Ep #410: Turn Clients and Event Organizers into Your Best Promoters

Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Stacey Brown Randall

Carol Cox: Hi, I'm Carol Cox of the Speaking Your Brand podcast. I work with women entrepreneurs and executives to help them turn their expertise into thought leadership through powerful messaging and speaking.

***Roadmap to Referrals* with Stacey Brown Randall**

Today, I'm taking over Stacey's Roadmap to Referrals podcast and sharing an interview I did on my own show.

We talked about how to create a client and audience experience that naturally leads to referrals.

One idea that stood out to me was that referrals aren't triggered by an ask, but by how people feel about the experience you create with them. This applies directly to speaking as well.

When your talk creates connection and transformation, people don't just remember you, they talk about you and recommend you. Enjoy our conversation.

Carol Cox: Hi there, and welcome to the Speaking Your Brand podcast. I'm your host, Carol Cox.

Now, most of us have been told that if we want referrals, we should just ask for them, but that can oftentimes feel awkward, even pushy. You kind of feel like, well, do I really want to ask past clients so directly for referrals?

What if instead, you could design an experience for your clients, your audience, and even if an organizer that makes you naturally referable? That's exactly what my guest today, Stacey Brown Randall, is here to share.

Stacey is the author of her new book called The Referable Client Experience, and she's built a proven system to generate consistent referrals without the awkward ask or any of those kind of like icky tactics that we've been told to use.

If you've ever wished more clients and more speaking invitations come your way, simply because people can't stop talking about the experience you created for them, you're going to love this episode.

And fun fact, Stacey was on this podcast way back in episode number 62. That was in March of 2018. I can't believe it's been that long. Stacey, welcome back to the podcast.

Stacey Brown Randall: Well, Carol, thank you so much for having me back. It's always nice to be a repeat guest. I didn't realize it had been so long.

It's so funny, that was actually the year my first book came out, so I guess it's perfect that I'm back now with my second book out, and clearly it took me forever to write my second book.

Carol Cox: Well, I still haven't written my first, so you are way ahead of me. So congrats on the second one. So let me ask you this.

So your first one was about referrals, and the second one is as well. So why did you decide to write the second book? What did you feel like you wanted to add to the conversation?

Stacey Brown Randall: Oh, so much. Like, I think that's the interesting thing about referrals, because for so long we've been taught that, hey, if you want referrals, just ask for them, or if you want referrals, just create like a loyalty-type referral program, and people will give you, you can give people commission for referrals.

Or you're taught, hey, just go network all the time so people can't forget about you, and that's all you got to do to get referrals.

People think it's like a do this and then get referrals, and it's like so like simple, and it's just like tiny and this one little process that they need to do. But that's treating referrals like they're a nail, and the only tool you need is a hammer, and it's just not the case.

I mean, I have been teaching business owners how to generate referrals for now 12 years, and I actually have 20 different strategies that I teach. No business owner needs all of them.

Most of them are situational, so like, hey, in this situation, when this happens, Stacey told me what to say is usually how I want my clients thinking about it, right?

Some are like processes or plans or strategies we want in place that kind of run all the time in your business, like year after year, and others are just because the situation happened, you know what to say.

And the truth is it's not just referrals are a nail so here's a hammer, right? You need a fully stocked toolbox to really leverage all of the referrals that have the potential to come into your business and exist in your business.

I teach referrals like they exist in an ecosystem. There's not just one way to get referrals. There's lots of ways.

And so the first book that I wrote, Generating Business Referrals Without Asking, I'll be honest. When I first wrote it, I was like, this is the book.

It's the only book, and it was like, great, and this is like, I think I started writing that book back in 2017. It came out in 2018. I'm like, this is it. This is my platform. This is the things you need to know.

And then as my business evolved and my clients started asking different questions. And it was funny because they'd ask like, well, what would you say in this situation? I'd be like, you say this, and I'm like, wait, that's not actually recorded for any other client to access unless they're listening to this conversation.

So we started building out the library of all the client questions, and they kind of formed their own little mini strategies and mini tactics, and so that's what we have that we provide to our clients.

But the more I started watching my body of work evolve, I was like, wait a minute. The book really only is attached to one.

The first book is only attached to one of the 20 strategies. It's the teaching you how to identify if you have people who refer you now, and then the steps to follow to get more referrals from people who already refer you.

But as the body of work evolved, I was like, well, what about people who've never referred you? Like, that's a whole standalone strategy.

What about the clients and the client experience? That's another whole standalone strategy that I teach, and so that's why I was like, oh, well, there's probably a bunch more books.

I don't know if I have a bunch more books in me to write them and actually get through it, but so I started thinking about it. I was like, yes.

I was like, I have three main foundational strategies. They can each serve as their own book. They don't need to be like a mini chapter in one book.

And so this is the second book that I decided to write, which is on the client experience.

And the idea that how you get referrals from someone who already refers you, whether they're a client or not, looks different from the repeatable process you need to have in place to be able to be worthy of those referrals and then to know how to bridge the gap to those referrals. And that all happens within the client experience.

Carol Cox: And Stacey, I want to get into the client experience both for those of us who are business owners as well as for those of us who are speakers and maybe don't own our own business and work for someone else because we can cover both of those different scenarios.

But I want to mention about what came to mind when you were describing about oftentimes we're taught or we think with referrals, like you said, we just go to network and we give people our business cards, digital or paper, whatever is in right now, and we do that, and then they're going to just magically think pop.

Someone's going to pop into their mind, and then they're going to introduce us and, you know, we're going to get lots of referrals that way or, or what have you.

And I feel like a lot of times that we don't like that approach or, you know, directly asking because it feels very transactional.

And I know for the work that I do in Speaking Your Brand with our clients, the work that you do, Stacey, the work that so many of the women who run businesses, the work that we do is not transactional.

It's the opposite of that. We create our programs and our workshops and our coaching to provide that transformational experience to do that deep work with our clients.

And then like we, but we treat this referral process, or we're taught to treat it very transactionally. And I think that's what thing comes into your emphasis on the client experience. So can you tell us about that?

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah. You know, I think like most people think about it, like it's very transactional yet so that it doesn't align. Like they think about referrals as transactional.

So it doesn't align to actually how they do business. And in some cases, how we do life, right? Like it just doesn't match.

And so I think that's the thing that people need to understand when it comes to your client experience is that, and this is like, this is something I would like to ask folks. I always ask folks like, do your clients love working with you? Right.

If you're providing that transformation and you're doing great work, not perfect work. I mean, nobody expects perfection. Nobody reasonable, I guess I should say expects perfection.

But if you're doing great work and your clients love you. And you're thinking about the value that you add and that you are what we would quote unquote call referable, right? Like you're doing great work.

Like this is all great. Your clients tell you that they love you. Then my next question is always, but are you drowning in referrals?

And usually the answer is nope, I am not. And that is because doing great work does not equate to receiving referrals. We think it should.

It seems like it would make sense. But actually, what you're working within the brain of your client to refer you is different, when you're actually just delivering great quality work within your client experience. So that's why we call it the referable client experience.

It is doing great work. I will, I mean, obviously that's important, right? I feel like I should say that even though I feel like I shouldn't have to say that. Doing great work is certainly important.

But then on top of that, you have to layer on top of that, that repeatable intentional client experience that makes you referable.

And then you still got to bridge the gap to referrals. And it takes all those pieces in place to be able to generate referrals from our clients.

It's not that our clients don't refer you because they don't want to, or because they think something bad about you when they're actually telling you you're amazing.

It's because that's actually not how they're thinking at all. And we kind of have to help them get there.

Carol Cox: So then Stacey, describe a little bit about how they're thinking and does this dovetail with your three stages of the client experience, which you call new clients, active clients, and alumni clients?

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah. So a client's going through a lot of different emotions when they move through your client experience. And number one, the number one emotion that they have through the entire experience is, am I going to get what I paid for?

Like it may not be that, that crass, right? But like the idea is like, did I make a good decision? Am I going to get what I paid for?

And that emotion is much stronger in the new stage, right? Then it is like in the active stage or the alumni stage. And so that's the thing they're thinking about.

They're thinking about themselves. They're thinking about how I'm going to take what you're teaching me, what you're coaching me on, like how is that going to work? So they're thinking through all those pieces.

They're not thinking about, oh my gosh, Carol is amazing. I need to refer her to everybody I know.

Some people will, you will have some clients that they come into your world, and then all of a sudden, they're referring you to other potential clients. And you're like, this is amazing. How do I duplicate that?

The hard thing about the right people referring you is, is that you can't identify them. Like they have to reveal themselves and then we can take care of them differently.

But yeah, that's a really important thing for people to understand is that your client's emotion through their stages is reflected on themselves and what they're doing.

Which is why I teach a formula to how you want to really invest in that client when they're part of the new, active, and alumni stage.

And that formula for your client experience is yes, first part, work touch points. But the second part of that formula is the relationship you build.

So the relationship touch points, and you have to have both. And when you have both, you have a greater opportunity to then also wow how they feel about you and then be able to plant what we call referral seeds to be able to bridge the gap to referrals.

Because my clients are not allowed to ask. They're not allowed to pay. They're not allowed to be gimmicky and promotional. And usually that's why they're with me anyways, because I don't want to do those things.

But I always tell folks like you're not going to do all these amazing things to build this amazing client experience and then ruin it with a, by the way, who do you know that's just like you that I should be working with.

Carol Cox: Stacey, I want to talk more about this idea of the touch point. So the work touch points and relationship touch points.

And this goes so well with what I talk about with public speaking and thought leadership, which is we have a tendency, especially as high achieving, well-educated expert women in our fields to get stuck in what I call the expert trap.

So we're so good at relaying information, whether it's in public speaking, podcast interviews, et cetera, that we forget about the transformation that our audience is looking for.

And because it's that transformation that gets them to feel and believe in something more for themselves or for their work or whatever it happens to be versus just information, which is important, but it's, it's not enough.

So it seems like what you're talking about with the work touch points and making sure to bring in the relationship touch points is also about, and the work that we're doing with our clients to make sure that we're also helping them understand the value of the transformation that they're undergoing.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah. You know, it's a crazy thing about the work that we do. At the end of the day, people want to know that like, Hey, I'm getting quality work.

But what really makes them feel like they would talk about you and that they would refer you and that they would even be open to the idea of it before they realize they're open to the idea of it is really how you make them feel.

It really comes down to that understanding of like, how do I feel. More so than, Oh my gosh, this is amazing, like the work I'm getting.

But also, that relationship you're building and how you make them feel. And that's what's remembered longer.

And that's the same thing with like, you know, I am as guilty of this I think as the next speaker, sometimes I'm like, I just want to make sure you have all the information.

Like you just got to have all the information because I want you to be able to go off and do go forth.

And the reality of it is, is that a lot of times the biggest transformation we make is that I need to think different about referrals. And so for me, it's the same thing.

It's the same thing with the clients on a referable client experience. I need you to have a great client experience, but I need you to think different about how you're going to get referrals out of it.

And recognizing that you've got to build relationships so that you have opportunities to plant referral seeds and really understanding that that is the journey your clients need to go on to move from she does great work to she does great work and I'm going to connect you to her because she's that amazing and you need her. And those are different.

Carol Cox: Stacey, can you give us an example, any that come to mind of developing the relationship with a client? What, what could that look like? What are some things that we could be doing?

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah. So I always tell folks, we want to look at the work touch points you're doing and depending on like how long your new stage, active stage, of course, the alumni stage is like indefinite until you decide to remove someone from the alumni list.

But the new stage and the active stage, depending on how long they are, there's going to be so many work touch points within them.

I usually tell folks, let's just say on average, in the new client stage, you have like 10 touch points you do. And this is some things the client never sees, right?

This isn't always things the client sees, but it could be the things you're doing for the clients behind the scenes and the things the client does see.

Let's just say for sake of argument in your new stage, you have like 10 work-based touch points. Then one or two of them probably needs to be a relationship-based touch point.

And then the same thing in active. Active is actually where most of the work happens within, with our client relationship.

And so let's just say you have like 40 touch points that happen start to finish, from that active stage starting until they move to the alumni stage.

And of course, if your clients are reoccurring, like they never leave, you don't actually move to the alumni stage. They go active and they stay in the ongoing active stage.

But you probably need to have like, if you've got 40 touch points in that point, you probably need to have like two or three that are relationship-based.

So we're looking at it from like a 20 to 30 percent relationship touch point in relation to the work touch points that you're doing. But it's not just all willy-nilly.

I'm going to do this touch point and then this touch point because I want to, or they feel good, or they're easy.

You actually have to be overcoming either some pitfalls that people make, or you've got to be overcoming some things that like of what the client is thinking.

So let's use, for example, the new client stage. When somebody decides to hire you, they have a moment of buyer's remorse. It doesn't matter how excited they are. It doesn't matter how long they've thought about hiring you.

At some point, they're gonna be like, oh boy, that's a lot of money. Am I going to get what I want out of this? And so it's important to try to overcome that buyer's remorse.

But most people do it by like, thanks so much for being a client. I'm like, no, no, no. In your relationship-based touch point, even though it still delivers on a work attitude, and that relationship-based touch point, we're going to acknowledge the buyer's remorse.

I call it the quiet voice. It's the quiet voice is the voice they're thinking. They're just not speaking. You don't know it, but you know it because you have it when you're a client of other people, right?

And so like, how do you overcome the quiet voice? How do you overcome that buyer's remorse that a client has, but also building on the relationship?

So one of the best things I like to tell my clients to do is sometimes that's handled through like the welcome card or the welcome gift, but it's the language you use that makes that really, really like hit home in terms of making me feel different about it.

So let's just take a welcome card, for example. Most people send a welcome card and they're like, Carol, thanks so much for becoming a client. We're excited to work with you. Can't wait to get started.

Fundamentally, I mean, I guess there's nothing wrong with that note, but it doesn't speak to anything I may have concerns about.

So I tell my clients to write what we call like, it's a little bit of a journey card. Like it's acknowledging the journey we're about to go on.

So the language we would use is more specifically to, Carol, I'm so excited to work with you. I know going through this process is going to stretch and challenge you and there's going to be moments you're going to wonder, what did I sign up for?

But I want you to know you're not alone and I'm your co-pilot. I'm here for the ride and I've got you.

That speaks so differently to a client who has a quiet voice and the buyer's remorse running through them versus the I'm so glad you're a client.

And that actually, that fundamental small card that you send or send that card with a gift is actually a relationship-based touch point that most people like wouldn't expect.

It feels like a work touch point, but the right language kind of turns it into a relationship touch point.

So sometimes it's not, let me send you 14 gifts because that's how you're going to feel like you're being taken care of. It's paying attention to how your client feels in the moment or the stage that they're in and then recognizing that and doing a work or a relationship touch point to speak to that.

Carol Cox: I love that example, Stacey. Very concrete and tangible. And I like it because it validates where the person is at, what they're thinking, it empathizes with them and it puts the emphasis on them and their journey versus you, the business and the transaction that you just closed.

Stacey Brown Randall: Right. Exactly. Absolutely.

Carol Cox: Okay. So that's really helpful. So we have these three stages, like you mentioned, the new stage, the active stage, and the alumni stage.

So I feel like we have a good sense of the new stage, alleviating buyer’s remorse, knowing that there's this quiet voice that's in there that is helpful to address in the beginning.

Oh, let me ask you this. When you're talking about these different touch points, are these generally, obviously they can be welcome gifts and welcome cards.

Is a lot of it happening via email besides say like Zoom calls or calls that you're having with clients, whether it's one-on-one or in group?

Stacey Brown Randall: So usually what I have my clients do is actually map out what they're currently doing from start to finish when they work with a client.

Because we actually want to pay attention to not only making sure that we have the right percentage of relationship touch points, but we want to have a variety behind delivery method.

So if everything you do with your clients is emailed, then I would want to make sure that we have some relationship touch points that are mailed.

So, you know, my business is very much like this. I am standing and looking at the humans that I get to work with over a screen with a camera, right? Like it's just how it is.

Not always. I have some where I work in person with people, but my coaching program is just like this with me and a bunch of faces in a Zoom room.

And so, my welcome gift when people join my coaching program is actually something that I mail.

It's actually a gift box that I mail to them that has very specific things in it that meets them where they are in that journey. And so the variety of the delivery method matters. I can't say there's like, hey, it should be five to ten.

Like I would never say that because I would need to know what someone's doing now and how they are communicating with clients now versus then giving them like, okay, you're doing it this way so let's add these three things in it and do them differently.

Carol Cox: I like that idea that it is also variety. I'm just thinking for myself. So I use LinkedIn as basically the only social media platform that I use.

And so I try to follow our clients, whatever stage that they're at. Obviously, the algorithm chooses to show me whoever it shows me.

But I do try to say, if I see them, you know, they were at a speaking engagement or they got a reward, I comment and congratulate them.

But I'm just thinking that even for current clients, so clients who are currently enrolled, we obviously send emails to them, you know, about upcoming calls and what they should be working on, but even maybe sending them a direct message on LinkedIn as more of a relationship touch point versus the here's what we're doing on the next call email touch point.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah. And I think that's one thing that people have to pay attention to, to what works for them, particularly when you move to the active stage.

Because it's in the active stage where the biggest pitfall you have to overcome is the lull of complacency.

Like it's just, we're doing our coaching calls, right? This happens. And then we're doing email checks or sending emails and we're sending Zoom link and we're showing up for coaching calls and we're reviewing your whatever it is like.

And this happens a lot for coaches in particular. It's like, it's that lull of complacency. It's the same with it doesn't really matter what you do.

There's always a lull of complacency. So paying attention to how do we show up a little bit different. And sometimes that means getting offline and going more analog, but that then comes into like a budget perspective.

They get to pay attention to logistical lift. That's real too. So yeah, sometimes it's being different.

Like sometimes I tell folks, like I had somebody, I was on a client call and he was like, I'm just going to email them. Like, no, you're not. You're going to send a video.

You're going to say whatever you would say in that email, but you're going to say it in a video because they need something different. He's like, I can do that.

Like I don't need you to like mail them a card every time you're trying to tell them something relationship based, but a video is better than yet another email.

Carol Cox: Oh, I love that. I could like Loom is so easy to use and then you can just embed it in the email. And the other thing that I have not done, but it reminds me that I should, is that sometimes I will get LinkedIn audio messages.

So direct messages on LinkedIn, but there, you know, you can record up to a minute at a time. And so I've gotten that from, you know, women colleagues that I know.

And I'm like, Oh, it's always, it's so nice to hear their voice and they can only really leave a minute or two message. That's it.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah, on Instagram, they've now changed it where you can leave like indefinite messages, which I have found is not great for someone who can sometimes ramble. So I'm like, Oh, LinkedIn, like they keep it tight.

Carol Cox: Yes. Okay. That's a great idea. I love this idea of the variety too. Okay. So then Stacey, let's talk briefly about the alumni stage.

So for example, here in our programs, we have our Thought Leader Academy. So women work with us and then they graduate and then they're in our alumni stage. So what does that look like as far as relationship building and keeping referrals in mind?

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah. So actually, at the alumni stage, there's no more work touch points. The only thing you have are relationship-based touch points.

Now, sometimes people use their alumni stage to bring people back to be a repeat client, right? That's not always what everybody's business is structured as to do that.

So in some cases, if the goal of my client is like, Hey, I want repeat clients in addition to referrals. And we may look at it a little bit differently.

But most of the time the work is done and them giving you a testimonial would be great. Then continuing to say great things about you online would be wonderful, but you really ultimately after the referrals, but all you have at that point are the relationship-based touch points.

And so it is an opportunity for you really. And I look at it this way. Most of the time when I'm working with clients, we are talking about staying top of mind, but when you get to the alumni stage, it really is like a step down from that.

And in terms of like a keeping in touch and really being like, I just, like you had this great experience with me. I want to make sure I'm popping up in your life, so you don't have the opportunity to forget about me. And so that can look very different for different people.

For me, once you're a client of mine and then you become an alumni client, the point is for everybody to eventually graduate, right? Is that you're always going to get up to at least your first so many years, our holiday card.

Now the difference with that is, is our holiday cards are a bit of a production. Like we theme them out, the family all participates. Usually, they are not happy with me, but like for one card, we did 11 different outfit changes and location changes.

Carol Cox: Oh my gosh, Stacey, you are hardcore.

Stacey Brown Randall: Like when I say production, they are a production. I actually have one of them in the book, in the Referable Client Experience book. And we linked to more like in the insider resource page.

But anyways, so like for me sending that out is like, there are some people, obviously not every person's like anticipating it, but like it comes and it makes a statement, right? It has an impact and it's a way for them to like, you know, remember me like keeping in touch, right? Staying in touch.

But there are other things that you can do that are more driven on more of that I'm just trying to like stay on your radar.

Because the idea behind the ability to be able to generate referrals first and foremost is that they can't forget about you.

And then, you need to make sure that you're staying in touch, keep in top of mind, staying in touch. And then it gives you that opportunity to maintain that relationship.

Now, if you have a client that's in your alumni stage and you're sending them like a holiday card and maybe they're invited to a client appreciation event for a couple of years after, and then maybe you're sending them like this random video for one, like 4th of July or something like that.

Like, let's not, let's, let's manage our expectations and don't think that's going to unleash a river of referrals from that alumni client.

But if you add in some other things, sometimes it's just like the check-in, like, Hey, I just want to check in and see how you're doing.

There's some things you can do that are just more time valuable as seen by the other person that allows them to be like, now you start working your way back into their memory bank.

And that's the big thing I want people to understand to be able to direct how someone thinks about you, like sending you referrals, you first have to impact how they feel about you.

And then you've earned the right to plant referral seeds and direct the language and the words that you speak to direct how they think about you. And it really does work in that order.

Carol Cox: Stacey, let's talk about how this applies to speaking engagements, because of course, everyone loves to get those inbound speaking requests, you know, the email or the LinkedIn message that says, Oh, I found you or someone told me about you.

And I would love for you to come speak at my event. And we have a budget to pay you. Right? So that's great.

So then how can we make it more likely that when we are working with event organizers, that we're getting referrals, maybe back to their own events, but to other event organizers that they know?

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah, so here's the thing, I think the number one thing to pay attention to is that what most people overlook is that they look at working with that event organizer in the just the singularity of that one speaking engagement.

And that event organizer is now your client, and they need a client experience as well. And if you're doing a lot of speaking, this is easier for you to set up in your business versus if you're like me and you do speaking, but you really do wait for the phone to ring.

You really do wait for the person to be like, I need you and you're like, great, what's your budget?

And so if you're really trying to build your speaking career, you have to treat the people who book you, they are your client, whether they are within an organization, and they may or may not be able to book you again, or they're within an association, and they have lots of other people like them in the organization they know, or lots of other associations that they're serving that they could bring you into.

They have a new, active, and alumni stage as well. And you need to build out what that looks like from a speaker's perspective, so that you can, you know, deliver the great work.

But it is not just about the time that you show up and you're on stage, and then you walk off stage, right? That's what I refer to when people are sitting in the audience, and they see you speak, and they're like, I want her. Yep, that's who I want.

That's like the right people in referrals that I teach from a client experience. You don't know the right people, when they show up in your client experience, they just reveal themselves by starting to refer you and you're like, Oh, got one, get a live one.

This is good, right? Same thing. But with your person who's booking you, that's where you have the potential for more, and you know who that person is.

And you need to manage them through that same process of that referable client experience, work and relationship touch points, and making sure, that you are extending that ongoing relationship with them.

So for instance, if you're speaking at a large conference, and you've got an event organizer that's booking you and a bunch of other people, you know the number one thing they probably need when the event is all over with, is a you survived it gift.

Carol Cox: Oh, that's a great idea, right?

Stacey Brown Randall: Right. Like, hey, thanks for having me, you survived it. It was so exciting.

Like, you don't need to say anything about referrals for something like that to work. I mean, truly, right. It's like, it's just the whole idea that as this one speaker, you showed up differently.

I have a friend who does a lot of speaking. And we were talking about the content of this book long before it ever came out. And he asked the same question as you Carol, like what does this look like for a speaker?

And I'm like, are you kidding? It's like, you can totally relate this to speaking because the person who books you as the client, and they have new active stage.

And I was like, Oh, my gosh, I was like, why don't you just send a you survived gift afterwards, like a self-care, kind of like small gift box, something in your budget, something you can afford.

And I kid you not, he got like four or five referrals for additional speaking engagements after that. Some came from the person he sent the gift to. And some came from people she told that also looking to book speakers.

Carol Cox: Yes, because not only as a speaker, you're going to do an excellent job, but like you said, you have to be memorable.

People have so much going on. You know people are drowning in information and emails and especially running events. And then for you to do something like that you will stand out.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yes, absolutely.

Carol Cox: OK, so I love these examples. These are really helpful to us. And so let me ask you this about whether it's clients or event organizers.

So oftentimes I will schedule a Zoom call with event organizer for after the event. You know, after they have survived it and did their self-care and their rest and recovery. So maybe is it you know two weeks later?

So I'll do a Zoom call with them because I want to get feedback from them about how it went and from the audience takeaways were any surveys and things like that.

And then oftentimes either myself or if my client is doing this, we will say something like, do you know any other event organizers or other events who could use a speaker like me, a speaker on my topic?

And my clients have gotten well paid opportunities from those referrals. So is that considered a soft ask versus a no-no ask?

Stacey Brown Randall: So here's the thing. Here's the thing I always tell folks, I am not interested in breaking anything that works in your business.

The way I would want to give direct information to your clients about this is how many times have you asked it and how many times has it produced results? And are there any patterns there?

So, for example, if you have a client who is asking that question of the event planner after the event and it's for more speaking engagements that that event planner is looking to book and that's where the referrals are coming from, well, that's a different ask than can you refer me to other people like you who are also booking speakers? So I think it depends on how you position it.

If you tell me, you've asked it 50 times and you've only landed one speaking engagement from it, my fear is is that the forty-nine that are now turned off for the one that you wanted to get.

I'm not taking anything away from the one that you landed. I'm just saying that if you ask that person like, hey, do you have any other opportunities or do you know of anybody who's also booking speakers?

If you ask that person, the trigger for them to refer to you was your ask. It isn't building the thought process in their minds by how you take care of them and how you show up and how you plant referral seeds that triggers future referrals.

And that's the difference I want people to make. Like, yeah, there are people who ask and there are people who get some referrals

But how many times do you ask? How many times does it actually work? And could you consider shifting it to look a little bit different in terms of now that becomes the trigger.

And so if you're not always asking them, maybe they won't think to actually refer you. So, again, if you ask and people are like, hey, every third person I ask, I get a speaking engagement. But I would never tell you not to.

You're doing something right. I would love to analyze your language because I bet it's not very direct. I bet it's like circumventing it just a little bit, which is probably helpful because it doesn't feel so like, OK, don't give me work to do.

Just that's what people don't want. They don't want you to give them work to do. So it is important in terms of how you position your language.

But if it's not working or it works one every 50 times, I'm like, oh, my gosh, please stop asking because you may be damaging relationships.

Carol Cox: Yes. Collect data. I'm such a big believer in tracking data sources where things come from.

So thank you for that, Stacey. Yes, I could not agree more. OK, so I have a few more questions for you that I want to dig into.

So is there anything surprising or counterintuitive that you've learned about referrals from the clients that you've worked with beyond just the asking directly usually doesn't work, but anything else surprising or counterintuitive?

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah, I think that sometimes what people don't expect is that you can't plant one or two referral seeds and think you're going to unleash some type of river of referrals.

Like in theory, I say that and like that makes perfect sense. But then when you're a client of mine and you're like doing it, you're like, when are they coming?

I'm like, nobody has an eight ball. Like we don't know. And some clients, I always tell folks, I'm like, listen, if 20 to 30 percent of your clients are referring you, you're actually doing great.

That's a good baseline to get to. Then we can improve from there. But let's not like jump in this being like a thing you're going to go from zero to 75 percent referring you because you planted a couple of referral seeds or you did a couple of like welcome cards.

Like it is an intentional, repeatable process where you're percolating the idea of referrals in moments that you have in your business where referrals are maybe more likely to happen and that you're repeatable with it and you're doing it for every client.

And we're seeing who it actually produces referrals from. And then we're testing those kind of things out.

So I think sometimes people are like, well, I said the thing and I'm like, OK. You said one thing. I had a client that I worked with the same way.

Like he was like, I'm doing the thing. I'm like, yeah. And you're like white knuckling every conversation you have planting the referral seeds and you're almost doing it like you're daring it not to work.

And guess what? It's not working because like we sense that this isn't genuine for you. And they totally switched his focus. And in one quarter, he got six referrals. So some of this is the belief that it can work.

The second thing is, is the belief that it's not going to work on your timetable. And I can't predict. And it's not going to happen because you do one or two things. It is an experience.

Carol Cox: Yes. And I tell our podcast listeners and our clients the same thing about public speaking that it takes time. It takes time to build your network. It takes time to build your reputation as a speaker.

You go do one or two speaking engagements. Great. Now you're going to get the ball rolling, but it takes a while for it to pick up speed. It's not going to happen in one month, like it's just not.

It's just not going to do that. So you have to be realistic, but you also have to get the ball started. You can't just keep waiting for it.

All right. So then, Stacey, so think of this idea of getting the ball started for the listeners out there. If they could take one action this week to start creating a more referable client experience, what would you suggest?

Stacey Brown Randall: OK, this may not be the answer that your audience really wants to hear because it's not some like flash in the pan, like, hey, let's say this one thing or plant this one referral seed or let's do this one tactic.

But I really think what people forget is that before the referral piece can work, you really have to pay attention to what you're already executing on within your client experience.

Like I see people all the time. They're like, I want to add this wow factor and then plant these referral seeds. And I'm like, yeah, but your clients are really hoping you just fix this one part of your process first.

So the example I like to share is like, you know, my husband and I go to a gym that's near our house. And I walked in one day and there's like the sign out. It was like sixty thousand dollars invested in new equipment.

And I looked at the sign, and I was like I just wish the water out of the water fountain was cold and not lukewarm. Can we do that before you give me a whole bunch of more equipment?

Like sometimes it really is about looking at how do you communicate? How do you set expectations? How do you deliver on the work you do?

Do all of your automations, are they working as they should? Do you actually have a blend of automation? Which I know allows you to be efficient, but also engagement.

Do you have a blend of like the work you do and the relationship you're building? Like pay attention to what you're doing now and fix the basics before you're like, OK, now let me take this up a level.

Carol Cox: So they can just like sit down, pen and paper, jot down the different touch points that they're doing right now in a typical client engagement that they have and then start looking to see how they can make improvements and add some of those relationship touch points as well.

Stacey Brown Randall: We actually in chapter two of the Referable Client Experience, that is the exact process is like write out what you're currently doing now, not what you want to do, not what you sometimes do, but what are you doing now? Map that out. And then we use that as a baseline to how to improve upon it.

Carol Cox: Well, so speaking of your book, Stacey, tell us more about your book and where can we get it?

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah, so it's Referable Client Experience. The website for the book is the title ReferableClientExperience.com.

And of course, you can purchase it wherever books are sold. So if you prefer audio, e-book or printed, all three versions are available.

Carol Cox: Fantastic. And it is out now. I'll make sure to include links in the show notes so you all can grab it there. Go get Stacey's book. I know having known Stacey now for seven years, over seven years. Unbelievable.

I love this like online women's business community because I feel like I've known so many of you all for so long. And I really enjoy seeing everyone's growth and their thought leadership develop.

So congratulations again, Stacey, on this book. I can't wait to get a copy because we're recording a couple of weeks before the book actually comes out. So I can't wait to get my copy and to read it and to start applying it here to the work that we do at Speaking Your Brand.

And also, I'll make sure to include Stacey links to your website, the programs that you run, as well as your main social media platforms. Stacey, thank you so much for taking the time to come on the podcast.

Stacey Brown Randall: Thanks for having me. I appreciate it.

Carol Cox: Until next time, thanks for listening.

Stacey Brown Randall: I hope that you enjoyed this podcast takeover with my friend Carol Cox of the Speaking Your Brand podcast. We're going to link to all the ways you can connect with her, of course.

But I just want to make a quick note. If speaking is a part of your business or if it should be, then you definitely want to check her out.

She has this really cool quiz that you can take that will help you discover your speaker's archetype. There's nothing better than learning a little bit more about yourself.

You can access the transcripts, plus the resources mentioned like connecting with Carol and where to take her speaker archetype quiz on the show notes page for this episode at StaceyBrownRandall.com/410.

Thanks for making it to the end. Until next week. Take control of your referrals and build a referable business. Bye for now.