



The Secret to Asking for Referrals—and Getting Them

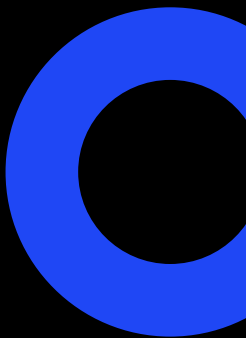


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Satisfied customers can be your most powerful marketing tool.

When it comes to growing your company's credibility and profits, happy customers are your secret weapon. And one of the most valuable characteristics of a satisfied shopper is their willingness to provide the referrals you need to grow.

Learning how to ask for referrals can be your fast track to a better bottom line. One study found that, of the companies that implement a referral strategy,



[71% saw higher conversion rates](#) and 59% saw a higher lifetime value per customer.

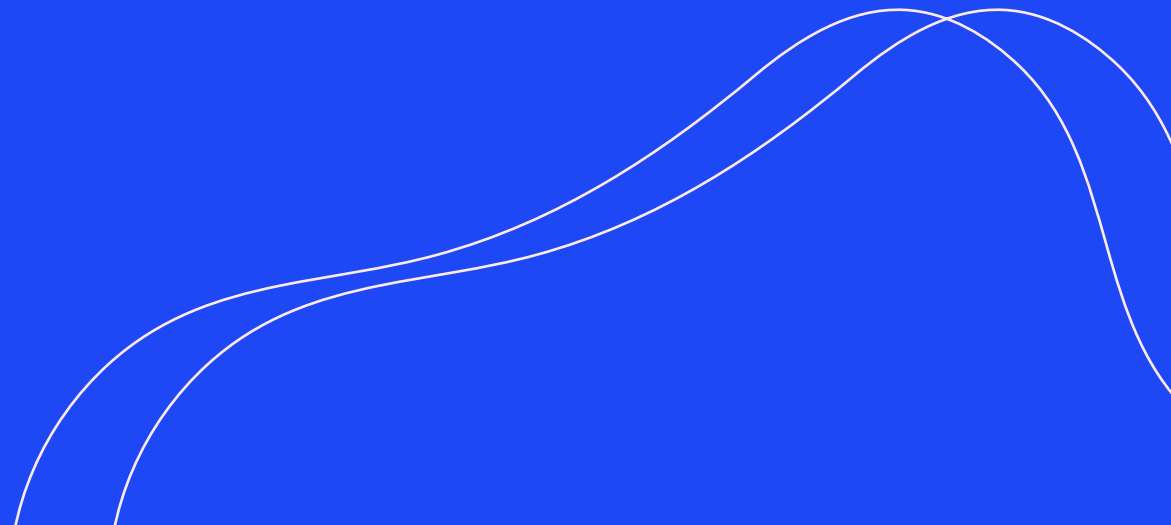
But how do you implement an effective strategy and what does that look like? We're here to help. Read on to earn more for every dollar you invest and multiply your high-quality leads.



01

How to Ask for Referrals

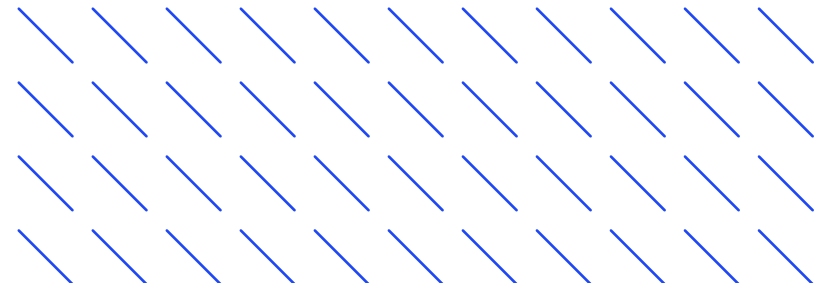
No matter how long a customer or client has been with your business, it can still feel awkward to ask for a referral. You may be worried about your referral request sounding pushy, or perhaps you simply don't want an existing customer to feel like you're using them as a marketing tool.





However, landing a successful referral isn't as difficult as it may seem. One study found that [83% of satisfied customers](#) are open to providing referrals. And they will if you have a solid game plan for asking them.

Follow the simple steps below to make a direct ask. With these tips, you'll never have to overthink your referral requests again.





1. Identify your most loyal customers

Sending direct asks to your entire customer base can be a waste of valuable time. Just as you need to narrow down your audience for day-to-day marketing materials, you also need to target the potential referrers who are most likely to take action.

To start, think about which customers already have a strong relationship with your brand. Some questions that can help you build and refine your list include:

- Who is a returning customer?
- Who has had a positive customer service experience?
- Who consistently opens and engages with your marketing texts or emails?
- Who consistently engages with your brand on social media?
- Who has left an online review without prompting in the past?
- Who have you personally had a positive, direct conversation with before?

The best customers to target are those who know the value your brand provides, especially if they've already proven to be advocates in the past.



2. Personalize your message

Whether you're speaking face-to-face, sending an email, or making a phone call, you don't want your customer to feel like they're receiving the same pitch as hundreds of other customers. Your best customers deserve a more personalized message that's more than an ask. This means tossing aside your scripts and copied-and-pasted email templates.

The content of your ask should include more than a request. Tie the ask into a message your customer finds value in. For example, when texting a current client, a web designer may lead with a link to a blog



post about website content trends in the client's industry. Then the content naturally transitions to the referral request. Don't forget to address your customer by name as you craft your message.

To increase the likelihood of getting a customer referral, many business owners will also offer an incentive (such as a gift card, store credit, or swag) with the ask. Your customers know that you care about your business growth, but this simple addition can prove that you're happy to invest in your current buyers as well.



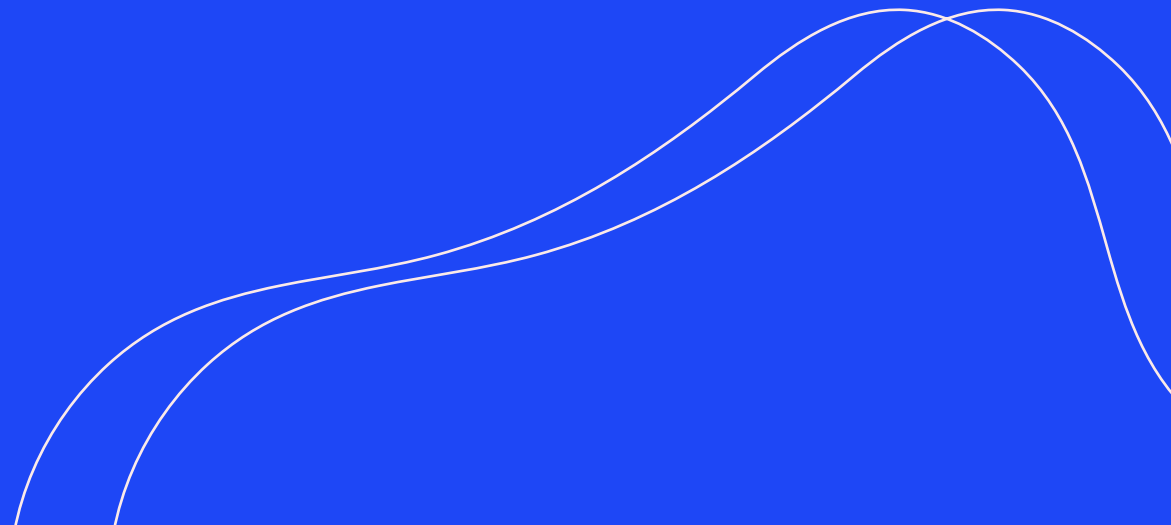
3. Ask at the right time

Even if a customer has had great experiences with your company in the past, they probably aren't as excited about the brand six months after their last purchase. You want to catch your potential referral sources immediately following a good experience. For example, an e-commerce company might ask for a referral right after a shopper's most recent purchase is delivered or after their customer support team helps a customer find a solution.

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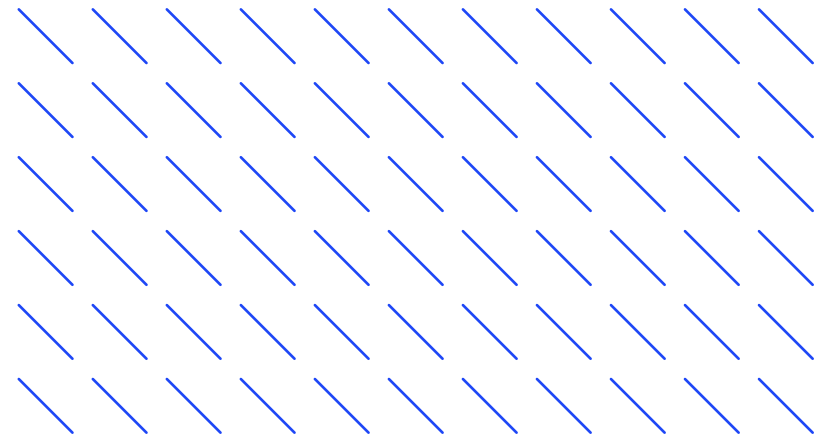
5 Ways to Increase Referrals

While handpicking customers and asking for referrals will get you the best results, you definitely don't want any missed opportunities. Although your biggest advocates may be the most likely to contribute to your referral marketing, they're not the only ones with connections to offer.





It can be hard to justify dedicating resources to lukewarm candidates. Luckily, there are plenty of strategies you can use to boost your referrals without sending direct asks to everyone.



1. Set up a referral program

[Referral programs](#) are a popular strategy for driving new business. By providing even a small incentive to anyone who successfully refers a new customer, you can spur even your most passive shoppers into action. This strategy is also a very cost-effective one. The majority of business-to-business (B2B) marketers agree that referral programs result in a [lower cost-per-lead](#) than all other marketing channels.



As you finalize the logistics of your referral program, we recommend setting up a dedicated landing page for it. This will not only help you direct customers to more information on your referral program promotions but also draw in referrers who are simply browsing your site or searching on Google.

2. Partner with an organization

A unique referral marketing strategy you can use to passively gain referrals is networking with relevant organizations in your area. This may include professional associations, leadership programs, coworking spaces, or even social meetups—any group with members who may consistently need products or services like yours.

When you develop a relationship with an organization, you become the group's go-to suggestion whenever members ask for related products or services. You gain access to a new



pool of connections that you can develop close relationships with. Plus, the organization's trust in you helps you gain immediate credibility among new members, including those you wouldn't have otherwise connected with.



3. Collaborate with other professionals

Similar to partnering with organizations, collaborating with other professionals can help you connect with another company’s customer base. Building a relationship with brands that have similar but not overlapping products or services can help you get a consistent flow of referred customers.

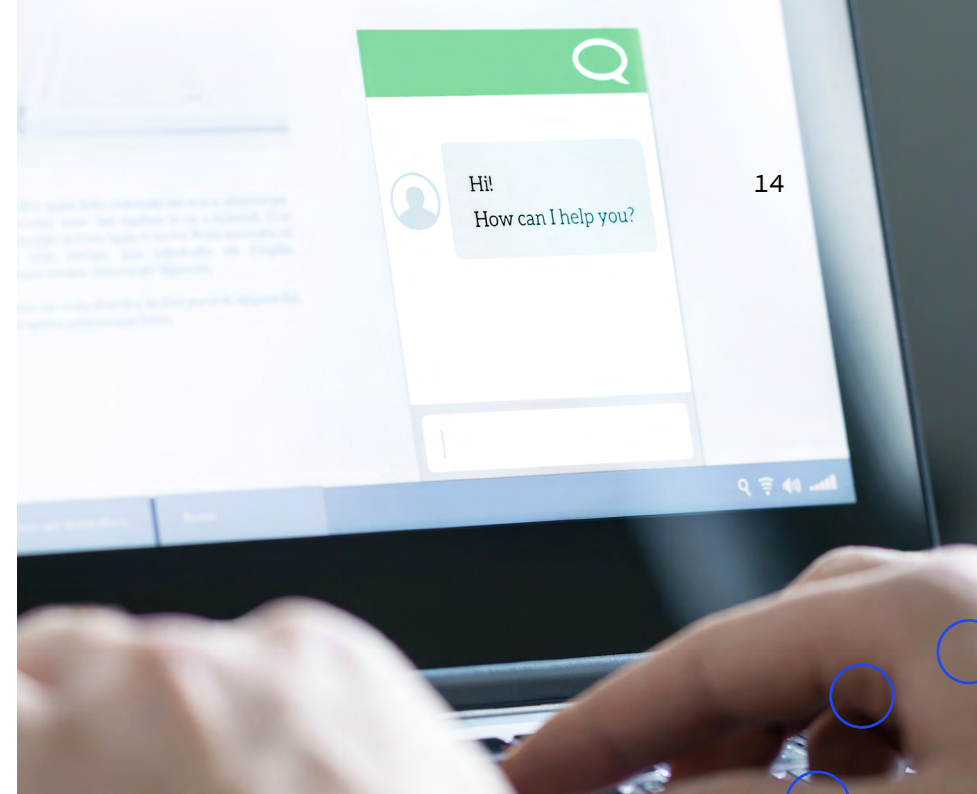
You often find this type of partnership between photographers and videographers or dentists and orthodontists. To promote this partnership, both business owners may link to each other’s websites on their own sites under a “partners” page or similar category.

If you provide a professional service, you may even find it helpful to work with people in the same industry. If a company is all booked up, they may turn a qualified lead to you as a second choice.

4. Automate a follow-up

While you probably don't have the time to send a handwritten note to every customer, you can automate a short and sweet request to all of the willing referrers you may have left behind. You can set up an [SMS](#) or [Webchat](#) message that sends to a customer as soon as they make a purchase or finish an interaction with a sales rep. Some companies will even follow up with previous referrers, perhaps a month or two later, to see if they know someone else who may be interested in what they offer.

Though an automated message won't be as personal as a direct ask, make sure it feels more



personable than a cold call. For example, you may use more conversational language and thank them for purchasing, reaching out, or taking the specific action that spurred the follow-up.

If you're worried about not providing your customer with enough value in return, keep in mind that automated follow-ups don't have to ask for a direct customer referral. More and more businesses are simply asking for online reviews—which, in many ways, have become [the new word-of-mouth marketing](#).

5. Engage on social media

These days, [most brands](#) are using social media for marketing purposes. By gearing your strategy toward building referrals, you can find potential customers with the help of your entire following—not just those who have purchased from your brand.

One effective tactic you can use is promoting user-generated content. Like all consumers, social media users like to feel valued and heard, so when you share their content that features your brand, you encourage them to keep tagging and indirectly promoting you.



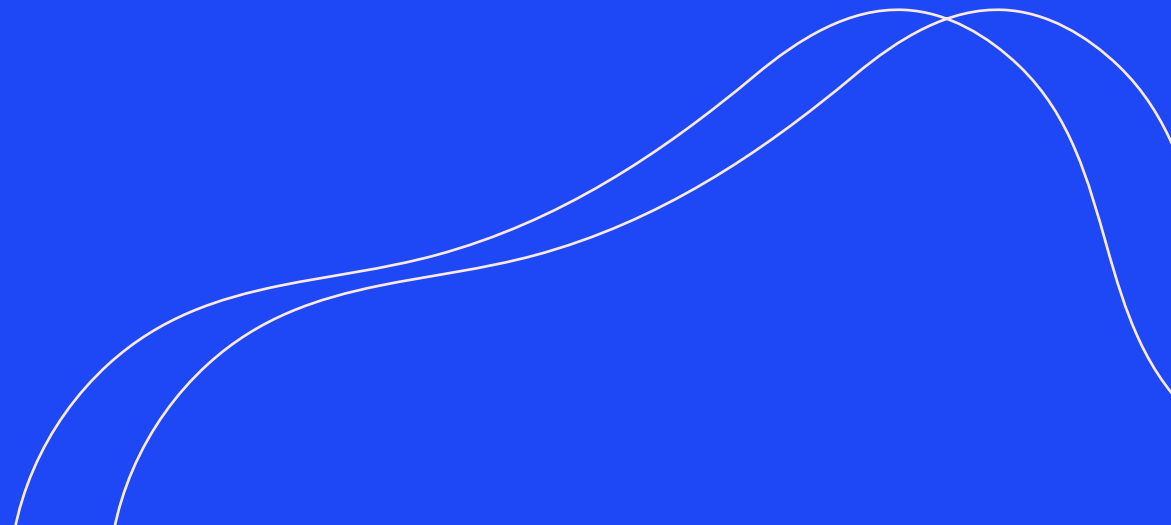
Social media contests are also commonly used to increase referrals. Many brands ask for their followers to tag their friends—which takes little effort on their part—in exchange for an entry to win a grand prize. This is a great way to get hundreds of referrals at once. While many of these tags will simply build brand recognition, a percentage of users tagged can become interested leads.



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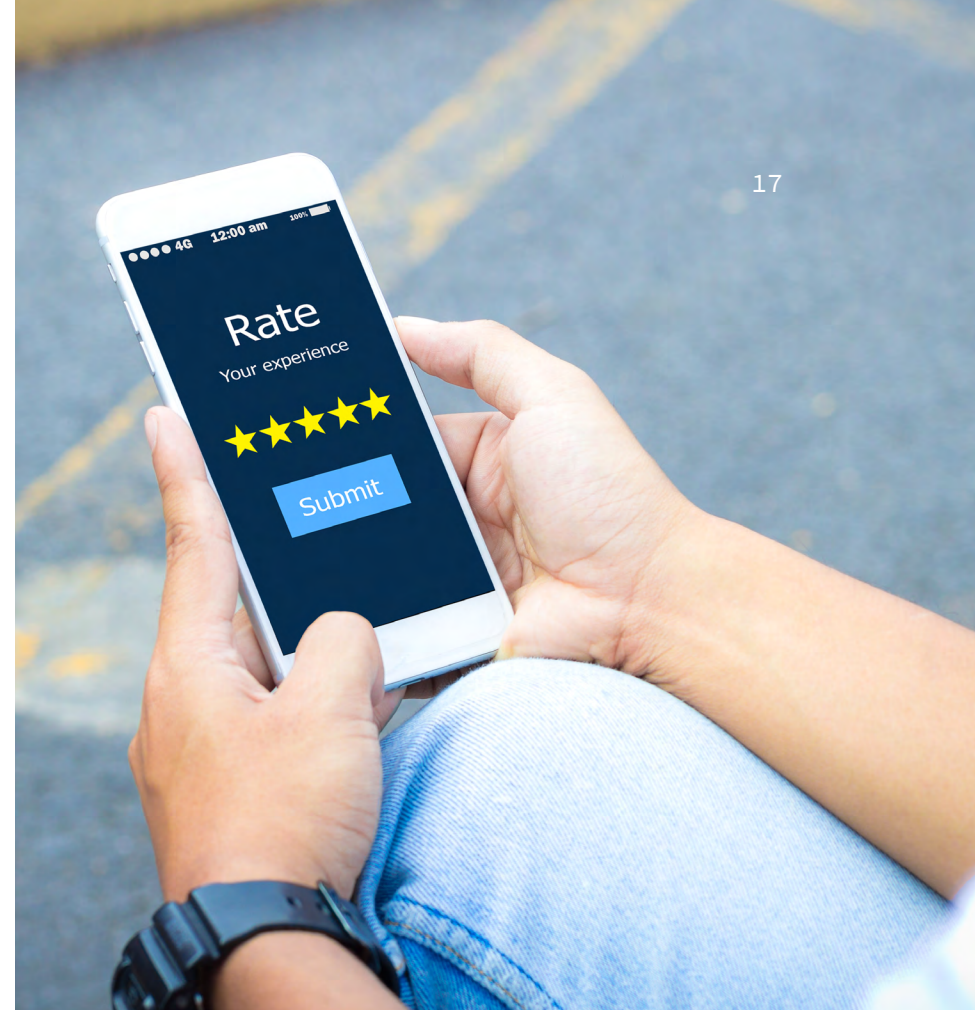
Improve Results with Online Reviews

Word-of-mouth referrals may lead to high conversion rates, but you need more than traditional referrals to experience business growth. If you want to speed up results and get new clients or customers faster, you can add an online review management tool to your referral strategy.



Online reviews are testimonials that reach thousands of people at once and influence their decisions. [79% of consumers](#) actually trust reviews as much as personal recommendations from friends and family. [88% of consumers](#) say reviews influence them in discovering a local business. And approximately [half of consumers](#) are willing to travel farther and pay more to patronize a business with higher reviews.

Google pays close attention to businesses' reviews when ranking and lists your rating and reviews in your listing. But it's not just higher reviews, or even more reviews, that help you top results and influence buyers. Google carefully analyzes your review [recency, frequency, quality, and quantity](#). Customer behavior reflects this as [83% of consumers](#) think reviews must be recent and relevant in order to



care about them. Businesses need to aim for review quality, diversity, and management to compete.

Sometimes it can be difficult for businesses to collect online reviews organically. Following are some tips on how you can collect reviews easily and naturally.

How to Rapidly Increase Google Reviews & Ratings:

- 1. Text.** Over a [third of consumers](#) who receive a text review invite leave one, and approximately [41% of consumers](#) prefer text to communicate vs. [18% who prefer email](#). If you want to increase your Google review collection, text is key—and the results speak for themselves. After switching to text to collect reviews, [Paul's Pest Control](#) jumped half a star on Google within 24 hours and gathered more reviews in one month than they had in five years.



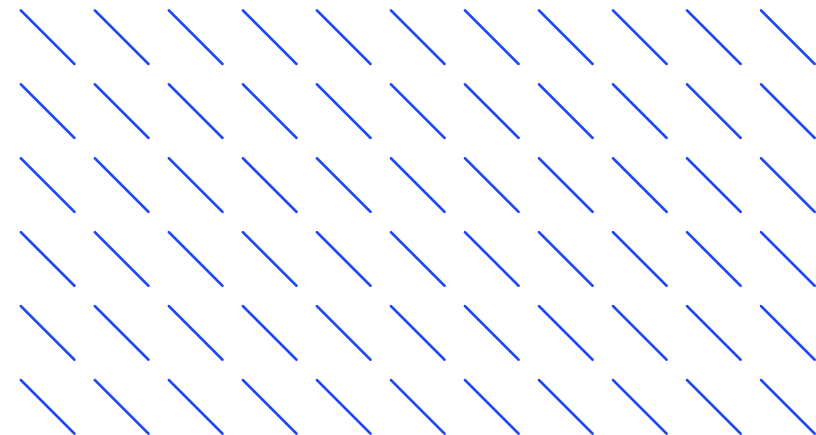


- 2. Create a Google review link shortcut.** The first step in setting up text review invites is to create a [Google review link shortcut](#). This allows you to send customers messages with a short link that they can click to review you quickly and easily.
- 3. Manage reviews.** If you want to collect reviews, it's [crucial to show your customers that reviews matter to you](#)—and that means managing them. Respond to negative reviews within 2 hours and positive ones within 24 hours. Showing your customers that you are responsive and open to their feedback will make them more willing to leave you reviews. Google's [GMB support page](#) explicitly says responding to reviews “shows that you value your customers and their feedback” and helps “build consumer trust.”



4. Change according to reviews. Another great way to increase collection and demonstrate your responsiveness is to implement changes according to the feedback you receive. [Griffin Fast Lube](#) crushes the competition by continuously improving their business through the valuable feedback they get from their customers.

5. Use a reputation management platform. Responding to, collecting, and analyzing reviews can be quite a task for any team to take on. But using a platform such as Podium makes managing reviews a breeze for any local business of any size. After adopting Podium, [Dunn Tire](#) saw a 5% increase in rating and 41x increase in average monthly reviews, surpassing 4,500.



Get Started

No matter your starting point, increasing your high-quality referrals and visibility is within reach. And with the right tools, you can do it much more quickly and efficiently than you think.

Podium helps 90,000+ local businesses of all sizes get found and chosen daily by empowering them to:

- Collect and manage thousands of reviews
- Drive and convert leads online
- Provide a modern customer journey

All through the power of text. See how Podium can open the floodgates to referrals by watching this [demo](#).

[Watch a demo here](#) ↗

