

Ep #394: Most Listened to Episode of All Time

ROADMAP to REFERRALS



with *Stacey* BROWN
RANDALL

Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Stacey Brown Randall

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

Roadmap to Referrals with Stacey Brown Randall

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I teach a science-backed methodology and framework that generates referrals without asking. This podcast and working with me is all about taking control of your referrals on your terms. Join me every week as we break it down.

Well, it is the last episode of the year. And I decided to build on the tradition that we did last week.

So last week, of course, we played the episode which was the most listened to episode of the year. It's a little tradition we've been doing for a while. And I decided to expand on that.

So first, I do hope you enjoyed listening to last week's episode. And I hope you'll enjoy what we have in store for you for this episode as well.

I decided to pull the most listened to episode of all time since the podcast started back in June of 2018. Like just makes you feel a little old when I say that doesn't it?

So since the podcast started back in June of 2018, which is almost 400 episodes ago, I mean, this is episode 394. We don't have many more to go before we hit 400 episodes.

So we are going to play the most listened to episode of all time. Do you have any idea though on what that episode number may be? Which episode could I possibly be talking about?

Which one could be the most listened to episode of all time? Well, I'm gonna keep you in suspense for just a minute or two longer because real quick, I have a quick reminder.

If you've had your eye on attending the first Referral Accelerator of 2026, well, it is coming up in February, which means early bird registration is just around the corner, and it opens up on Thursday, January 1st.

So with early bird registration, of course, comes the early bird pricing as well.

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So if you want to be on the wait list to be the first to receive the email that the doors are open so that you can grab your spot if you want to, then you need to sign up for the wait list, which is StaceyBrownRandall.com/accelerator.

Just go to that page, StaceyBrownRandall.com/accelerator and sign up to be on the wait list.

Then on Thursday, January 1st, if you can believe it, we will actually send an email out to just those on the waitlist with all the details, the dates, and of course, the early bird pricing.

Now, signing up to be on the waitlist does not obligate you to attend. It's just saying you're raising your hand to saying, hey, I just want more information in case I do want to attend, I don't want to miss out on the early bird pricing.

Because remember, the Accelerator is my two-day in-person workshop that I do in Charlotte. And so we keep the group small. There will not be dozens and dozens of people in this room with you. There will be less than a dozen.

So that means there's not that many seats and they will go quickly. So we want to make sure that if you're interested and you're like, yeah, I've actually been thinking about this and I want to do this, then you definitely want to be at the one we're doing in February.

Remember, we only do two Accelerators in Charlotte a year. So first quarter, and the end of the year in fourth quarter. So it's a long time till fourth quarter 2026.

If you know you want to learn with me through the Accelerator format, learning them live, watching all the dots connect, seeing how the system feeds itself, and learning everything to get your strategy set up with it done, most of it done at least, before you leave, so you don't leave with a long list of to-dos, then you're going to want to be at the Referral Accelerator.

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Again, get on the wait list to learn more about it at
StaceyBrownRandall.com/accelerator.

Alright, thank you for that little interruption. It's time for a drum roll, my friends. That's right, it is our most listened to episode of all time. It's cued up, it's ready to roll.

Stacey Brown Randall: Today, we are demystifying your business development or sales strategy to help you simplify what you should be doing to grow your business.

I don't know about you, but when I became an entrepreneur, I didn't do it because I wanted to be amazing at sales. I became a business owner because I was good at solving specific problems for my clients, and that gave me a lot of joy and purpose.

But as a business owner, if you don't figure out how to bring in a pipeline of prospects and convert those prospects to clients, and I mean paying clients, you won't have a business for long.

With over 1,000 clients that I have coached or have gone through one of my online programs, Growth by Referrals, or Sticky Client Experience, or have attended one of my presentations or workshops, there is always a common theme.

Whether you're a CPA, attorney, home builder, realtor, consultant, coach, insurance agent, financial advisor, interior designer, commercial printer, photographer, and on and on and on. The theme is the same.

We became business owners to deliver an amazing service because we are good at something that others will pay for.

In Michael Gerber's book, E-Myth Revisited, it's we're really good at being the expert, or what he calls the technician. But to deliver that amazing service and be the expert, we need paying clients, which means that we never want to be seen as the always hustling salesperson.

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OK, I totally just did that in air quotes, but you cannot see. We do need a process, a strategy to fill the pipeline of potential new clients called prospects. And filling the pipeline consistently is the key.

Let me define pipeline for you. When I say pipeline of prospects, what I mean are people that have shown some level of interest in your business. And how they arrive to your pipeline happens in different ways, which I'll talk about in a minute.

But it is a pipeline of prospects who your idea here is to be able to convert them into clients. And the more full that your pipeline is, the better chance you have to convert the number of clients you need so that your business can actually hit your revenue goals.

So think about literally a funnel, and you want to fill it up from the top with prospects so that the right number of clients come out at the bottom.

And the truth is, not everybody who ends up in your pipeline will become a client, which is why it needs to be more full so that you can actually get the clients out of it that you need to hit the metrics and goals you have for your business.

So to fill the pipeline, we need three distinct and specific plans. OK, there I go again with those air quotes that you can't see.

So what are these plans? Well, these plans are made up of activities we do that should produce the results we want. And by results, I mean paying clients.

And we can boil these three plans down to this. We need a prospecting plan, we need a marketing plan, and we need a referral plan.

Now you've probably thought about those three things and just kind of bunched them all together in your business development plan or your sales and marketing plan.

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But what I'm arguing, and I want you to consider is those are three different plans, and you bring three different mindsets to executing well on each of them. So let me define them for you.

So first, we have our prospecting plan. The prospecting plan activities, and activities are just the things you do that make up that plan.

The prospecting plan activities could be all that networking, all those networking events that you go to, the one-on-one coffees and lunches, the cold calling that you do, mailing out direct mail pieces.

It definitely can be the different activities you do that I like to call pounding the pavement. And the prospecting plan I've always referred to as, that's the plan that lets me eat tomorrow.

It's the plan that I do that's trying to, as quickly as possible, get me to a potential prospect that I can potentially turn into a new client.

The prospecting plan is a very active plan. And let me be honest, it can tire you out. But every business will have some level of a prospecting plan.

The point is to have another plan do better so you can be less reliant on the prospecting plan. But before I tell you about that important plan, let's go to plan number two, which is the marketing plan.

So every business needs a marketing plan. And that could be because you just need branding, like a website, to be able to show that, yes, you're a business and you have credibility.

Or you may also have a marketing plan that goes a little bit past branding and focus on lead generation. Not all marketing plans will, but some definitely do.

And so your marketing plan with that branding, it could be the advertisements that you run. It could also be the thought leadership that you're trying to produce with your blog posts and your articles that you're putting out there.

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It could be the publicity that you decide to go after with earned media, meaning having an article placed on a publication or, of course, maybe being interviewed for an article.

But your marketing plan in terms of bringing in clients or prospects, it's a little bit more passive unless you have a specific lead generation strategy that's built into your marketing.

And the third plan is the referral plan. Now the referral plan is just that. There are not a multitude of activities that go into making up a referral plan. It is a process that you follow to generate referrals.

Some people's process is to ask for those referrals, which I am completely against. I think if you're asking for referrals, you're doing it wrong. But having a referral plan is really important.

My plan happens to be one where I don't ask for referrals. But the ultimate aspect of what we're after with this referral plan is to generate prospects that come to us by referral that we can then turn into clients.

Most of the time, people talk about referral marketing, and they group the referral plan in with the marketing plan.

But the reason why I separate these out into three distinctive plans is because the mindset you bring to the table is really important when you're executing on the three plans.

What I think when I'm in prospecting mode is different than what I need to be thinking when I'm in referral mode. Give me a minute, and I'll tell you what I mean.

Your business needs all three plans. There are no exceptions. But what activities will define each of your three plans will be different based on your business.

And I see it all the time with small business owners and solopreneurs. They subscribe to the spray and pray methodology or the singular focus, fingers

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crossed, hope it works. Let me explain these two and then let me give you an example of what it should look like.

So the Spray and Pray methodology is you jump into many activities. You go to dozens of networking events. You put all your money into Facebook ads.

You write three blog posts or articles a week. You're buying lists and you're cold calling. And you're working to set up 15 coffees or more a month.

You are doing a ton of activities that are probably hitting in the prospecting and the marketing plan. And you really, truly have your fingers crossed that something will work.

And you're doing it all at one time. So you're exhausted. And you're doing all of that activity without a plan to know how you're going to produce your ROI, your return on investment.

So you effectively are just out there spraying all the time and then of course praying that something will come from it. Some new clients, some new prospects. The spray and pray methodology.

The opposite of that, that I see business owners doing as well, is that singular focus, fingers crossed, hope it works. You pick the one activity you really, really, really want to work because you like it, and then you focus on it solely.

So it's, I just want to write a bunch of blog posts and put them out there into the world and clients will come to me.

I just want to go to networking events because I'm a really social person, and then I just know I'll meet all the clients that I need.

Well, doing a thousand things isn't helpful, but doing just one thing isn't helpful either when you're trying to grow your business.

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And I don't mean start your business. I mean, at any point in your journey to grow your business to the next level, to just make it a little bit more sustainable so you can move from surviving to actually thriving.

Both methodologies, the spray and pray or the singular focus fingers crossed hope it works, both of these methodologies take you to the same place. I call it the feast and famine months or otherwise known as the entrepreneurial roller coaster.

And it is a ride you don't want to ride. It is where your stress and your energy and your fear of your business goes up and down, just like the clients coming in and the revenue you may or may not be producing.

It means you put your head down, and you do some work, and you're working, working, working, and then you look up when the work is over and then realize you have nothing coming in for next month.

So whereas you may have one great month, it could be followed by two or three really tough months. And that is a very scary place for any entrepreneur to be.

What you need to do is get really clear on a few aspects and allow that clarification to drive what activities you do within your three plans.

You now know what the plans are, right? You know you need a prospecting plan, you know you need a marketing plan, and you know you need a referral plan.

So your job is to figure out what activities should be in each plan. Our ultimate goal is to be really clear on the activities within each plan and create a schedule to follow to execute on those activities, because consistency is the key.

Here's an easy and quick way to start determining the activities that you will probably might want to fill your pipeline.

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Now, here is one thing. I'm going to give you these four questions I want you to ask yourself. It will allow you to figure out where should you be spending your time within these three plans.

And you'll probably have some prospecting activities and some marketing activities. And I definitely hope you'll consider having a referral plan as well.

But there's four questions that help you figure out what activities should you be doing, and then determining if they're prospecting, marketing, or referral.

And to make it easy for you, you can actually grab these questions on the show notes page at StaceyBrownRandall.com/2, as in the number 2. And remember, Stacey has an E.

So here are the four questions I want you to ask yourself. Number one, what service do you offer?

When I buy, there I go with those air quotes again, when I buy working with you, what am I buying? What am I receiving? What service do you offer?

Now, you may be thinking, well, that's a really silly question, Stacey. I know exactly what I offer. You'd be surprised how many people I talk to who can't articulate that for me in 30 seconds. You need to know what you offer.

Number two, you need to know who wants to buy it or should be buying it. Who is your ideal client? It is really important to be very clear on who is your ideal client, who's buying what you're selling.

Number three, where does your ideal client hang out? And I don't mean like a bar. I mean, where are they hanging out in their professional world? What networking events are they attending? Who are they hanging out with?

It's really important for you to get clear on where they're spending your time because that's where you're going to want to spend your time.

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And number four, who comes across your ideal clients? What I mean is, what are the other service providers who come across the people who may need what you do? So other service providers who are actually around your ideal clients.

If you can identify who they are, this very quickly helps you understand where you should be spending your time, which where are the sources where clients will come from.

So if you're answering these four questions and you're thinking to yourself, OK, where do my ideal clients come from? You'll start to recognize, oh, maybe some of them could come through Facebook ads. OK, that could be an option for a source.

Maybe some of them come to me joining these very three specific networking groups. Great, another potential source.

My client should definitely come through referral. Excellent. Referrals is a source. As you start to develop your sources, you'll start to see how they fit within each of the three plans.

Now, to be honest, for this to make sense, you really need to pull out a piece of paper and start mapping these out so you can see what it looks like. But let me walk you through the four questions using an example.

Imagine for me for a second that you're a bookkeeper. Alright, so if I was a bookkeeper and I'm answering these four questions, my answer to question number one is, what service do you offer? It's bookkeeping services.

So I offer keeping up with your QuickBooks or your FreshBooks or whatever service that my clients have, keeping the books up to date, reconciling bank statements, making sure that the accounts match, making sure your invoices get out the door. Those are the services that I offer.

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Well, then who should be buying what I do? Well, if I've determined my ideal client and I know a little bit about my niche, I may say, I want to work with solopreneurs or micro small business owners.

Or maybe I'm a bookkeeper that wants to work with companies that have more than 50 employees but still want to outsource bookkeeping. That may be a little bit of a stretch, but it's just an example. So go with me here.

So if I'm a bookkeeper, and I'm very clear on what I offer, and I know exactly who my ideal client is, in this example, let's say it's solopreneurs who don't want to have to do their own books.

Well, when I get to question three, it's, well, where do solopreneurs hang out? And are you looking for a specific type of solopreneur? Do you want service professionals over maybe, say, manufacturing or maybe product?

So being really clear on who your ideal client is allows you to hone in on figuring out where do they hang out.

Let's say, for example, this bookkeeper only wants to work with female business owners, right? That's their choice. So where are female solopreneur business owners hanging out? That's the question you ask yourself.

And then you start investigating, are there groups catering to female business owners, to solopreneur business owners, to just small businesses? You start looking for those groups and then investigating your options.

And then, of course, number four, well, who comes across my ideal client? Well, if I'm a bookkeeper, who's talking to my ideal solopreneur or small business owner about their bookkeeping needs?

Well, when you think about it, it could be a business coach or a consultant maybe talking to their clients about how they can run their business more efficiently. And outsourcing bookkeeping is one of those things.

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So I could then identify, OK, so maybe business coaches and consultants are service providers that I need to form relationships with, so when they have a client who needs to outsource bookkeeping, I'm going to be the first person that comes to mind.

Or maybe it's CPAs that don't offer bookkeeping, but they have clients who need that service. I can be the person that they then refer.

Do you see how those four questions work together? It's getting really clear on what service you offer, who wants to buy it, your ideal client determining your niche, and then where's your client hanging out so you know where to spend your time.

And then, of course, who are the other people who come across your clients that could become referral sources or referral partners for you?

When you have this information, you can then decide, OK, I need to spend time networking in these three groups. Well, then that's a piece of your prospecting plan.

I need to make sure that my website is speaking to the solopreneur that is a female. Great. Then part of your marketing plan needs to make sure that your website is actually catering the messaging towards that group of potential clients.

And I've now determined that CPAs and business coaches and consultants could be potential referral sources for me. Great.

Then developing those relationships would be part of your referral plan. Those three plans are very different and very distinct.

So I want to tell you about an email I recently received that I think puts the fingers crossed, I hope it works, really into perspective. So most people actually subscribe to, unfortunately, the spray and pray.

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They will do a ton of things, they'll be exhausted, and then they'll be wondering about what's working and why am I doing it, and nothing seems to be working, and I'm not getting the traction I want.

But I did receive an email from a photographer up in New York. And through our email communication, I quickly realized that he subscribed to the singular focus, fingers crossed, hope it works.

He reached out asking how to generate referrals because he knew he needed a referral plan in addition to his prospecting and his marketing plan, kind of. But he wanted to generate referrals without asking because he thought that sounded like the best way to bring in new clients.

And he was reaching out to ask because he had never received a referral before. So when I probed about his business, here's the background that he shared, which I think is relevant for you to understand the advice I gave.

His business started towards the end of '15, and sales started to pick up in 2016. And he said, at the time, very much of my sales were generated based on my website. And so I had no reason to assume that I would need to do anything extra.

He was just focused on generating business through his website. Then before he knew it, in 2017, the sales had become very sporadic, and not really any sales in 2018. And so here's the thing to pay attention to.

Those three plans that I said you needed to have, they're probably going to have two or three activities within each that you need to be doing on an ongoing monthly basis to make sure you're bringing in a pipeline of prospects that you can then turn into clients.

That's really, really important. You can't just believe that one methodology is going to work until you know for sure that that's all you need.

And I would say even then, having one way of bringing in prospects is a very dangerous place for your business to be. I would prefer you have two

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or three really solid ones with a couple on the peripheral that are also helping.

But you don't need 15 either. And we don't know which are the ones that are working if we're not tracking those that we're actually doing.

So my advice was to stop worrying about generating referrals. I just said, you know what? Don't worry about generating referrals right now and focus on building out a real prospecting plan.

Because this man needed to eat tomorrow, right? So focus on building out a real prospecting plan. And I walked him through the four questions that I told him he needed to ask himself.

So here's the thing. While everyone needs all three plans, prospecting, marketing, and referrals, the focus you put on the plan will probably depend on where you are with your business. But regardless, you still need all three plans.

The good news is, is once you focus on having a successful referral plan, you'll be less reliant on the other two plans, prospecting and marketing.

But if your business is brand new, maybe just getting started within its first year or so, you're going to be more heavily reliant on your prospecting plan.

As you move into approaching the two, three, four, maybe five-year mark, you definitely should be making sure you've made a switch over to truly generating referrals and having a strong referral plan.

And then, of course, if your business is five or more years in business, you definitely should have a strong sense of generating referrals.

The truth is the marketing plan's going to stick with you through every milestone in your business, starting out all the way to being in business 20 years. That marketing plan will be there.

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What's in the marketing plan will probably look different at the one-year mark versus the 15-year mark.

And if you're brand new starting out, don't worry so much about referrals, focus on bringing in clients to those prospecting activities.

But once you've been in business a year or two, you really need to pay attention to bringing online, well, on board, I guess I should say, a referral plan to help you grow your business.

Stacey Brown Randall: For me, listening to that episode was a blast from the past. Like, way back when I, let's be honest, did not know what the heck I was doing. But not too bad, right?

And what I love about this episode is that it's a classic. It's one of the first episodes I did, and it is still something that I fundamentally teach today.

Now, granted, so many years later, because that was back in 2018, so many years later, I think I teach it better.

Because if you've ever been to one of my presentations or you've seen me present virtually, I actually have these animated movements to explain the three legs to your sales strategy with referrals being their own leg of the stool.

And I have these great animated buckets, shall we say, that kind of walks you through understanding the difference between prospecting, marketing, and of course, referrals.

So I hope you enjoyed that episode. I know it was so fun for me to listen to it. I know exactly where I was sitting when I recorded that episode, how nervous I was. And I was wondering if I would be any good at this whole podcasting thing.

So it's fun for me to go back to the past. So thanks for going on this journey with me. And I love the fact that one of the most listened to episodes or the

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most listened to episode of all time is still on a very classic, very important topic that we all need to know and that I still teach today.

Okay, so if you want to access the transcripts for this episode, or you want to get the Referral Accelerator waitlist signup page link, it can all be found on the show notes page at StaceyBrownRandall.com/394.

Well, thanks for making it to the end, my friend. Until next week, which will actually be next new year, take control of your referrals and build a referable business. Bye for now.