Ep #438: Why You Shouldn't Ask For Referrals (Obvious & Non-Obvious Reasons)



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Stacey Brown Randall

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

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

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If you've been with me for any length of time, I hope there is one way that you think of me, that you remember me, that when you hear something about referrals, I am called to your mind.

And the one way I want you to remember me is by one simple statement. Don't ask for referrals.

It is possible, yes, to generate referrals without asking, without incentivizing, without turning referrals into a marketing gimmick or feel like you are networking all the time.

And that is basically the only thing you do with your life. My clients do it every month, every quarter, every year.

You don't have to ask. In fact, you shouldn't ask.

You also shouldn't incentivize with kickbacks or turn referrals into that gimmicky thing that you've heard at the end of your email signature, like, don't keep me a secret, or the greatest compliment you can give me is a referral, or believe that the only way you can be referred is to be seen so you are constantly remembered.

Now, in this episode, I want to make sure you're very, very clear and have complete confidence in the fact that you don't have to ask for referrals or pay or any of the other stuff you don't want to do.

I want to tackle two obvious, well, to me, they're obvious. They're probably obvious to you too, but we'll see. I want to tackle two obvious reasons never to ask and one not so obvious reason as well.

So let's dig in. Obvious reason number one to not ask for referrals. Let's start with the easy one, how it makes you feel.

Now, when you think about how it makes you feel, everybody's a little different in this, right?

But I find with the people who find their way into my world, there are a few key feelings and emotions that always bubble up.

They are when you feel like you have to ask someone to refer you, you start getting nervous and uncomfortable.

There is an awkwardness that happens, an ick factor, a feeling of constant dread, and that is really obvious to you because it hits you right in your gut, right where you feel.

Now, what I'm going to talk about is why you're not wrong to feel that way. It's a good thing. It's okay that you feel that way.

Now, if you happen to stumble upon this video on YouTube, or you're listening to this episode and your favorite podcast listening app while you're out, I don't know, running right now, and you think to yourself, wait a minute, I love asking for referrals.

I ask every day, all day, and everybody I meet. Well, you're probably in the wrong place because this isn't for you, right?

But you're also a unicorn. Very few people in the world actually enjoy asking people to refer new clients to them.

So one of the main obvious reasons why you shouldn't ask is because how it makes you feel and because your gut isn't wrong. I want you to listen to that feeling, right?

When something feels off, when it feels weird, when it has an ick factor, when you just know this isn't good, we're taught to listen to our guts.

This is one of those moments where you need to listen to your guts because how it makes you feel is very real and actually it makes you very right.

And that moves us, of course, into our second obvious reason why we don't want to have to ask for referrals.

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Hey, pardon the interruption. This month's 20-minute teaching coming up on November 16th.

It is all about me explaining the missing visual that is powerful, and you need to have it within your client experience, and it has a direct tie to referrals.

So join me by signing up for StaceyBrownRandall.com/teaching. It's 20 minutes. I get you in, I get you out, and it's happening on November 16th.

So the second obvious reason why I don't want you asking for referrals is how it makes the other person feel.

Now, for some of you, maybe that's not obvious, but for the majority of people, when you feel awkward, you can sense it in other people as well, right?

You can see them shift uncomfortably in their seats, right? You get what I would call like throwaway responses that are like, oh, okay, yeah, I'll get back to you, or yeah, let me think about that, and then they never do.

Because the truth is when you ask somebody to refer you, you're giving them work to do, and most people, at least I know I'm this way, and I know most of my clients are this way, we got enough work to do.

We don't need your work to do either. So you're not wrong, and it is very obvious for a very important reason.

It's just that most people teach you to stuff that uncomfortable feeling down and stuff that concern of how it's making the other people feel, just like stuff it down and keep asking, like stuff down your emotions, stuff down your feelings and do the thing you don't want to do, which in this case, asking for referrals.

And the truth is the way it's making you feel is not something that's wrong with you. It's a warning, right?

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It's a signal, and you knowing how it makes the other person feel by how they shift, how they look, how they respond, how they actually never follow up and do the thing you're asking them to do.

That's another response that you should, it's a warning response that you should recognize.

But those are the two obvious reasons that I find people are like, this is why I don't want to ask for referrals.

It makes me feel terrible, and it creates an awkwardness, and I know a terrible feeling with the person that I'm asking as well.

Those are obvious. We feel them. That's why they're obvious.

There's also one other non-obvious reason why I don't want you asking. And that's the thing that most people don't pay attention to.

So a non-obvious reason why I don't want you asking is because when you ask, the ask for someone for referrals, when you ask someone to refer you, that becomes your trigger, which means you're not naturally thought of.

And that is a big different point that we have to kind of keep in mind, right?

If your strategy to generate referrals is just to go ask people all the time, and they don't usually refer you, and it makes them uncomfortable, and you're not sure who it's making uncomfortable and who it's not, because they don't always tell you, you can kind of sense it, but they don't always tell you, the ask actually becomes the trigger that gets someone to think about referring you.

And if they don't ever do it, it's not associated with anything positive. It's like, oh gosh, here comes Bob. He's going to be asking me to refer him.

Here comes that newsletter again. He's going to have that mention of referrals and all the referrals they want me to send to them. The ask becomes the trigger.

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What I want is for you to have a strategy in place where the idea of referring you is actually the referral source's idea, but it was planted there by you in terms of how you take care of them, whether that's your client or a COI or a client or COI that's already referring you.

We want to be naturally thought of, but that naturally part of being thought of is because we want referring us to be the person referring us. We want it to be their idea.

We want it to be the referral source's idea, but people just don't spontaneously combust and all of a sudden think, hey, I need to refer these 15 people tomorrow. That's not how it works either.

So the strategies we put in place are there to lean into the relationships we have and the relationships we want to develop into referral source relationships and make sure we're taking care of those folks and using the right language, which is the referral seed language that I teach, so that you can be naturally thought of when the opportunity presents itself.

You've already got the desire to refer you locked in. Now it's about the opportunity comes across for them to refer you.

Because once somebody refers you and they know it's their idea or they believe that it's their idea, they're just more likely to do it because the ask isn't the trigger.

They did something. And then you did all the things after that. Once they referred you, you did all the things after that, that you're supposed to do, right?

To thank and acknowledge and all the things, right? You did all the things after that, that created that referral as a really great experience for that referral source when they referred.

And that is actually what keeps them considering referring you ongoing.

That and having opportunity, which you don't control, which a lot of people want to believe, want you to believe that you do, but you don't.

When people tell you you can control referrals, you can control the opportunity that people come across to refer you, that's because they're teaching you that the control factor is you asking.

But asking violates the science behind referrals. And I talk about the science a lot on this podcast. So I'm not going to give that lesson right now.

We can link to other episodes where I talk about the science in this episode in the show notes page for this episode, which is StaceyBrownRandall.com/438.

But what I want you to understand is that when you are doing a trigger, like asking or reminding them that you pay some type of commission for their referrals, that becomes the thing, the mechanism that they remember.

And some are completely turned off by it and want nothing to do with it. So they stopped paying attention to it the third time you ask, and most aren't actually motivated to refer you because you ask, right?

There's a different strategy that I want you to have in place by nurturing those relationships, the right relationships, the relationships that have opportunity, right?

There's a strategy behind this and then having the tactics, the processes, the plans in place and the right language in place to be able to have your referral sources do it because they're naturally thinking of you.

But you're behind the scenes, making sure that you are continuing to maintain that relationship because that relationship matters to you.

And the biggest question you always have to ask yourself is, Hey, these folks that are referring to me, or these folks that I ultimately want to refer to me, referring to me takes care of my business.

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Of course, I believe it's the right thing to do to take care of the people who are taking care of my business or may one day be able to take care of my business.

And that is the mindset. That is the heart of where we come from. When we are creating our strategies, they're not from manipulation.

They're not from, Hey, I'm going to be back here, like pulling like puppet strings, getting you to refer me.

It is about intentionally wanting to have a strategy behind staying organized, to maintain relationships with people who do refer, or that you would love to refer you.

And that's an entirely different way that you are able to then become naturally thought of as someone to refer to versus triggering them to refer to you by constantly asking.

And even if they do refer, when you ask, you're usually just very lucky because it doesn't happen that often.

Okay. So there are two obvious reasons why you should not ask for referrals and one, maybe non-obvious reason that you've never thought of before. So now you know.

Of course, you can check out the resources mentioned in the links below the video, just look below, or of course on the show notes page, which is StaceyBrownRandall.com/438. Don't forget Stacey has an E.

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I also love feedback, so don't be shy, drop me a comment. Bye for now.