be able to answer. And this one, in my opinion, is a real big one.

Because I do think there's a lot of people out there who are feeling like they're doing the motions, they're going through the motions, they're doing the activities to build relationships with people.

They feel like I'm writing thank you notes and I'm sending out holiday cards and I do give gifts when people refer me or whatever it is, right? They feel like they're doing the relationship thing and it's not working.

And so the question is, if it hasn't worked before, why would I want to spend more time, and quite frankly, when you hire me, more money, trying to see if it then will work? It's a legitimate hesitation. It's a legitimate objection. It's just not real.

And so what I wanted to do is explain to you, to my valued listener, how I talk a prospect through this as well. And whatever the decision the prospect comes to after the end of this, it's completely for them to make that decision.

But I want to make sure they understand where their thoughts are lying and what's getting in their way. And actually, quite frankly, probably what they've been doing wrong.

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So when somebody says, hey, I have done the relationship thing, I have tried to get these folks to refer to me and it's not working. If it's not working historically, why should I spend any more time on it to see if it'll work?

Here's what I like to say. Here's what I always say. First, I always want people to understand, and I want you to hear me in this too as you listen to this podcast episode. It's a hesitation that many have, but not everybody actually verbalizes it.

So I wanted to address it here. So in the future, I will be able to send people to this episode if they want to hear me talk through it.

And if you're sitting in your car right now or maybe at your desk or maybe you're on the treadmill or on a walk and you thought the same thing, I want to speak directly to your hesitation so that you have the information you need to then make a more informed decision on if you want to move forward to really work on generating referrals the right way or if you don't.

And both answers are legitimate. You're a business owner and you get to decide.

So if you've been working on building relationships and you've been working in a way that you think is actually should be producing referrals, but it hasn't produced many referrals, I find with my clients, this comes down to one of five reasons.

And actually, it's typically a combination of multiple of these five reasons. So let me break down these five reasons for you.

Number one. Who you are focusing on is not the right fit with opportunity to actually refer you. There is a strategic discernment that develops over time when you recognize who actually has potential to refer you, who is the right fit to refer you versus who is not.

So there is this strategic discernment that I really believe you develop over time as you are cultivating new people to refer you. But as you're starting to

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cultivate new referral sources, new people into referral sources, there's a framework of how you consider who is the right fit.

It's not everybody. It will never be everybody on LinkedIn or everybody that follows you or connects with you or everybody that's in your phone, right? You have to have that discernment of understanding, and you have to understand the framework of who you should be considering as cultivating into a new referral source.

So sometimes when you're trying to cultivate referral sources and it's not generating referrals, it's who you're focusing on is just not the right fit. That's reason number one.

Reason number two. What you're doing, the notes, the gifts, the seven million cups of coffee, is lacking the right language. Now, we call this, right, in my world, in my business, we call this planting referral seeds, and that is the right language, and there is a formula to it.

Plus, in addition to the formula of what an actual referral seed looks like, not only is there a formula to it, there's also a where, a when, and a cadence to follow.

Let me say that again. When you're doing the notes, the gifts, the coffees, and it's lacking the right language, which we call planting referral seeds, you're just doing notes, gifts, and coffees. You're not actually helping their thought process, that subconscious thought process of how they think about you because you're not using the right language, which we call referral seeds.

And because of that, you're just doing coffees and gifts and notes and it's not actually doing anything but like you being a nice person. Which is good, but only half the equation.

And so you need to make sure the language that you're using is actually planting referral seeds. And there's a formula to this. I mean, in my program, I teach not only direct referral seeds, but indirect referral seeds.

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In addition to that, there's a where, there's a when, and there's a cadence to follow.

There's a couple of times I tell my clients when they're doing specific outreach to either referral sources or potential referral sources, I'm like, do not plant a referral seed. It is not appropriate.

Now I'm wondering if anybody listening can actually guess what those two times are in a year that I would tell someone not to plant a referral seed. If you can, I would love to hear from you.

Shoot me an email or DM me on Instagram or LinkedIn and let me know what your guesses are of when, if you can imagine the two types of outreach that people do, two times that people would do outreach in a year, where I would say, do not plant a referral seed.

But you don't do it all the time. And you have to have variety to how you do it. And you need to understand the formula. So a lot of times, you may be doing the right things, but without the right language that goes along with it. And this is not like saying the word referral in every conversation, because that's weird.

So it's really understanding not only the formula, but the when you do it, the where it's placed, and the cadence that you follow it as well. And recognizing that sometimes you shouldn't be doing it. Okay, that's reason number two. Let's talk about reason number three.

**Stacey Brown Randall:** Hey there, pardon the interruption. If you're a longtime listener of this podcast, then you've heard me mention my Building a Referable Business coaching program. But did you know that BRB, the coaching program, is only one of the three ways to work with me?

You can dip your toe in and get started with my online starter course called Your Next Five Referrals. Or if you have a small team and you want me to build your strategy for you, then my VIP referrals in a day program is probably the right fit for you.

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Links to all three ways to work with me, Your Next Five Referrals, the BRB coaching program, and the VIP experience are in the show notes page for this episode. Now, back to the episode.

**Stacey Brown Randall:** Okay, so here's the third reason why what you've done historically, all the coffees, all the lunches, all the thank you notes, all the cards, all the things you've been doing to try to generate referrals by building relationships, here's the third reason why it may not be landing.

Number three is you might be missing something within your client experience that is not making you referable. So it's not just enough to cultivate people to refer you. You've got to back it up. You've got to actually be referable.

Early on, when I used to teach people how to generate referrals, it happened a lot after my first book, *Generating Business Referrals Without Asking* came out. And when that book came out, people would be like, OK, so I can do all this and get referrals. And I'd be like, well, you know, my disclaimer is that you actually need to be referable.

Like, let's just make sure you're actually doing the type of work that makes you referable. And I would always have this disclaimer. I would say it a lot on podcast episodes when they'd be like, OK, take us through your five steps to generate referrals.

And I'd be like, OK, so let me start with my disclaimer, which is I'm assuming that you're referable. And if you are referable, then this is the five steps you would then take, which means sometimes you've got to pay attention to what may be going on within your client experience.

No client experience is perfect, and no client experience is executed flawlessly, seamlessly for every single client. Something will always go wrong at some point, different points. Not at the same level for every client, but we're not looking for perfection.

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So when I say referable client experience, I'm not talking about perfection. I'm actually not even talking about the outcome. I'm talking about what the client feels like as they work with you, as they move through the three stages of the client experience and what you're doing within that, that is on the work that you deliver and the relationship you build and the moments that are there where you are actually planting referral seeds.

That's that language piece again. That opportunity to leverage moments in your client experience for referrals. It's actually all three of those things.

So your client experience is defined as how your client feels, the emotions it evokes while they're working with you. And that is built through the work you do, the relationship you build, and leveraging those referral moments as well is kind of like the cherry on top.

And so in some cases, when I'm working with folks, what they don't realize is that their client experience is choppy. Very rarely do I work with anybody where their client experience is crappy. Like it's just, that's just not the people I attract. So yay, that means you don't have a crappy client experience because you were listening to this podcast.

Okay, I can't actually make that, draw that conclusion from point A to point B. But the truth is most people that I work with, I shouldn't say most, almost every single person that I work with, they do really great work.

I bet you do really great work too. Not perfect work. I don't do perfect work. Something will go wrong. It is inevitable, right? And so I'm not talking about perfection, but I'm talking about a client experience that you're intentional about, like you've built it out.

Like I feel so passionately about people having a referable client experience. It's actually what my next book is on. Now granted, it's not going to be out until September of 2025. And that's if I can get the next round of the manuscript finished.



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But the idea there is, is that it's so important. I feel like with my second book, I'm doing like a Star Wars kind of progression, right? Like, you know how Star Wars like started with the end in mind, like the first movie that came out and they're like, oh, let's back up and kind of tell you how the characters got there, right? They kind of like backing up.

It's the same thing, I think, with my book. I feel like I taught you how to generate referrals, but I was assuming you were already referable. So now I'm backing up with book number two and be like, wait, let me teach you how to be referable and what that actually means from a client experience.

So it could be that actually something is lacking or missing or your client experience is just choppy and you're missing moments to really wow your client and to really do some things that they didn't see coming.

In addition to the fact that you've got the right streamlined processes and procedures in place so that the work is executed on as seamlessly as possible. Again, I'm not looking for perfection.

So the third reason why it doesn't matter how many relationships you're trying to cultivate referrals from, if you're not actually referable, people know it. And guess what? They do not say it to your face. They will not tell you. They'll just politely smile and pretend and say nothing.

It's unfortunate, but true, even more so if you're in the South. Okay, that's my personal opinion being in the South, but that's just what I think it is. Okay, let's talk about reason number four.

Reason number four is a biggie for me. I probably should have put it at reason number five, but it's reason number four.

You're white knuckling this process. You go into conversations and do the air quotes, “relationship building things” with such a tight grip and expectations that it undercuts the entire process. It also keeps your relationship building at the surface level, which, spoiler alert, we notice. It's noticeable.

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When you white knuckle the process, when you're like holding on, you know what it's like when you're like, grab your desk or your steering wheel or your phone, something that's in your vicinity right now with me, grab it and just grab as tight as you can. You see your knuckles, right? And the tips of your fingernails and stuff, they get white.

That's because you're squeezing it. You're like squeezing the life out of it. You are white knuckling this process and you're like, I'm going to go into this conversation, and they are going to refer me. And you have such a tight grip, right, that you're squeezing the life out of the potential. And your expectations are set so that it is undercutting the entire process.

Sometimes I have to tell clients, I need to know you're willing to let go of the outcome for us to actually get to the outcome.

Can you let go of the outcome of what this is gonna look like in terms of your referral generation and just be in the moment of experiencing what you're supposed to be doing to cultivate relationships and release the outcome, release the referrals, and just focus on the human in front of you.

And do it because you actually care and want to know more about the human sitting in front of you. I'm gonna be honest, that's really hard for people. To go into a meeting where you're like, I need some referrals, or I want some referrals, or it's time that I get some referrals, and to be like, nope, that thought is not allowed in my mind.

I'm going into this meeting to just see how I can be of service and help the person sitting across from me. And I know that the outcome will take care of itself.

I know this sounds like a little woo-wee for some folks, but the truth is, you have to release it for it to come back around. We all know that. We don't probably all love it, but that that's how it works.

But the people that I see have success in my programs, they just trust the process. They release, yes, they don't come in thinking, it's OK if I get no

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referrals. We don't say that in my program. We don't say, it's OK if I get no referrals. We say, what is going on? Let's fix this.

But the truth is, they come in and they have goals. We set goals and we have expectations. But they also understand they cannot white knuckle this process. They got to let go.

They got to do the work. They got to do it consistently. They've got to actually care about the other person that they're working to generate referrals from. They got to be willing to put the other person first. They got to let go of the process. And that's when the magic will start to happen.

And I know I said the word magic, which I always shy away from saying, but sometimes it feels like that. It's like I'm going to put in the work and release myself from the outcome, and then that's when it's actually going to happen. It's the ability to trust the process.

I tell people all the time, do not join or work with me if you can't trust what I'm asking you to do, because I don't know exactly when for you it's going to start clicking. For some folks that I work with, it clicks within 90 days, and it's awesome, and they get more referrals in 90 days than they got the year before.

I love that, but that is not the reality for everyone. It can move slower for some, and I want to be really clear about that. But this process works when you do the work, you do it correctly and consistently. You don't question the process.

I mean, ask questions, but don't question it to the point that you don't do it at all, or you do a very watered-down version because you think your way is better. If you think your way is better, you probably shouldn't be investing in a program of mine anyway.

But this whole concept of white-knuckling and squeezing on as tight as you can and forcing this process to work, we all can tell. We all can see it.

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You know, they always talk about this in sales. When you're desperate for that sale to happen, it won't. And your buyer, your prospect, can smell it on you. That's what they always say in sales. Have you ever been through sales training? If you ever do go through it, that's what they're going to tell you. Because it's true.

How you present yourself and what you believe, that is ultimately what will come and what you'll receive. So what you're putting out in the world is what's going to come back to you. So you've got to trust the process. You've got to allow your relationships to go below the surface level. And you can't white knuckle it.

Okay. Here's reason number five. Your timing is off. Meaning you've assigned a timetable as to when you believe you should receive referrals. After this many months, after I sent this gift, whatever it is. But you've assigned a timetable to this.

You've determined that after I take you to coffee, then I should get a referral within 30 days. Or after I've done these couple of touch points, then I should get a referral. And your timing is just off because you don't dictate that.

When I have people working to cultivate new referral sources, one of the things that I always talk to them about is understanding that we are going to cultivate more people than you probably need to refer you because we don't know who's going to actually become a referral source and we don't know when they're going to become a referral source.

So, we follow a strategy and a process that honors that person, but we're doing it for a lot of different people because we just don't know who it's going to click with and who's going to refer and how soon they're going to refer.

So when you go in and you've assigned a timetable as to when that person is going to give you referrals, you have already lost. You have already made it not going to work.

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There are some people in this world who are very, very much black and white thinkers. I am raising one of those. It's a little difficult. And the truth is, there's more gray in this world than there will ever be black and white.

Yeah, there's a lot of black and white. Right? Right and wrong. A lot of black and white. There's also a lot of gray in that as well.

And so if your timing is off, if you believe it's black and white, I do this, this, and this, and then you give me a referral, you've already lost. Because you can't assign a timetable to something that you ultimately don't control.

Do the processes and strategies and tactics and language that I teach work? Yes, I've been doing this for 11 years. I wouldn't still be in business if they didn't. But can I pinpoint the exact moment with the exact person they're going to work? Of course not.

And if I told you I could, I'd be lying. And I'm not a liar.

So I think you just have to understand that if you've been doing the relationship thing, if you've been investing in people, you need to consider if you really truly believe, I've been doing the relationship thing, I've been developing and cultivating relationships, and I've been doing it for a long time and it hasn't worked, is it because you're actually getting one of these five things wrong?

Or that you're looking at it incorrectly? That's what I want you to consider, right? So here they are again in rapid fire format.

Number one, who you are focusing on is actually not the right fit with the opportunity to refer to you.

Number two, what you are doing, the notes, the gifts, the coffees, is lacking the right language, those referral seeds, and you don't know the formula to it.

Number three, you're missing something within your client experience, so it's not allowing you to be referable.

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Number four, you're white knuckling the process. You go into conversations and relationship-building things with such a tight grip and expectations that it's keeping your relationship building at the surface level, and we all can tell.

And number five, your timing is off. You've assigned a timetable as to when it should happen, and it doesn't happen like that.

So I know for some of you listening to this, you may be like, I want to push a button, that button being whatever Stacey tells me to do for referrals. And then once I push the button, referrals pop out on the other end.

Referrals and what I teach is not an easy button. Does it work? Heck yeah. Is it amazing? Yeah, absolutely. Will you love it when you start receiving referrals? You betcha. But there is no button that you push and then a referral pops out on the other end.

But I'm pretty sure that's exactly how life works, too. There's no button that you push, the easy button, where what you're looking for pops out on the other end. Except for maybe in healthcare. And I'm thinking more so like health and fitness, just pop a pill, right? That seems to always be the easy button. And then dangerous side effects.

There is no easy button, folks. There isn't in referrals and there isn't in life either. But here's the thing, I always tell folks, when people think about joining one of my programs, I'm like, it better be a hell yeah. Because if it's not, you won't give it the commitment that it needs.

So make sure it's a yes. Make sure you're like, yep, I know I'm going to do the work, and I'm going to release my white knuckles, and I'm going to trust the process because I'm going to do the work. Because you deserve referrals. You're just not owed them. So you have to be willing to do the work.

Alright, my friends, that's it for today. The show notes page for this episode can be found at [StaceyBrownRandall.com/326](https://StaceyBrownRandall.com/326). We're back with another

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great episode next week, created with you and your needs in mind. Until then, you know what to do, my friend. Take control of your referrals and build a referable business. Bye for now.