# Ep #441: The Business of Referrals for Law Firms




**Full Episode Transcript**

**With Your Host**

**Stacey Brown Randall**

**Stacey Brown Randall:** Hey there, it's Stacey. For this episode, we have two special guest hosts. Enjoy.

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

# Ep #441: The Business of Referrals for Law Firms

**Margaret Burke:** I'm Margaret with MB Law Firm Consulting.

**Laurin Johnson:** And I'm Laurin, and we're taking over the Roadmap to Referrals podcast to share a conversation we had with Stacey on our podcast.

**Margaret Burke:** And we're also the hosts of the Law Firm Lab podcast, where we help attorneys successfully run their law firms so they can concentrate on the practice of law.

During our conversations with Stacey, we explored ideas and insights on the business of referrals, including how to nurture existing referral sources and build new referral relationships.

**Laurin Johnson:** What really resonated with us was the importance of having intentional and memorable touch points throughout the year as a way to nurture your key relationships.

Stacey shared that the magic number is seven unique touch points each year with each contact that you're looking to develop long-term, lasting, and meaningful relationships with.

**Margaret Burke:** Yeah, and we really enjoyed connecting with Stacey and exchanging ideas.

**Laurin Johnson:** We're excited to share this conversation with the Roadmap to Referrals podcast, and we hope you find it insightful and valuable.

**Margaret Burke:** We always start, Stacey, first, so happy to have you here. And we start every episode, and this opens up such a good conversation with, can you please share with our audience, what is the worst advice you have ever received?

**Stacey Brown Randall:** I can only imagine the different answers you guys have gotten to this one question.

## *Roadmap to Referrals* with Stacey Brown Randall

So I would say there's probably been a number of like worst advice scenarios that I've probably received. But the worst one for me was actually when I had my first business and it led me to realize how important it was to protect my mindset.

So when I had my first business, we're talking, I started this business back in like 2009. So I wasn't even done having children. And I started my first business back in 2009. It would fail by four years later, it would actually fail.

And one of the conversations that ran like consistently as a theme throughout my mind that I realized should never have been in my mind is when somebody told me when I was applying for an award, like a women business owner award, someone said, Oh, Stacey, companies like yours, they don't win awards. Yours is more of a lifestyle business while you're having your children.

And I bought it. I'm embarrassed to say I bought it hook, line, and sinker. And she didn't mean it like your business is going to say small. She meant it like trying to help me understand probably a life stage and a scenario.

And I know this person's heart, so I know that's not how she meant it. But I didn't take it probably the way it was intended.

And I let it be an excuse for why my first business probably wasn't as successful as it needed to be. But that's what growth is all about.

**Margaret Burke:** Well, thank you so much for sharing that. And it's interesting because I've heard similar stories from other folks, and it usually is from people that have the best intentions. But it's amazing how words like that can actually impact your own actions.

**Stacey Brown Randall:** Yes.

**Laurin Johnson:** It really can. So speaking of growth and business and referrals, which is, you know, one of the things that you truly are an expert

in, when our clients are thinking about referrals and really trying to reimagine their approach, what would you say really triggers a referral?

**Stacey Brown Randall:** Yeah, so here's the thing that I think people have to understand that nobody wants to tell you when it comes to referrals.

There's two things that have to be present for a referral to really happen, and that is desire and opportunity.

And what a lot of people who teach referrals will tell you is that you can control both and how you control both is by asking and constantly reminding people to refer you, or by incentivizing people to refer you, or being gimmicky and promotional, or by networking all the times you're always seen and never forgotten.

And the truth is, you actually only control one of those. And the one you control is desire. Why would I refer to your consulting firm over your competitor? And that desire that you are able to control is based on the relationship we have.

And so your obligation, your responsibility, your goal within your referral source relationships is knowing that. Knowing that it's all about the relationship that you maintain with your referral sources and maintaining that desire to pick you.

What you don't control is how often I'll come across opportunity to refer you. It's why people believe that if you control opportunity, you control it by asking.

But then if you're asking for referrals, that becomes the trigger and you have to keep doing it over and over and over again. And what people don't realize is that it's actually it's that if the asking is the trigger, you never get to stop.

It is always something you have to do. And most people don't pay attention to how it's violating the science and what's happening to the other people when you're constantly asking.

So it's really important to understand desire and opportunity. You control desire, but not opportunity, which means figuring out who's best suited to refer you, who actually comes across your ideal client with some level of regularity is really important in being strategic with your referral strategy.

**Margaret Burke:** That's amazing. Thank you so much. It is so true that, you know, we fill a need. We all fill a need for another person and being in front of a person where you can fill a need is critical.

Can you talk a little bit about the psychology? What happens when someone, you know, feels moved to refer to an attorney?

**Stacey Brown Randall:** Yeah, so this is all rooted in the science of referrals. And so the reason why I teach referrals in such a contrarian way and contradicting decades of advice that has come before me is because I really dug in to understand from a science perspective what's happening when a referral is being given.

And most people know one part of that, and that's the psychology of trust, right? Everybody would say, when someone's referred to you, the trust that that person has in you is transferring to the prospect, right?

So that's the part of the science everybody gets and understands when it comes to referrals. But there's some other pieces that matter just as most.

And the first one is more actually than the psychology of trust. The first one is actually what's happening in the brain of the referral source, which is just what I call the person who's going to refer a potential client to you, what's happening in their brain.

And it's actually the happiness trifecta, the release of the cousin, I call them the cousin chemicals, but it's the release of the cousin chemicals in the brain that it's the feel good chemicals.

And so it's the idea that when I do something to refer someone to you, I'm helping someone solve a problem, not your problem of giving you a new client, but somebody who has a problem.

And in that moment, I get to be the hero. The feel-good chemicals are triggered and it feels good to help someone and be their hero. And how I'm helping them is by referring them to you, to your law firm, to help them solve their problem.

And so that means referrals are never about you. They're about me and how I feel in terms of helping somebody else who has a problem.

And you can't like try to jump in line, like jump to the front of the line and make referrals about yourself because they're not, they're about your referral source, helping somebody who has a problem.

And that's when a referral shows up and was like, take my money. I've been told you the best, just solve my problem.

And so there's really the first thing to understand about from what's happening from a science perspective is, one, what's going on in the brain with your referral source.

Two, of course, is that psychology of trust. That is important that we maintain the right trust and relationship with our referral sources. But much more than them knowing you're the best attorney, they actually don't care.

Like, I know that sounds crazy. Everybody wants, I'm the best at what I do. Yes. And it's important that you know it.

But other people, it's actually not what triggers them to refer you. They're not necessarily referring you because you're the best. You're the best that they know.

And so as long as they know you and have a relationship with you and you're maintaining that trust and don't lose their trust, of course, right, that they assume that they can refer to you because you're still in business.

And if you weren't still in business, it would probably be because, right, maybe you weren't good, but you are still in business.

So the trust factor is more based on the relationship and the connection than it is the fact of your portfolio or the number of acronyms you have after your name.

And the third piece to the science is actually behavioral economics. And that's how we maintain and nurture the relationship with our referral source and understanding what has them remember you.

What has them build that desire to refer to you, what helps you move from keeping in touch to staying top of mind, what has you being memorable so that you don't have to do a lot of things, but you gotta do just enough things so that they'll actually always be having you top of mind. And that's really important.

So brain science, psychology of trust, and behavioral economics. It's not all of the science, but those are the big three.

**Margaret Burke:** Yeah, that's amazing. How much does liking another individual play into this psychology?

**Stacey Brown Randall:** So it is important, like people are not going to refer to people they don't like unless they have so much respect for that person, it kind of overshadows the fact that they don't want to go grab a beer with them ever, right?

And so, and some people, you know, some people just, we connect with different people, on different levels for different things.

But the likability factor is very important. Most of the time when someone's going to be referring you to someone else, there is a likability or at a

minimum, if there's not a complete and total likability, there is an admiration.

There's like, hey, this this lady is tough as nails, but she will defend you. You know, I wouldn't want to hang out with her on a Saturday night, but she would defend you in your case and she's probably the best for you.

In the legal space, that admiration, respect, reputation sometimes plays to a bigger factor than, say, maybe in some of the other industries that I work in.

But most of the time, we refer to people because we like them and because the liking means we know them, and that moves us faster to trusting them.

**Margaret Burke:** Yeah, thank you. It's interesting because we also find that in the legal industry, you will hear from time to time, oh, gee, this person is difficult, but they're the best.

And people are drawn to that. They think, okay, this person is great. They may not be the easiest person, but they're going to get the job done for me.

Staying on this topic of asking and referrals, can you share why some of the tactics that are taught in sales and other advice that people receive about just ask, you've got to ask for the referral. Why does that sometimes, like could that backfire?

**Stacey Brown Randall:** Oh, it definitely does. So it's two things, right? So the thing to recognize about when you make the decision to ask for referrals, you're actually putting yourself in a position to asking becomes the trigger.

And when you're asking becomes the trigger, you have to always do it because that's the only reason or why someone would think to refer to you is because you made it about you. So then you have to keep asking.

But while that's exhausting, right, and certainly not a way anybody wants to go about building their business, or at least not most people, it's the second piece that matters more.

And that goes right back to what we were talking about with the science, because it's violating the science of why someone would refer. When you ask them to refer, it's violating the science.

So I always tell folks when they're thinking about their sales strategy, they're thinking about their business development strategy. We're traditionally taught we have two legs to this stool.

There's the prospecting activities we do, the networking, the bar associations, the 7 million cups of coffee. Maybe we're sponsoring things.

And then there is the marketing side of what we do. So that's our website, SEO, thought leadership. Maybe it's going after having earned PR.

So you've got both prospecting and marketing. And they're both good. And they're both necessary. They are two equally important legs of the stool.

What's been traditionally taught with referrals is that referrals has to fit into the prospecting leg or the marketing leg, which is where you get the tactics.

If someone believes that referrals fit in prospecting, it's where you get the tactics ask for those referrals, pay for those referrals, or network all the time so you're never forgotten.

When someone believes that referrals fits into marketing, you'll hear it called referral marketing, which I always say is not a word. People should stop using that.

But when they believe that referrals fit into marketing, that's when you get the be gimmicky and promotional, put in your email signature, the greatest compliment you can give me as a referral, right?

And most attorneys, most business owners, there's a level of expertise and reputation we want to be seen as. So most of those things don't really match with how we want to show up in the marketplace and show up to our prospects and show up to other people in our industry.

And so that's why I always say, that's because referrals don't fit in prospecting and marketing. You have a third leg. And that third leg is your referral strategy. And it's totally different.

Prospecting and marketing, you're really trying to get in front of the prospect, that potential new client. With referrals, you don't know who the prospect is because that's not who you're talking to.

With a referral strategy, you're talking about developing relationships with referral sources and they know the prospect.

So you're never really talking about it from a sales conversation type perspective. So everything shifts when you start trying to develop referrals.

**Laurin Johnson:** Stacey, for a firm, let's say we're dealing with a law firm, they are getting some referrals, but they're looking to really focus on their referral strategy. Where would you recommend that they focus first and why?

Should it be on nurturing existing referral partners? Is it improving the overall client experience? Should they be out there trying to build new referral sources? Where do they start?

**Stacey Brown Randall:** Yeah, so you just named off what I consider the big three. Those are the three groups of people that I think every law firm should have in place to develop referrals from.

People who refer you now, your existing referral sources. Clients from your client experience, and then, of course, your new people, the potential referral sources.

Now, if you're like, you know, certain types of attorneys, we don't always focus as much on the client experience, like personal injury. We usually take a different tactic for client experience.

But if you think about those three groups, they're equally important. You should have a plan in place for all three of them. But if you don't, and you're looking for the one, right?

So Laurin, to your question, if you're looking for the, where do I start? We start with the one that is our low-hanging fruit. And it is the group of people who will have the potential and the ability to get us more referrals faster.

I always tell folks, when you go to my website and you look at case studies from other attorneys and other professional service providers, and they're like, oh, we doubled my referrals in 90 days, or we tripled or quadrupled my referrals in a year, it is 80% of the time because they had a group of existing referral sources that we could go in and take care of them differently and get more referrals from them, right?

It's just like it's easier to sell to an existing client than it is to sell to a brand new client. It's the same thing with referral sources.

So if you have people referring to you as an attorney or to your law firm in general, that's the group we would want to build a strategy for first because they already have done it.

And so it's easier to go in and just take better care of them and do a few other things. Obviously, there's a strategy behind it to be able to generate more referrals from them.

Then we would turn our attention to having a referable client experience and cultivating new referral sources.

**Margaret Burke:** That's amazing. And you said the sentence, take care of them differently. Can you share, like, what would that look like?

**Stacey Brown Randall:** Yeah. So people always think, okay, I have these people referring to me. I probably need to make sure they're getting my weekly or monthly newsletter.

I probably need to make sure I'm taking them to coffee a couple of times a year and just like staying in front of them and keeping in touch.

What we have found when you apply behavioral economics to how you take care of your existing referral sources, the variety matters and the surprise and delight factor matters more than anything in terms of impacting their memory runway. And that means how long they ultimately remember you.

So the plan that I would have any individual attorney or a law firm as a whole put together to nurture their existing referral sources is going to have somewhere between five to seven outreaches, which we happen to call touch points with our clients, five to seven touch points in a year.

But this isn't your newsletter, right? And it's not the one client appreciation event you do every year, and you invite your referral sources to it. It's a variety of things that we do that allow you to stay really top of mind.

So we're transcending the keeping in touch, because you're going to be memorable and meaningful. The, what you do is really dictated by who you're doing it for.

An attorney told me, Hey, most of my referral sources are actually, they just happen to be for whatever reason, mostly guys in their twenties and thirties.

And then another attorney tells me, well, most of my referral sources actually happened to be pretty much, you know, a mix among the genders, and they're usually in their 50s and 60s, the plan we're going to build, that looks very different for both of those groups.

So what those five, six, or seven touch points end up being is typically always going to be starting by looking at the who we're doing it for, and then building together what that actual plan will look like.

**Margaret Burke:** As you were speaking, I was thinking about how there's referral sources and sometimes there are other business professionals that you have synergies with, and then other times it's clients.

So I'm curious like what your advice is on how to always keep your clients top of mind and ensure that the experience they receive from you becomes a referable experience.

**Stacey Brown Randall:** Yes, and that is such an important question because a lot of people are like, okay, great, I've just built out this five to seven touch point plan for my existing referral sources. Can I just take that and apply it to my client experience and apply it to my new potential referral sources?

And my answer is always no, because it's a different experience. Sometimes it's the same people, right? You have clients that refer you, so they would be on that existing referral source list.

But really when we look at generating referrals from our clients, we have a two-pronged approach here.

With every other strategy I teach, we have one objective. We've got existing referral sources. Let's get more referrals from them. We have new people we want to refer us. Let's nurture them into referral sources.

But with the client experience, it's different, and there's two parts to it. The first part is you actually being referable.

And most people think that means you do amazing work and you win every case or you always come in under whatever you said the price would be, right? And we all know none of that's possible.

So it's not about being perfect. Right? It's about doing great work. And then the second part of a referable client experience equation is actually building relationships.

So it's having relationship building touch points, in addition to your work touch points, when those two pieces are in place, and your clients feel different about working with you, right?

Because a client experience is defined as how your clients feel when they're working with you, knowing what those are by stages and all the pieces of having that referable client experience, really looking at it from the perspective of, OK, we do the work and we build relationships.

Once that's in place, you're now referable. From there, we look to bridge the gap to referrals, which we look to do that in a couple of different ways. But you can't bridge the gap to referrals until you have that referable client experience in place.

And I know that's not like everyone's favorite answer, right? Usually we're like, can we just jump to getting the referrals from our clients, please?

But it really does, like what people overlook is how much your clients, they're not thinking about referring you. Like they just don't.

Like they think about whatever they're getting from the relationship with you, but it doesn't connect naturally to them being like, okay, yeah, now, let me refer you to five people because you've taken such good care of me.

But if you want them to ever see those opportunities to refer to you, you've got to bring them to a place in the relationship where you are truly referable and you've truly impacted how they feel.

Then we use some key tactics to actually bridge that gap to referrals as well. When it comes to bridging the gap to referrals, that's going to happen in three main ways.

It's either going to be the right people who you cannot predict until you sign that new client and they start referring you. And you're like, oh, I got a right person here, right?

We don't build strategies around them because we can't predict who they are. But then you also have referral hot zones, and you also have right moments.

And it's understanding when those things happen and what you say and what you do. That's the piece I tell my clients. You can focus on bridging the gap to referrals once you are first and foremost, referable.

**Margaret Burke:** That's excellent. It reminds me of the saying that people won't always remember what you said, but they'll remember how you made them feel.

**Stacey Brown Randall:** Yeah. Maya Angelou quote. Absolutely. Very, very true today and every day.

**Laurin Johnson:** Yeah. it is. Stacey, I'd love bit about, I think one thing that is somewhat unique to the practice of law is how often lawyers tend to refer business to one another right?

There's just not that many industries where you're constantly seeing people within the same field referring back and forth a lot.

It can be due to being conflicted out on a case, geography, you don't specialize in an area of the law that the client needs. So this is an area that law firms can be really intentional about.

So what can they do? What are some strategies they can employ to really help nurture those peer-to-peer referral relationships?

**Stacey Brown Randall:** Yeah, so this is my favorite thing about working with attorneys because no other industry has this, this like built-in potential for referrals from other people who do exactly what you do.

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Like it doesn't, financial advisors are not referring to other financial advisors, right? I mean, marketing consultants aren't like necessarily referring their competitive marketing consultant. They're just not doing it.

So I used to tell my attorneys, I'm like, if you're not getting referrals, like you're missing like the easiest thing in your business because other attorneys usually need you. Not every attorney you know, but there are definitely attorneys out there that need you.

We actually, when I work with law firms, we actually treat those attorneys that can refer to them just like they're an existing referral source or a potential referral source. And we devise the same strategies.

So if we have an attorney that's referring, so if I have a client that's an attorney, and they have a couple of attorneys referring to them, they're labeled as an existing referral source and they're going to get that five to seven touchpoint plan just like if they had a financial advisor that was also referring to them.

We don't separate them out. We keep them in the plan. One that just makes it like from a logistical lift, that just makes it easier for the attorney or the support team or the law firm itself to actually do the touchpoint plan if everyone's kind of treated the same.

And so from that perspective, they are part of your referral sources. They are categorized as such. We nurture them as such.

We don't really have to do anything special or different to receive referrals from them, because sometimes those attorneys that are referring to you, they need you as much as you need them, because they need a place to send that client as well, but we still wanna take care of them.

And the reason why we keep them on the same list as other existing referral sources, or if there's an attorney you want to refer you, and now they're on the potential referral source list.

Like the reason why we do a five to seven touchpoint plan, the reason why we try to be referable, the reason why we nurture new people to refer us, is because we know and believe, like my clients have to have this fundamental belief or what I teach doesn't work, is that if someone's going to refer a client to you, that you believe that if you're willing to refer a client to me, of course, it makes perfect sense that I would want to take care of you.

And I would want this plan in place to take care of you because you're taking care of my business. And those attorneys that refer to other attorneys are no different and very, very valuable.

**Laurin Johnson:** Do you find that that's a bit of a mind shift with your clients when you're talking to them about these fellow attorneys, their peers that are referring to them and really thinking about them and nurturing like they would any other referral source?

**Stacey Brown Randall:** I think the light bulb I see go off more is, is that they already kind of have that professional respect. Like, I really love that these attorneys refer to me.

But then we start digging into the science, we start digging into the why, we start building out their plan. And usually the light bulb moment is, oh, I'm actually not doing enough, and I need to do more.

I shouldn't just assume, because we're both attorneys, and we know each other from law school, or we know each other from our first corporate job before we went out on our own, that they're always going to refer to me, that I probably need to nurture that relationship and make sure they know that I appreciate them.

So it's usually more of a, ew, I'm probably not doing enough. I'm taking a lot for granted. **Laurin Johnson:** Yep.

**Stacey Brown Randall:** Yeah.

**Margaret Burke:** Interesting. So that brings us to a topic that is near and dear and it comes up often. You mentioned logistics and follow-up.

We'd love to get your feedback on CRMs. So not just CRMs, but how do you recommend people track their activities? Do you recommend CRMs? Like what are some tactics that you recommend to your clients?

**Stacey Brown Randall:** Yeah, so I'm software agnostic, but for most of the attorneys I work with, you gotta have a software. Like to me, it doesn't matter which one you have as long as it can do what you need it to do. Cause tracking is huge. Like if you don't track, then you don't even know where to start, right?

And in my first book, Generating Business Referrals Without Asking, there is a chapter on cleaning up your database and going back and tracking if you don't. And we literally call that section walk down memory lane.

And it's not a fun section for anyone to be like, oh, that's what I have to do. I got to go back and figure out where all these clients came from so I can track them correctly. So tracking is very important.

It starts with your intake process. It moves into how you are then inputting them into your database.

The biggest tip I would give all my clients and I would give your listeners is that when you're thinking about your CRM, collect what you want to collect, do all the things you want it to do.

But when you choose the source for where that prospect, because they're always a prospect first before they're a client, right?

So when you choose that source for where that prospect came from, and your CRM provides you a dropdown list that you can usually choose. Sometimes you can decide what those are. Sometimes you're just given what they are.

And referral is an option. You have to if it's not already included, you have to go back to your CRM and you have to say, I need another field added to the prospect record so that I can track not only that this person was referred, but the name of who referred them, the name of the referral source.

And I tell my clients, dig in. until they give that to you. I've been teaching this stuff for 12 years. CRMs have totally caught up to the importance of this. Twelve years ago, sometimes I'd be like, do you need me to get on the phone with support at your CRM because they are not getting it from you of how important this is.

Now, it's like almost in most CRMs that I see. Every once in a while, I'll see one I'm like, you added that field, you can add another field if you don't know how support will help you do it.

But that ability to know who did the referring to that prospect that you're gathering in the intake process is critical to your tracking. Because here's the thing that people don't pay attention to.

When you track like that, when you track where your prospects come from and then you run me a report that shows me all the referrals that you've received and who the referral source was and what the outcome was, I can instantly look at not only are we increasing referrals and how many referrals are you receiving on a monthly or quarterly basis, but I can also look at your closing ratio.

You're receiving 50, but you closed five. We have a problem, right? I can also pay attention if you have a quality issue. Why we're only closing five is because 40 of them were terrible, right? Now I know we have a quality issue. There's a tactic to solve that.

You're getting great quality and you're not closing them. Maybe it's not quality. Maybe it's you. So we have a technique to help with closing referred prospects.

And we get to know who's referring you more than once. And what you're losing ratio is by those individual referral sources.

Wow. Bob, this one attorney, he referred you five people and you closed all of them. You have a hundred percent closing ratio with Bob. Amazing.

But Sam referred you five people and you closed none of them, right? That's important data to know because now we know it's probably how Sam setting you up versus how Bob setting you up. And there's a conversation for that.

So that's the thing that people don't understand. Like the data tells us how to solve the smaller problems in referrals while we're also putting these bigger plans in place that we've talked about.

**Margaret Burke:** Yeah. If you see me shaking my head adamantly because I just really couldn't agree more.

And what I'm sure you see often, and we see it with the folks we work with, is when you run a report, often people don't realize who is referring to them, and it's eye-opening when they track for a year.

And sometimes people don't realize that someone has referred 10 people, and if they go on memory, they might have thought it was maybe two.

**Stacey Brown Randall:** Memory is a terrible use when you're trying to do that with this. And you know what's interesting? When I have people who do this, I'm always like, you know, there's a couple of things that are going to happen when you do the process of identifying your existing referral sources.

But my favorite reaction and not favorite, like it's not great reaction in terms of like why I'm reacting. But my favorite reaction is when someone says, oh, my gosh, Sarah has referred seven people to me.

And then I wait and then I hear them usually say, and I haven't talked to her in nine months. I'm like, uh huh. Can we do something about that? And they're like, yes, let's do something about that.

**Laurin Johnson:** Stacey, for our listeners out there who don't have a referral network yet, they're sort of starting from scratch. What might, let's say, a realistic 90-day plan look like for them to begin building that first trusted referral relationship?

**Stacey Brown Randall:** Yeah, so I want to be really encouraging here for everybody who's listening that's like, this is me. Like Laurin just asked a question that is right where I am, and I don't have people referring me.

One of the very first people that I taught this strategy to, like way back, like more than 10 years ago, I think it was like 2013, something like that, was a personal injury attorney who worked in a small firm.

There was like four, I think partners. And there was one of those partners who had just been in the industry forever, knew everybody. And he fed her most of the clients that she did work with.

And she was like, one day he's going to retire and I'm going to be in trouble because all of my cases, all of my clients come from him. And that was why she was like, I got to hire Stacey, and I got to figure this out.

And the goal there was was first and that 90-day plan, like you said, the first thing we had to do is identify who should be referring her. Like who should be referring you?

And it wasn't just attorneys. They were definitely on the list, but we looked at like who comes across your ideal client.

We kind of created like an ideal referral source profile if they're not a client, right? Like an ideal referral source profile for like centers of influence. Who should be referring you, right?

And then I have a strategy I teach called the running five keeping warm of how we reach out to these folks, how we start nurturing relationships with these folks. We're not focused on receiving referrals. Never.

The outcome is not valuable yet. What we are focused on is taking care of them and trying to help them and seeing what we can do to help them. Because when you help me, that's when I'm going to remember you.

And that's when I may get around to remembering, that's right, you are a really good personal injury attorney. And so for her and her first six months, she brought on like six people referring her. And it was incredible.

She was like, oh my gosh, I have people outside the partner in my firm referring to me. And she was like, I think it was like in six months, she was up to six people. And then she got over 12, maybe it was 12 or 13 in her first year.

But every year after that, she continues to grow that. And eventually she hit like 40 referrals a year coming from probably like a base of 20 something people. And she's maintained that.

And every year she checks in with me. And every year she's like, this is how many I got, right? Like this is how many referrals I got. Every year she checks in with me.

And every year there's growth in the way she wants it, which doesn't always mean every year she gets more referrals than the year before. She's sometimes looking for better quality cases. And as long as that's improving, the number doesn't matter.

And her business has flourished. And she has put into her, like she told me one time, she was like, Stacey, this is just how we run our practice. This is like second nature.

It's like how we would go out and defend a client, like how we would run a case, how we would dig into an investigation. She was like, this is how we do referrals.

And they've been doing it that way for, oh gosh, I don't know, is that 10 years now, more than 10 years?

So it is starting from scratch. It is harder. It does take a little bit longer, but it can completely transform your firm if you will give it the time that it needs to be successful.

**Margaret Burke:** That's an amazing story. There's so much to talk about. We're coming to the end of our time together and this has been so informative.

I've been taking notes and we started by asking about advice that you received and we asked you to share some advice that was not helpful.

We'd love to hear about some advice that you've received that has been helpful. What is the best advice you have received?

**Stacey Brown Randall:** Yeah, so I went through this journey about eight years into my firm back in 2021. 2021 was kind of like the start of it.

It wasn't really a COVID thing, but it was just the more of the type of business, the type of business that I wanted to build. and what that looked like for me.

And I got some great advice that said, you've got to figure out Stacey, where your sweet spot is in terms of the area of expertise that you want to be known for.

And you've got to match that with how you show up for your clients based on when they get their best results.

It's not all the ways people work with you, they get great results, but what are the top ways that people get results? And then marry that with how you want to show up.

How do you want to show up on your day-to-day? Do you want to show up five days a week? Do you want to show up less than that?

But it was looking at those three pieces, like where's my sweet spot of expertise? Where do my clients have the best results when they're working with me? And then how do I want to show up and actually allow that to happen?

And from that perspective, that created an entirely different model in my business. And in 2021, I retired five things that I used to do, five areas of expertise and other programs that I don't do anymore. And I narrowed it down to like the three that truly mattered and where my clients get their best results.

And if that person hadn't told me, because it was like giving me the confidence to be like, I know the answers to all these three things. Now I just need to sit down and figure it out.

And then I got to go share some bad news for some clients or be very happy when I retire, whatever it is they're doing with me. But it made my business so much stronger.

And so that was some of the best advice I've ever received is like building the model that works for you, regardless of what the marketplace and the industry. and the comparison game says what you should want.

**Laurin Johnson:** It takes a certain amount of confidence to do that. And I think sometimes somebody that we trust and respect saying that to us it's like just what you need.

Because it's true. You're right. You know the answer, but sometimes it's like that little extra push you need to really make that jump and sort of be all in

on the certain aspects of your practice that you really get the most joy out of.

**Stacey Brown Randall:** Yeah, it's why coaching and working with consultants is so very important. Sometimes you need an outsider's perspective.

**Laurin Johnson:** Yes, absolutely.

**Margaret Burke:** Yeah, so true. So really, thank you so much. You know, we've learned so much today.

And I think if I were to take one takeaway is that referrals aren't about asking, it's about earning those referrals. And you have really shown us exactly how to do that with heart and strategy.

We'd like to share that folks can also check out Stacey's podcast, which how many, what is your number? You announced it before we got on the air.

**Stacey Brown Randall:** Yeah, we're not quite there, but we're very close to hitting 400. So I think we're in 380 something.

**Margaret Burke:** That's amazing. And the name of your podcast is Roadmap to Referrals?

**Stacey Brown Randall:** Correct. Yes. Roadmap to Referrals.

**Margaret Burke:** Great. And would you share where people can find your free resources?

**Stacey Brown Randall:** Yes. So if they just go to my website, StaceyBrownRandall.com, I'm sure you'll put it in the show notes page. They get Stacey spelled right, but it is spelled with an E. Stacey Brown Randall dot com. You're going to find a link to both of my books, including the second one, the new one that's just out.

There's a resource tab you can go to. It's got some free resources as well and a lot of content that you can find in that website that'll really just help you know that it is possible to generate referrals in a way that will work for you and will feel good.

**Margaret Burke:** Excellent. Thank you. And we will, in fact, be putting those notes in the notes for our listeners. And Stacey, thank you so much for your generous time, your practical tips that you gave us today.

To our listeners, if you're ready to stop chasing referrals and start earning them naturally, this episode is your roadmap. Also, you know how to reach Stacy. It'll be in the notes. And again, thank you.

Today's insights really have sparked something in me, and I'm sure in Laurin, and we hope that it sparks something in the rest of our listeners.

And then until next time, I'm Margaret Burke. I'm here with Laurin Johnson, and let's keep building smarter law firms together.

**Stacey Brown Randall:** Thanks, Margaret and Laurin, for being the guest hosts of the Roadmap to Referrals podcast.

All the ways to connect with Margaret and Laurin are, of course, listed below the video. Just scroll down. Or, of course, you can find them on our show notes page, which is StaceyBrownRandall.com/441.

I want to thank them again for sharing our episode that we did and the great conversation we had about increasing referrals for law firms.

OK, remember to like this video. Make sure you leave a five-star rating for the episode. And I would love it if you would subscribe to the show, whether that's on YouTube or on your favorite podcast listening app.

I also love feedback. So what was your favorite part of the episode? or what's something you learned new? Just drop me a comment below. Bye for now.