

Ep #417: Get More Clients

ROADMAP *to* REFERRALS



with *Stacey* BROWN
RANDALL

Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Stacey Brown Randall

Stacey Brown Randall: Hey there, do you love referrals but hate asking for them? Well, then you've come to the right place. This is the Roadmap to Referrals podcast, and I'm your host, Stacey Brown Randall.

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Every week, I break down why you don't have to ask, pay, be gimmicky, or network all the time to generate referrals for your business.

We take a science-backed approach with our methodology, frameworks, and strategies. The goal is simple, to help you take control of your referrals on your terms.

Shauna Lynn Simon: Hey there, I'm Shauna Lynn Simon, host of the Real Women, Real Business podcast. And I am so excited to be taking over the Roadmap to Referrals podcast to share my conversation with Stacey Brown Randall.

On my show, I work with what I like to affectionately call my accidental CEOs. These are women who built successful businesses through talent, instinct, and a whole lot of figuring it out as they went and are now ready for more strategy, more structure, and sustainability.

In this episode, Stacey and I talk about how referrals are not about awkward asks, gimmicks, or constantly chasing new people. They're about relationships, trust, and being intentional with the people who already believe in your work.

One of my favorite takeaways was the simple but powerful reminder to start by identifying who is already referring you, then simply take better care of those relationships. Enjoy our conversation.

Shauna Lynn Simon: Hello and welcome to the Real Women, Real Business podcast today. I am super excited to welcome our guest Stacey Brown Randall to the podcast.

She is a multi-award-winning author of *Generating Business Referrals Without Asking*, as well as the upcoming book, *The Referable Client Experience*, which is set to release in October of 2025.

She's also the host of one of my favorite podcasts, the Roadmap to Referrals podcast. And one of the things that I think makes Stacey

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especially unique is her contrarian approach to referrals, because she teaches business owners how to generate these naturally, without manipulating, without incentivizing, without even asking.

And her work has been featured in major publications like Entrepreneur Magazine, Forbes, and Investor Business Daily.

And so I want to just explain a little bit about how I originally met Stacey, because we actually collaborated as co-authors on a book with LuAnn Nigara, who's also been featured on this podcast.

And I will be honest. When I first learned that her whole premise to everything that she does is all about referrals, I was a little skeptical because I'm like, how on earth are you building an entire business around referral strategies? That sounds like a portion of your business plan.

And she makes it basically your whole world. And you'll see why when we get to talking about this. And after listening to her speak about it, seeing the results that her clients have achieved, I got to say, I am absolutely 100% a true believer.

So Stacey holds a master's in organizational communication. She's helped thousands of business owners double, triple, and even quadruple their referral revenue.

And today, we're going to dive deep into her methodology and how busy female entrepreneurs can build sustainable referral systems without the awkward sales tactics that we all hate. So Stacey, welcome. Thank you so much for joining me.

Stacey Brown Randall: Oh, gosh, it's my pleasure. Thanks so much for having me.

Shauna Lynn Simon: Seriously, when we first connected on that book, I'm not kidding when I say that. I'm sure probably when I met you, I was like,

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oh, this sounds fantastic in my head. I was like, I don't understand how this is the whole strategy, like legitimately.

I mean, talk about niching down, like this is as niche as it gets. So what made you realize that this was such a crucial missing piece for most business owners?

Stacey Brown Randall: Well, first, thanks for saying, like, recognizing that it's actually the subject matter is my niche, right, is the niche, is like, it's the subject matter. I mean, I do actually only, I have some industries I work in and some that I don't work in, because it's how my strategies work

But I always like to say to people, when you want to talk to me about business and things like that, I'm an inch wide, but I go a few hundred thousand miles deep.

And it is on that one topic about referrals and really understanding that all the things we're taught about referrals don't have to be true. You don't have to ask. You don't have to compensate.

You don't have to network every single day so people never forget you. You don't have to send gimmicky things out in the mail or put in your email signature, Oh, the greatest compliment you can give me is a referral. Those don't have to be true.

We've been told for generations they're true. But they don't have to be true. So there is another way to do referrals, to generate referrals.

So, you know, I when I started this business, it was like I needed it for myself. I had overcome a business failure. I was starting again with my second business. Didn't want to be a two-time member of the Business Failure Club.

It doesn't need any more members. It has lots of people in it. And I think the statistic is like 85% of all small businesses will fail before they hit year five.

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I am one of them. I was at year four when my business failed, my first business.

So when I started this business, I was like, I got to figure this out. I got to grow this business. And business development, like it, love it, loathe it, leave it. It doesn't matter. You have to do it. Like you have to have a strategy to bring in clients.

And so for me, it was like, okay, well, let's find a way that I'm willing to do it. Because when my second business started, I was like, we need to, this one really needs to be successful.

And I'm glad to say it's 12 years now. That was 12 years ago when I started this business. But yeah, it's just, it's been really interesting of like my ability to recognize referrals, figure out what really makes them happen.

And I know we'll talk about this because it's all about the science and several tools. And then for me, I was like, yes, this is what business owners need. This is what no one's teaching them or telling them.

And they say the marketing strategy or as a business development strategy, find your blue ocean. And for me, this was my blue ocean. Referrals is a very red ocean. There's a lot of people who teach referrals and a lot of the same generic tactics are taught.

And for me, it was like, no, I'm just going to go over here and I'm going to teach you how to get it without doing the things you hate.

And I mean, it didn't matter if it didn't work. Once it worked, I was like, OK, I'm on to something. And I built a business around it.

Shauna Lynn Simon: And I think that's exactly what's key, because it does kind of sound too good to be true. But I know that it works.

I've listened to the success stories that you share on your podcast about your clients. And I've practiced them myself.

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And I think that in a day and age where it's so easy for us to hide behind our computer and say, I'm doing everything, but things aren't working, are you doing everything? Or are you just posting every day on social media and hoping that something finally clicks with someone or that something goes viral?

And I'll be honest I've had a couple of videos go viral. They did not bring me in any more business.

Stacey Brown Randall: So true. I literally tell my assistant, Kathy, she's amazing. She's my right hand. And she really does excel at the social media stuff and the video editing and all that kind of stuff. So she's amazing. But I always like to say to her, remember, I don't make money on social media. As much as we need to do things, I'm not making money there.

Shauna Lynn Simon: Yeah, you might bring in some leads, get some people into your orbit. And yes, there's absolutely value to that. They may eventually turn into clients.

But the cost of acquisition for that client can be pretty high, especially if you're doing ads, and especially if you don't have a real sales funnel set up for them. If it's just like, oh, cool, I captured a follower, great. Now what do you do with them?

So I think, you know, talking about the whole, like, without asking, without incentivizing, without manipulating, like, it does sound too good to be true. So can you kind of break down?

I don't want to give away all your secrets, of course, but, you know, kind of break down, like, what does naturally actually mean in real practice?

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah, so I do always like to say, generating referrals naturally doesn't mean no work. So I want to be really clear.

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You're not asking, you're not manipulating, you're not taking advantage of reciprocity, you're not compensating, you're not paying, you're not going to be gimmicky, you're not going to network all the time.

But that doesn't mean you're doing nothing, and it replaces that. So I always feel like that's the little disclaimer I want to put out there.

When you understand the science behind referrals, there's a few key things I always tell folks. You have to wrap your head around. For them, when you hear me say, don't ask, you're like, yeah, why would I? Because it violates the science.

Or when I say, don't compensate, you're like, yeah, because that commoditizes my relationships. Or when I say, don't feel like you have to network and be seen and be known, you're like, yeah, because the science says, based on behavioral economics, that it's not about the repetition of someone remembering me.

It's about how well I'm connected with them that they're going to remember me and the relationship we have. And I can do less stuff and have a tighter relationship than see them every week at my monthly leads meeting.

So when you understand where referrals fit in your overall sales strategy and then the science behind it, everything I say like, don't ask, don't pay, you're like, yeah, got it.

Until you understand those two pieces, what you think, Shauna Lynn, it's like, yes, exactly. You're like, yeah, right. Like, too good to be true, because those are the pieces that aren't connecting.

So when I tell people where referrals fit in their sales strategy, most of us are taught, if you go through any sales training, we're taught that sales strategy is a two-legged stool.

We've got prospecting, and we've got marketing. And you should do both. And both are good. I do both. Every business probably does both, right?

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The problem with that, though, is that then people say, well, referrals has to fit in either leg. It's got to fit in my prospecting activities, the networking, the 7 million cups of coffee, the joining different leads groups, the cold calling, the cold emailing, the cold direct messaging.

If referrals have to fit into prospecting, well, then it makes sense that the tactics are taught based on the mindset and the messaging of prospecting activities that you're going to be told to ask or pay or do a bunch of networking.

If you believe that referrals don't fit in prospecting, but they fit in the other leg of the stool, marketing, well, then now we're talking about being gimmicky and promotional and putting your email signature, the greatest compliment you can give me as a referral, because you feel like it's an activity.

Referrals are an activity within your marketing, which is also your website and your social media and your thought leadership and your earned PR, right? And maybe sponsorships.

Because if you're taught that sales is two legs, prospecting, marketing, pick which one you want referrals to go into, it drives the tactics that have been around for generations.

The problem with that is it's not where referrals fit. Referrals are not part of prospecting, they're not part of marketing, and your sales strategy is not a two-legged stool, it's a three-legged stool. And the third leg is referrals, because everything's different.

When you put a post out there on social media, you're hoping a prospect will see it, like it, comment, and then give you a bunch of money. Like, let me hire you, right?

Or when you go to that networking event, you're hoping that you sit at that table with somebody who was like, I have been needing to hire you. I just didn't know you. Like, let me give you a bunch of money.

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Shauna Lynn Simon: I mean, it happens. Sure. Sometimes it's not quite the, here's a bag of money. But you know, for the most part, yes, it can certainly happen. But it's so much left to chance.

Stacey Brown Randall: So much left to chance. And it's the idea there that if that's what you're after, it's that faster mentality, it's a let's make it happen, let's get me fastest as I can to the prospect.

The problem with that though is when it's referrals, you don't know who the prospect is. With referrals, all you know is who the referral source is, the person who knows the prospect and knows they have a problem and knows they need you.

So all the messaging, all of the conversational points, all the relationship building, everything you do, the work to generate referrals is based on who you're delivering it to.

In this case, it's not prospecting and marketing, so it's not the prospect, it's the referral source. You don't need to sell to your referral sources, but you do need to build relationships with your referral sources.

And so instantly you can see how, oh yeah, so when I send an email out and it's like promoting my latest thing that I'm pitching, I don't need my referral sources to get that. I don't need to be selling to them. I need to be nurturing a relationship with them.

And I mean, if they get your newsletter, fine, but that's not how you're cultivating that relationship. So when you want referrals, The focus is on who's on the receiving end of what you're doing, and it's not the prospect. So you're not selling.

It's a referral source who knows the prospect, and so you're building relationships. And that, coupled with the science behind referrals, changes everything about then how you're going to show up to generate referrals.

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Shauna Lynn Simon: And I think that's just like, as you're talking, I can just see how probably everyone listening to this is sort of reframing it in their own minds. Because like you said, everything that we've been taught is essentially wrong.

And I can remember when I was operating my home staging business, we would get just these glowing testimonials. And we would sometimes get pushback, for example, on our price. We were not the cheapest stage or in town.

In fact, we were definitely at the higher end of the scale. And so there's times where we definitely get pushback on our price. So and so is only charging this much. And of course, we're focusing on this is our value, yada, yada, yada.

And we could usually convert people nonetheless with our conversations in terms of our value and such.

But I remember saying, like, if only people could experience what we do firsthand, like, once they experience it, they're singing our praises. But how do we get them to understand that experience without having experienced it?

And it's one thing for me to say it. It's another thing for someone else to say it. And that's when I started realizing how important, yes, the testimonials and the Google reviews absolutely were. But in addition to that, how important it was to get those referral sources.

And I wouldn't say that I ever had a referral strategy. I was very fortunate that apparently whatever I was doing worked. But if I were to dissect it, I'll admit that there are times where I'm like, I don't actually know what I did that worked.

But I can tell you that people would call our company. And for the most part, we worked with real estate agents. And real estate agents would refer other real estate agents. And here is how the referral usually went.

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Someone would call us and they would say, so-and-so told me that you're the best stager in town and that I should just book you, that you're not the cheapest, but that I should just go ahead with it, so when can I book you in?

So my sales have essentially been done for me. It doesn't mean I don't still have a bit of an uphill road, like I still have things, they still have to meet us, they still have to be on board with things.

But they're already pre-sold on understanding, like listen, if you're looking for cheap, this is not the company to go to. You want the best, this is the company to go to.

That right there did so much of the heavy lifting for us that we can tell them that all we want. Who's going to believe us? Just because we're saying that we're the best and that they should just pay our rates doesn't necessarily mean they're going to be like, OK.

Stacey Brown Randall: Oh, sure. Let me do that right now.

Shauna Lynn Simon: Here's a big bag of money. So it was incredible to build that on. Like I said, I would love to say that I understand the science behind it, that I understand all these things. I don't.

I think that's why I'm so intrigued by what you do, because I'm thinking if I could dissect that into a repeatable process for every business, I mean, that's huge. You're saying essentially pretty much every business.

And I know because I've listened to your podcast, I also know there are certain types of businesses that you prefer not to work in. You say that the strategies don't work nearly as well. But for the most part, this is a very repeatable process.

So if someone's saying, well, that doesn't work for my industry, chances are it actually will work for them, no matter what industry they're in, no matter

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how niche they are, no matter how different they are from everybody else out there.

So what does this look like? Walk us through a little bit of the philosophy. Referrals come from these relationships, which comes from our connections, which are built on these ongoing touch points. What does all this look like in practice?

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah, you know, there's two things we need for referrals to happen. And it's the two things that people don't, like that other people who talk about referrals, they, they want to tell you that you control both of these and you actually only control one.

So you're going to know this answer because I know you listen to the podcast. And I talk about this pretty regularly because I feel like sometimes you just have to repeat yourself like a thousand times before people like got it. Okay. On the hundredth and one time, I got it.

But there are two things you need to make a referral happen. It's desire and opportunity. And what most people will tell you is that you can control both. And if you only control one, well, then you control opportunity. And you don't. You control desire. You don't control opportunity.

People who teach you or tell you, you control opportunity of when someone will refer to you, they're going to teach you tactics where you're forcing or artificially creating or manufacturing that referral to be true by the asking scripts and things like that.

The referrals I want to walk in the door are the ones that have kind of been like, I know you're not the cheapest, but I'm still going to hire you because I have that much trust in you because somebody else told me to trust you.

And I just did an episode recently on this. I believe that we're in a trust recession. I believe that trust in businesses and small businesses, big businesses, brands, doesn't matter. It's like at an all-time low. There's just a

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lot of stuff happening. And you don't have to be in the United States to feel the trust recession.

Shauna Lynn Simon: Most definitely, yes.

Stacey Brown Randall: It's everywhere, right? And I think we all gotta have our unique acuteness to it, but like the truth is it's everywhere. And so that ability for someone to say, I trust this person is what we want, but it's the piece we don't control.

What we control is your desire to pick you. I refer to you and not the 50 other people who do what you do in your town. Or I pick you to refer to and not the thousand or ten thousand other, let's use real estate agents as our example.

There's never an area in any place in a larger city where there's like five realtors. There's five on one block. I'm just saying, when there's thousands who do what you do, and if you're all still in business, on some level you do a good job, or you wouldn't be around forever, right?

But why do I pick you? And the desire is the piece you control. Not like, snap my fingers and I look at you and you just give me a referral because it's some Jedi mind trick. That's not what I'm talking about.

What I'm talking about is what you control is how you manage and maintain and deepen and strengthen the relationship, the desire in me. And you do that by our relationship, but we're all really busy, like super busy, busy business owners.

So like when I say you got to maintain connection, some people are like, I don't have time to take everybody to coffee every month. And I'm like, yeah, I don't either.

So I would like, I don't know who has time for that actually. And nobody wants to go to coffee with you every single month. So no matter how lovely you are.

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So the reality of it is it's like it's creating a system that derives that connection that is comes from a place of being genuine and authentic and it drives that connection through outreaches, which we internally with my clients called touch points.

And when you, like there's a framework we use inside our program of how you create what those touch points are. They are not your newsletter and they're not 10 events in a year.

We use behavioral economics a lot to like factor in to how we build these touch points. And so you only have to do like 5 or 6, maybe 7 of them in a full year. And some of them are simple, and some of them can be complex, but they don't have to be.

Some people are like, I don't have a budget. I'm like, great, shoestring budgets can apply. You don't have to, like, I can't go buy Cutco knives for every single person who refers to me. I'm like, then don't. You can do others.

Shauna Lynn Simon: Yeah, a big thing that staggers are faced with often is that here comes the holidays, every real estate agent needs to get the latest and greatest blanket, cutting board, whatever it is that you want to give as that special gift.

But at the end of the day, they're getting this from, I mean, real estate agents are one of the most sought-after businesses for so many different industries. So they are getting just showered with gifts, especially at Christmas time.

Is that really a touch point that's going to have any value? And instead, how many thousands of dollars have you spent now on that so-called campaign to get in front of them? And I just I cannot condone it.

I'll admit I've done it with varying success. I wouldn't say that it's ever helped me with my referrals or anything else. It's a nice thank you. I think

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that's all that you want to do is just give a nice thank you by all means. But it's not going to make you stand out in any way.

Stacey Brown Randall: No, and particularly like that's what, and it's like real estate agents. Like anytime I'm working with one, I'm like, can we just stop sending pies at Thanksgiving?

Shauna Lynn Simon: I mean, I do like my, I get a lot of free pies at Thanksgiving, so I'm going to push back on that.

Stacey Brown Randall: You're like, wait a minute. Don't take away my pies. My point is, is that, and most people who refer to an agent probably only have one agent they refer to, right?

So most of the time, it's not like the people who are referring to real estate agents are getting 16 pies, right? It's just I see it all the time. Like, every agent puts in their plan pies at Thanksgiving.

I'm like, it's fine. And I let them keep it. Like, I don't tell them to take it out. But for me, I'm like, just do something different.

Shauna Lynn Simon: Can we just move beyond it, yes.

Stacey Brown Randall: Can we just try something different? But the truth is, is, when we're trying to be, like part of the framework of how we build our touch points and one piece of that five-part framework is what we call minding your M&Ms, which is really memorable and meaningful.

What we do needs to be memorable and meaningful. For some people, sending a Christmas gift at Christmas time or a Hanukkah gift at Hanukkah time in the holidays is very memorable and meaningful.

Because in their world, with who their referral sources are, they're not getting showered with gifts. It may be the only gift they get, right? And hear me say this, we're talking about a gift because it's the easy thing to talk about.

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I tell folks, I'm like, don't you do five gifts in a year? That's creepy weird. Like, you better have some variety, right? You can't just like, let me just write a bunch of thank you cards and I'll get referrals.

Let me just send a bunch of gifts and like, no, like, there has to be a surprise and delight factor. That's how behavioral economics plays into it. But it is really important to understand that piece. And I think that's the piece people miss.

So for some people, the holiday gift is perfect. For others, it's like, let's do the random thing, because that's going to be more memorable and meaningful.

And most of the time when people are hearing me talk about my strategies, they'll be like, OK, so just tell me what to do. What are the five? What are the six? What are the seven touch points?

And I'm like, I know you hate this answer, but the truth is who your referral sources are helps us create the right touch points for you based on the science-based framework. And I know that everyone's like, well, can't I just write the one thing that my neighbor's writing? And I'm like, no.

Because if you tell me that your referral sources are predominantly guys in their 20s, we're going to build a very different plan of outreach than if you tell me that the majority of your referral sources are women in their 40s and 50s.

But I know I just over-generalized two totally different groups of humans, but it's to make the point of people understanding who you're sending things to. Your referral sources matters.

Shauna Lynn Simon: I love that you're providing the framework, but it's not a one-size-fits-all model of like, here are the six things that you need to do. So I wanna dive in just a little bit further as well as to how people get started on this and how to avoid some of the most common mistakes.

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But first, we're gonna take a very quick break to hear a quick message from our sponsor, and we'll be right back. We'll be right back after this quick message.

Shauna Lynn Simon: This episode of the Real Women, Real Business podcast is brought to you by, well, potentially you. Are you a brand or service that supports passionate female entrepreneurs who are ready to turn their vision into profit without the stress and overwhelm?

Perhaps you're an Accidental CEO yourself, now on a mission to make work and life easier for fellow passion-driven boss ladies. Our podcast is experiencing an exciting 30% month-over-month growth, reaching entrepreneurs who are building stronger, working smarter, and dreaming bigger.

We have limited partnership opportunities available for brands that align with our mission of redefining how working hard looks and feels. Visit AboutShaunaLynn.com/partner to learn more about becoming a partner in our rapidly growing show.

Shauna Lynn Simon: All right, welcome back to the Real Women Real Business podcast, where we are speaking with Stacey Brown Randall about referral strategies. And I think what we were just covering is the fact that it's not a one-size-fits-all model.

There's a proven framework that is science-backed, which you're always going to get me anytime something is science-backed, because I am all about the science on things.

And this is not just a feeling or a gimmick that one company did and it worked. And now they're saying like, oh, everybody can do this. This is all very, very much vetted.

But it's not like, I think people who are listening to this are like, just give me the six things right now that I can do. And it's not, it's not possible to do that.

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So can we maybe talk about what are some of the first steps that they should be taking or perhaps what are some of the pitfalls that they should be trying to avoid?

I mean, I think you've kind of covered some of the things like don't send a gift on every occasion and don't overload someone who's already getting a gazillion of something at a time. So yeah, let's dive into some of the things to get them started on this pathway.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah, the very first thing that you should do, and everybody should do it. They should stop listening to this podcast when we're done, and then they should go do this piece of homework.

Because no matter what your results show you or that you see, you will know instantly. You're like, OK, now I have real information in which to make decisions from. And that is taking the time to identify who's referring you now.

Like, most people will come up to me and they'll be like, oh, my business, because I'm a referral person, right? They're like, my business is all referrals. And I like lovingly look at them and I'm like, that is amazing.

And inside I'm like, you are lying. And I don't say that because A, it's rude, and I was raised better than that. But B, the truth is, is that most people believe their business is built on referrals.

And I cannot tell you of the 12 years I've been doing this, the number of spreadsheets that I have looked at where people have told me, my business is built on referrals. And then I got to see the data. And I'm like, those two things do not align. Like, sorry.

Shauna Lynn Simon: It's so true.

Stacey Brown Randall: But here's the thing and let me just address this really fast before we talk about some tactics people can start doing, because this is really important.

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The reason why people tell me and other people that my business is based on referrals, and 97% of them is a made-up statistic, but I know I'm right. 97% of them aren't telling the truth. It's because of what a referral says about us.

When people work with me, they're like, yeah, I want referrals because I'm going to get better clients and I'm going to make more money. And I'm like, yes, but we are just scratching the surface of what a referral means to you.

When you can tell somebody your business is predominantly served by referrals or you get a lot of referrals, it's not just what that says to somebody else. It's what you then believe about yourself.

Because if you get referrals, it means you're worthy. The business that you do is truly like valuable. People want it and they need it and they want other people to experience it.

And as a business owner, who's usually the people I work with are really good at something. I'm an amazing interior designer. I'm an amazing home stager. I'm an amazing marketing consultant. And now I'm gonna go out on my own and start my own business.

So they're amazing at something. And then they're like, now let me figure out how to do my own bookkeeping and bring in clients.

Shauna Lynn Simon: I affectionately call those my Accidental CEOs who started a business with more passion than plan.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yes, absolutely. And most people are like that, even if they plan a lot. It's the, 'I can do this for myself' mentality is where we all start.

So when they're in that moment, right? Like, and you're like, okay, you're great at this. And now you've got to learn how to run a business, right?

In that moment, when you get a referral, it like feeds your self-confidence. It's like, I'm worthy, right? I am valuable. I am worth it. I am referral worthy.

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Like I like to say, I work with referral worthy business owners, right?
Referral worthy entrepreneurs.

Because what a referral says to you is that, you're worth it, you're validated that this business you started is good. And so yes, it means the money and the easier clients and all the things on the outside, but internally, that's what it says to us.

So I know when someone says to me, my business is supported by referrals, and I know they're probably lying, but don't mean to, it's because they get to tell themselves, because I do get some referrals that I'm like, without saying it, right?

Without always connecting the dots or like, I mean something, you know, like, you know, I'm a business owner and I matter and I'm valuable and people like to do business with me.

Shauna Lynn Simon: Sure.

Stacey Brown Randall: So that's why I always like to say, when people are like, oh, all my business comes from referrals. It's because they're building that value in themselves and they want to believe it to be true.

Here's the thing. You are valuable. You don't actually probably need referrals to prove to you that you are valuable, but they're the ultimate validation.

Shauna Lynn Simon: Right.

Stacey Brown Randall: But here's the other thing. People don't refer you just because they love working with you. And people don't refer you just because you've been in the same networking group with them for six years and they adore you and sing your praises.

Referring you goes further than word of mouth buzz. There's an extra step involved and it's called my reputation. And now it's on the line.

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And so doing great work doesn't equate referrals. Knowing a bunch of people doesn't equate referrals. Having a huge brand in town doesn't equate to referrals. You have to bridge the gap with the things that will have people remember to actually refer you.

And so the way that we teach this is that you've got to identify who are your referral sources now. That will then tell you, do you need more referral sources too, which is a different strategy.

But if you have people referring you now, my big question is, how are you taking care of them? Like, what are you doing that's allowing you to be memorable and meaningful in your newsletter, isn't it? That's allowing them to build the desire to pick you.

But also, and this is where my secret sauce piece comes in, gives you those five to six touch points in a year. They give you the opportunity to use certain type of language, which we call referral seeds, that allow you to plant a gratitude-based perspective on referrals while you're taking care of these people and letting them know that you appreciate them.

And that is truly my secret sauce of how the entire science-backed framework works. It's the what we do, the cadence in which we do it, and then the language that we use throughout it that allows someone to feel cared for.

And once we've impacted how they feel, we can then direct how they think. But we always come from a place of being authentic and kind. And then, of course, from gratitude and thankfulness.

This is not a manipulation, taking advantage of reciprocity. But it is this idea that like, hey, you take care of my business by referring to me. Of course, I'm going to take care of you back.

And it may not be in referrals. I may not ever, ever be able to refer you. Right? But that doesn't mean I can't take care of you and let you know that you matter to me. And that is like the heart of what I teach.

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I just teach a way for business owners to like manage it and get the language right and get the science piece right. So it doesn't come off as weird or creepy, or like you're overdoing it. But you start. with identifying who's referring you. Who are your people?

Shauna Lynn Simon: And I think that is such a key point because even as you're speaking there, I'm kind of thinking to myself of like, well, who's sending me referrals?

Because I mean, as a business coach, yeah, that is a very good part of my business. And some of the referral sources that I think that I have as I'm thinking about them, I'm like, are they really a referral source?

And to your point of like, how am I treating them in a non-transactional way, in a, you know, I will probably say that I'm probably not doing half of the things that you are saying I should be doing and probably doing most things wrong.

Because I think to your point, you know, everyone looks at a referral strategy as sort of a means to an end. And when you look at it that way, and meanwhile, of course, I'm always building genuine relationships, and I'm just amazed when those genuine relationships end up turning into referral.

But when I don't approach them, specifically as like, you need to give me a referral. Can you give me a referral? Here's a link to get me a referral.

When I don't approach them in that way, it's amazing how people are just like singing my praises. Like, here you go. I want to give you any business that I can possibly give you. There's just a natural way to it.

I wouldn't say that I could replicate it necessarily though. I don't have a system in place for replicating it.

Stacey Brown Randall: Well, and more than likely, you could probably tell me, here are the things I think I was doing. And I could pull out the pattern

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that was there and how you were tapping into the behavioral economics part of the science framework that actually made it work for you.

Some people do stumble. I'm not the only human, right? I'm just the human who built a business around it and gives you all the shortcuts. But other people do sometimes like over years, like create this for themselves.

And I think that's the important thing to remember. The other thing is, and I'd like that you said, like, I'm just being genuine.

A big part, so one of the foundational strategies that I teach is, yes, the first and foremost is if you have people referring you now, we're going to dive into that because that's your low hanging fruit.

And usually, I can get to the ROI and the referral increase you're looking for from that group of people, which is just your existing referral sources. But nine times out of 10, not always, but nine times out of 10, people are also like, and I need more people referring to me, new people referring to me.

Then they go through that training. And at the very beginning of that training, it's like, hold on. I'm about to teach you something that's going to feel very backwards, very slow, and like, are you serious? Can we just get on with it? And that is why this is going to work.

Because people come to me all the time and they're like, well, I want to do this so I can get this in exchange. And I'm like, wrong. Like, if that's how you approach it, you're not going to always get that.

You may get some of it. Every once in a while, you may hit people at the right time. But I teach what we call literally the process of turning new people into referral sources and to my clients, we call it the backwards model.

We are like, we're not a bull in a china shop going in the front door saying, hey, I'm going to be great to you because I'm doing it with an ulterior motive

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that you're going to give me referrals. And if you don't do it in three times, I'm out. I'm not caring about you anymore.

We go in the side door and we're like, what would it look like to put that person first for a year? What would it look like to impact them, help them, do things for them, release our expectation that the referral is going to come from them?

Because we're doing this for more than one person at a time. And there's a system I teach that you can manage it and keep up with it. But what does it look like to build into other people's worlds?

And of course, I do teach the language of how you plant referral seeds when they've never referred you. It is different. The formula, the language looks different. But like, what would it then look like just to care about them?

That's all you're going to do is just going to care about them. And you're going to listen for ways to help them. You're going to try to help them. And yes, you're going to plant some referral seeds in the process.

Because here's what the science tells us. Before I'm ever going to get to the point of remembering, not even trusting you to refer to you, but like remembering to do it when the referral actually happens, I have to know you care. And the only way you can genuinely help me know that you care is to make it about me. Not you.

Shauna Lynn Simon: And this is one of the challenges in networking groups, because you get up there and do your 30-second elevator speech, but you're not building a relationship with the other people in the group necessarily.

Stacey Brown Randall: And people come to me all the time. They're like, I'm in this group that meets every Tuesday or I'm in this group that meets once a month. And why am I not getting referrals?

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And I'm like, well, how many one-on-ones have you done within that group? And they're like, I've done a one-on-one with everybody. And I'm like, and then what did you do to follow up after the one-on-ones for four or five more times over the course of the next 12 months?

And they're like, what? Nothing. I'm like, well, then you didn't earn the referrals. That's why you didn't get them. You have to be willing to put people first.

And this is why there are some industries I work in and some industries I don't. Because the mentality of the person who's running the business, it's also why I love working with smaller business owners, because they're like, I get it.

Because you know when it's happening to you on the reverse, you're like, I don't want to be like that person. Right? And so you get it and you're like, all right, I'll take the time to invest and to learn this and to do this.

Because, you know, the people I work with, the clients I work with, whether they're an attorney or financial advisor, an interior designer, or real estate agent, it doesn't really matter.

Nobody spends a dollar with them. They spend thousands, sometimes hundreds of thousands of dollars with these people over the course of time.

Shauna Lynn Simon: Yes, they're big investments.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah. So the trust factor, the expertise factor, the relationship factor matters. And so they're like, I can invest in being a good person. Like, I can make the time for that. And I'm like good, because you're going to have to.

Shauna Lynn Simon: Well, it's funny because I also teach a home staging certification training program. And one of the things that I've always said, it makes my training program different from all the other programs out there, is how much we address the human factor.

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Because a lot of interior designers, home stagers, they have the eye for things. They look at the MLS listings. They're like, oh, they just need to do X, Y, and Z. That's all fantastic.

But if you want to get them to spend a dime with you, They have to trust you. They have to like you. They have to want to work with you because you're now asking them to spend thousands of dollars and they might not actually be on board.

So if you don't know how to get them on board with your recommendations in the first place, they're definitely not spending a dime with you.

But I like what you're saying, though, about, and I'm sure this is actually probably one of the most frustrating things. Someone listening to this is probably like, wait a minute, where's my quick fix?

When you talk about, yes, there's always a low-hanging fruit. There's always some opportunities for some things. But I recall listening to a podcast episode of yours not that long ago, but I actually don't know if we're talking weeks or months ago, but it was not that long ago.

Where you were speaking with a client of yours who, in the first year working with you, essentially his referrals were basically the same as they were prior to working with you.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah, they were flat the first year.

Shauna Lynn Simon: Right, which doesn't mean that he lost any business or anything else, but like, I can imagine it's difficult to feel the results when you're like, well, I literally just did the same thing.

So I've invested in this program and in this coaching, and I'm not seeing a difference. But year two, that's when things really started to change. Because like you said, you're planting seeds. So it's not an instant quick fix.

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But this goes back to everything that I teach about is about building a sustainable business. Quick fixes and quick hacks are not going to get you the sustainability.

So if you want something that's gonna continue to work long-term, I'm all about creating a business that will work in any market and isn't going to be affected if TikTok shuts down tomorrow, or Instagram decides to delete all of your posts and you have to start over, or if you get hacked on your Facebook account. Whatever the case, you still have your business running.

I had one of my coaching clients lost her Google business page for about six months. I had her on my podcast a few months ago talking about how she suddenly is no longer searchable.

If someone types in, she was a home stager, if someone types in home staging in her area, she literally did not come up in the results.

So the only way that she was going to get business was either by her social media, which again, is not really a full strategy, it's a trickling kind of thing. But I said, okay, your next job is to reach out to every single one of your contacts and tell them what's going on.

Because I think the more that they understand that your business is now suffering from this Google review or Google Business aspect, the more likely they're going to want to help you.

You're not going to them and saying, like, I need business. I'm desperate. None of that. Just simply, like, hey, here's what's happened.

So in case anyone's looking for us, you're not going to be able to find us online. We're definitely still in business. We still would appreciate any business that you have. And I'm sure that all the language I gave her is probably wrong in your books.

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But nonetheless. It did work, though, in terms of helping her to sustain her business. If she didn't have relationships already, she wouldn't have had anything to pull from in order to help to keep her business afloat.

And one of the things that I said to her, though, was that people genuinely want to help other people. It sounds like that's kind of what you're tapping into, as much as it's not the reciprocity, so much as people just genuinely want to help someone that they know does good work.

They want to be able to support that business in some way. But they're only going to do it from a genuine place. So if they can refer you, they will refer you.

But they have to, to your point, they have to remember you. They have to know how to refer you. They have to understand exactly what it is that you do.

If they don't understand, this is one of the big things that I talk about often with my clients is if you can't be clear on what it is that you do and what you offer, and I know even like our conversation pre-hitting record here, we were talking about how you streamlined your own business.

If you're saying to them, well, I could do this, or I could do this, or I could do this, or if you need this as well, like if you've got a laundry list of the things that you can help with, it's really difficult for someone to really dial into how they can actually help you and refer you.

Whereas if you are very streamlined on, this is who I work with, this is how I work, and this is how I help them, that's going to get you the business.

And I know so many of my clients are like, but I don't want to miss out on business. I get it. Trust me, because I'm constantly chopping up my own business to say, how am I going to narrow this in my focus to what I really want to be doing and how I really support people?

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And it's hard sometimes, because we see these opportunities. We're like, well, I can do that. I could do this other thing over here, but you're diluting your business and you're diluting your success.

And so to make you more referable, I'm assuming, and again, you're the expert on this, but I'm assuming in order to be more referable, it has to be pretty clear as to exactly what you do. And if you're doing 26 different things, that's gonna make it a bit harder.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah, I mean, definitely. I always say, when you think about it, I say this to my teens more when they're driving, and I'm like, distraction leads to destruction.

But I think it applies in business too. If you're truly distracted in your business and you're trying to like be all things to all people and like, I do all these things and I can do all this stuff for you.

It's like, okay, it's not literal destruction, right? But it is that idea of understanding like the more, like there is something to be said about if you're going to generate referrals that people need to know how they're going to refer to you.

But then people take that out of context and they're like, well, they have to know what I do and how I do it and how my process works and how amazing I am. And here's my portfolio and here's all the things that I've done.

I'm like, no, no, no, no. People actually don't care that much about all those things. They do need to know, are you a real estate agent or a home stager? That's an important distinction. Are you an interior designer that also does home staging, or are you just a home stager?

That's an important distinction. But beyond that, they're not thinking about you that deeply to know how amazing you are. That's going to come in when someone goes and checks out. Even if they're referred to you, potential clients are still going to go check out your website.

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They're still going to go check out online places. But that is that idea of, I can remember what you do once I know you care. And that's a fundamental piece that you have to put forward first.

And if people are already referring you, well, it's a no-brainer to want to take care of those people, because they've already sent you potential clients, right?

And the episode you were referring to, that was David's episode. And that was [episode 363](#) on my podcast, The Roadmap to Referrals podcast. If anyone wants to be like, wait, someone didn't get those results they were looking for, I'm like, yeah, that's why I had David on the podcast.

Now, he's a financial advisor. And their industry is just different. Sometimes I have someone come to me and they're like, I'm in this industry. And I'm like, goldmine. This will be so much easier.

And then I have someone come to me and they're like a financial advisor. And I'm like, this will take longer. So don't come on board if you can't be OK with that. And David clearly could be OK with that. And then, of course, he had all the success he needed. And then some. And continues to.

Shauna Lynn Simon: And you even did say in that podcast that you approached it with him very transparently of like, you're not going to see instant results. And I think that is important that whatever industry you're coming from, you have experience that you can help to manage expectations, let's say.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yes, definitely. And it's true, there's some industries where if you come to me and I'm like, oh, you're sitting on stuff you don't even know you're sitting on, this will be easier for us just to uncover that.

But I think one of the things we were talking about is people being like, where's my quick fix? What's the thing that I can do that I can feel like I can take momentum and move it forward now?

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And here's the two things I would tell folks to do. The first thing is to actually go through the process of identifying do you have referral sources now?

Because once you can see those names in black and white and you're like, oh, I do have people who refer me, right? It changes everything about feeling empowered to making a decision if you want to do something different.

I don't care if you got six people on that list or 62 people on that list. Like, you can just be like, oh, these are the people that referred me over the last couple of years. Let me start here. It's like starting with the relationships that have already proven to do the thing you want them to keep doing.

And I tell some folks, I'm like, if you have like 10, 12, 20 people who referred you last year, I was like, what if we got the referral from them again this year and then got another one from them? Already we've doubled what you've done, and we haven't had to create any new relationships.

And so sometimes people don't understand that it's that simple and break it down. But once you've identified who these people are, this is something I teach in my starter program. My starter program is called Your Next Five Referrals.

And it's like, hey, let's just show you the places in your business and some things that you can do. Easy things. It's like four modules. It's like easy things that you can do where you're probably sitting on referrals you didn't know you had, or they're like right there. You just don't know what to do.

And the goal is to help you get your next five referrals so that you're like getting a taste of it. You're like, oh, I can do this. And then if that's all you need, great. And if you need more, then, of course, you're perfectly positioned to come into one of my programs.

And so Your Next Five Referrals, one of the things I talk about is that once you've identified everybody who's referred you, what if you just sat down

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and wrote them all a thank you note, thanking them for referring you in the past?

It doesn't have to be fancy. A couple of lines will do the trick. Just make sure you say thank you for referring me in the past. Like, let's call out the action that you want them to repeat in a framework of gratitude, right?

Like, thanks for referring me to referrals in the past. They mean the world to me, and I appreciate you. And you mean the world to me, whatever you want to say, right?

Now, will that unleash a river of referrals? No, and I'm not guaranteeing that. And can you build a referral strategy the way that my clients have results off of that? No. Of course not, but it is a quick win, and it is a starting point.

And I have had people who take that tactic out of Your Next Five Referrals and write the thank you note and send them out and be like, I got a referral. I'm like, I know you did. Like, of course you did. I can't guarantee you how many you'll get and how long it'll take and if you'll get any, right?

I mean, if you've never thanked anyone for ever referring you and then all of a sudden out of the blue, they get a thank you card, they may be like, hmm. Right? So like, hopefully you've been doing some good things along the way.

But we talked about that in the first module. Like, here's how you thank people. You get all that information, but it is a quick win. I'm like, can you just take a half a day? And I'm assuming a half a day if you have a lot of cards to write. Most people can knock this out in like an hour.

Shauna Lynn Simon: Sure. And I will admit, I hate writing out thank you cards. But you're absolutely right that it doesn't actually take a lot of time. And it would be a fairly simple thing to do. Yes.

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Stacey Brown Randall: And it matters. You know why a thank you card matters more than anything else you can do? Because of what it says to me that a text and an email and even a voicemail or even a video can't say to me, which is, I'm worth your time.

Writing out a thank you note will always take longer and more time than any other type of communication channel, other than like driving to your house and saying it to you face to face, which is like clearly creepy, right?

So the idea there is that send the thank you card because it tells them that they are worth your time. And that is something we want to make sure that they understand.

Shauna Lynn Simon: And I couldn't agree more when I get thank you cards. I genuinely appreciate them. And sometimes they have a little gift card or something in them, which is always appreciated as well. But to me,

Stacey Brown Randall: It's not always necessary.

Shauna Lynn Simon: No, I agree. I don't need the incentive. And I'm not thinking like, oh, when I refer so-and-so, I'm going to get a \$10 gift card for a coffee shop of my choice or something. No, I couldn't care less.

It's the same thing if you incentivize me to take a survey. I am someone who I try to participate in surveys whenever I can because I know how valuable that feedback is. But if I don't have the time, I don't have the time. Or if it's a company I don't care enough about, then I'm not going to do it.

If you try to say to me, well, I'm going to give you a \$50 Amazon card to do it, I'm probably still not going to do it if I wasn't already interested in doing it. The incentive doesn't change things. The incentive is a bonus that people appreciate, I'm sure.

I referred someone to, I've got a friend in town who works for a particular car dealership, ended up actually getting my mom's latest car from his dealership, from him. And he had a lovely thank you gift for me.

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I would have done it without the thank you gift. And knowing that I get that doesn't make me any more or less likely to refer him in the future. The experience that my mom and I had purchasing that car from him, that's what's going to get us to refer him again.

Stacey Brown Randall: That's the thing. People always think like, I've got to give you the gift card. I got to give you the gift. I got to say thank you in a big way for the referral you just sent me.

But once you start down that path, you're now actually, what people don't realize is that you're moving into commoditization of the relationship. Like an area. That's the area you're moving into.

And so now you start to be like, well, it's the reward is the reason why they're referring. No, it's not. And if you're not careful, you're going to commoditize the relationship. There's nothing wrong with saying thank you with a thank you gift.

But what if that person goes on to refer you like four more times this year? And then what if you forget to send gift three, four, and five? So it's that idea. I don't like to reward for the referral received.

What I like my clients to do is send a thank you note, a handwritten thank you note, when the referral is received. But our touchpoint plan, those five, six, or seven touchpoints are running behind the scenes regardless of when the referrals come in.

So we know throughout the course of 12 months, they're going to get touched five or six or seven times. And that's happening regardless of when or how often the referrals are coming in. And they're still getting a thank you card when they refer.

Shauna Lynn Simon: I love this. I mean, honestly, I think that we could probably talk about this all day and still we're barely scratching the surface of it.

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At the same time, I love that you've given some really easy tips to be able to get people started on it. And I think something so simple as figure out where your referral sources are and actually write them down.

I am a big fan of actually like having that visual of putting something into a data collection system, whether it's a piece of paper, a spreadsheet on your computer, into your ClickUp tasks, whatever it looks like. But having that captured in some way is so incredibly powerful.

One of the things that I have my clients do, for example, when they're feeling like, oh, business isn't going as well as it could be, I'm like, OK, so today I want you to write down where your money is going to come from next. and just write it down.

They're like, oh, well, I do have some things in the pipeline, or I do have some opportunities. And if you don't, then it's allowing you to be creative and say like, oh, well, here's where my money's going to come from.

And I know that that's putting it very crassly of like, oh, where's your revenue coming from? But the reality is that we are built on, like we operate on money. I don't operate on fumes or on goodwill or exposure.

My business needs actual cold, hard cash in order to pay the bills. So I don't necessarily do this with every client. But I do it sometimes with just the clients who are getting a little bit in their head of like, write it down, because you just need that visual to remind you that, like, yes, your business is thriving.

And whether it's that or whether it's your gratitude or whatever, there's a reason why we write these things down. You write down your affirmations, you write down your mantras, whatever that looks like, all of those are helpful to have.

So I think that's one of, to your point, that's one of the simplest, easiest ways to just get that quick reminder of where things are coming from. So you know where to focus some of your efforts.

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So Stacey, if someone is listening to this and they're thinking, okay, I need more information. We're going to have a link to your podcast, of course, in our show notes because I think that everyone should be subscribing to your podcast. But how else can they find you?

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah, so the home base of the website, Stacey Brown Randall, is a wealth of information in terms of, we have a resource page if people are like, let me go do some things.

There's a quiz that you can take to kind of help you understand where you are in terms of your ability to generate referrals. There are some exercises that we've kind of talked about that are there.

You can watch a video on the science of referrals, digging in deep. That truly like scratches the surface with us, but there's more behind it that you can go and learn about. And that's all on the website.

I always like to tell folks, it's like, it's kind of like, choose your own adventure. Like, what do you want to learn about from that perspective? I mean, of course, I'm on the big social media platforms as well. LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook are like, the 3 you'll find me my full name.

But I really tell people, if what you've heard and you're like, this makes sense to me, and I want to generate referrals in a way that feels more naturally and in alignment with how I want to show up and treat people, the best thing that you can start doing is, like you said, just start consuming what I teach.

Like don't buy anything yet. Like just start consuming what I teach. Come to the podcast. We drop a new episode every Tuesday. I think just like you do, right? So you'll have two episodes to listen to yours and then mine.

Shauna Lynn Simon: Perfect. Yeah.

Stacey Brown Randall: And then just start consuming what I teach and it'll resonate with you. And then, you know, I have a book out *Generating*

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Business Referrals without Asking. You can read that or get the eBook or listen to me say it to you in the audio version, get my second book when it comes out.

I'm a firm believer that when the student is ready, the teacher will appear. And there are people who are listening to this podcast today that are like, that's what I need. You can figure out how to work with me on my website.

But for other folks, they're like, I just need a little bit more of the teacher before I'm ready to make any kind of decisions. And so that's why we have plenty of information out there for folks to take advantage of, books, podcasts, and then the resource page on the website.

Shauna Lynn Simon: Well, and clearly you are practicing what you preach and making yourself incredibly referable as well by putting all that out there.

But jokes aside though, honestly, Stacey, I cannot thank you enough for coming on to the show today and sharing just a wealth of information and really helping us to sort of reframe how we look at referral business.

And like I said, when I first met you, I was very skeptical. I'm like, this is not an entire business. I don't know how she thinks she's building an entire coaching business.

And then I'm talking to you and you're like, oh no, I've been doing this for several years. Come on now. So I mean, again, you definitely changed a skeptic into a believer with me but thank you so much for sharing all this with my audience. I truly appreciate it.

Stacey Brown Randall: Thank you for giving me the opportunity. I appreciate it. Thanks for having me.

Shauna Lynn Simon: Wonderful. So listen, if you're listening to this episode and what we're saying here is resonating with you, be sure to tune in again next week and check us out and allow us to continue on the journey with you.

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Don't forget to check out Stacey Brown Randall on her website as well. We'll have that in the show notes. And of course, don't forget to subscribe to us on your favorite podcast platform.

Leave us a review because this is a great way to help others to be able to find us and maybe refer us to someone.

But I always say the best way that you can support us as well as your fellow women entrepreneurs is to share this podcast with someone that you know really needs to hear this message right now. And until next time, keep thriving.

Stacey Brown Randall: I just want to give a quick shout out. Thank you to Shauna Lynn for hosting this episode for you guys, my listeners.

I hope that you enjoyed this conversation between Shauna Lynn and I as much as I did. I mean, as you guys all know, I could talk about this stuff all day long every day.

So it's always fun when I get to go on other people's podcast and share thoughts. And I love how they ask questions that sometimes I don't even think about myself and it gives me a chance to answer it.

So when that happens, I always want to bring those folks onto my podcast so you can hear other people ask me questions about referrals.

Now, Shauna Lynn mentioned she created the Accidental CEO Assessment, and it may be the next right step you want to do after listening to this episode and realizing that maybe your business, it may need referrals, but it may actually need some structure to the growth so it can sustain that growth.

So her Accidental CEO Assessment will help you pinpoint what your business actually needs next. Whether that's stronger systems, clearer priorities, better profitability, or more support behind the scenes.

Roadmap to Referrals with Stacey Brown Randall

Ep #417: Get More Clients

Because remember, we want referrals, but we also want to make sure the business is built to sustain them and to support them.

You can take the free assessment at AboutShaunaLynn.com/roadmap. But of course, you know, I'm going to link to that in the show notes as well.

So if you are looking to connect with Shauna Lynn, you're looking for that link to her Accidental CEO Assessment, or you're also looking for the transcripts for this episode, please remember links are always below the video if you're watching this on YouTube, and of course, on the show notes page at StaceyBrownRandall.com/417 for my podcast listeners.

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