

The Referral Engine

Subject: A systematic approach to generating word of mouth as a comprehensive marketing strategy.

Chapter 1: The Realities of Referral

1. People refer because they need to. It's human, reciprocal.
2. All business involves risk. The best way to remove it is to connect logically and emotionally.
3. Nobody talks about boring businesses.
4. Consistency builds trust.
5. Marketing is a system.

Chapter 2: The Qualities of Referral

Be trusted.

Market to employees, too.

Hire for fit.

Train. Constantly provide marketing training for staff.

Ideas: Open dashboard, open-book management.

Theme: Shift the thinking from "What can I sell" to "What can I give?"

Anecdote: Designing a marketing system for new agents.

Suggestion: Make a list of 100 people they know. Instead of pitching them on insurance, introduce them to other businesses, services, and opportunities. "In fact, I suggested that they spend the first six months of this new program doing nothing but

connecting their friends, family, and network members in ways that helped them get more of what they were lacking -- no selling allowed."

Do it and people will find you. That's the essence of the inbound referral.

Referral strategy is a lead, customer service, process, competitive, mgmt, people, and financial strategy.

Chapter 3

Widely referred businesses create opportunities for people to join a community.

"Come for the tool, stay for the network."

Theme: Convergence. Bring off-line businesses more online. Bring online businesses more off-line.

Chapter 4

System view.

1. Core talkable difference. What makes you remarkable.
2. Find your ideal customer.
3. Inbound process. Instead of finding, think of being found.
4. Target customers and prospects, but also target businesses that serve the same customers.

Chapter 5: Authentic Strategy

Document it. Messaging.

Write down the story that captures the essence of the business.

Tell it.

Brand elements: name, logo, product, packaging, process, people, and everything else.

Marketing metrics:

lead gen

percentage of leads converted
CAC
transaction per customer

Chapter 6: Content as Marketing Driver

Your killer "technology" -- this can be a process, tech, tips, essential steps, approach to employees (a la Canlis), habits, etc.

Create a point-of-view white paper.

Share and educate.

Collect addresses/business cards.

Get to a podium.

Theme: Advertising's call to action is to teach.

Chapter 7: Convergence Strategies

Hub and spoke.

Repurpose content.

Be personal.

Put a social media system in place.

Companies:

New Belgium
Cheeseboard Collective
Zingermans.com
biznik

Tools:

centraldesktop.com