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# The WRAP® Method: *How to Ask Customers for Referrals*

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All top producing sales people know that building a straight referral business is the most effective way to fill your pipeline with qualified leads and the fastest way to sell more in less time. When you think, eat, sleep, and make referrals a way of life, your client base becomes a lead generating machine. Sometimes happy customers will take the initiative to send referrals your way, but most of the time referrals don't happen organically. Help the process along by asking. So what's the catch? Most people don't ask because they don't know how.

If you've delivered a great product/service and you've confirmed that the customer is genuinely happy with the purchase, you have earned the right to ask for referrals. But getting a name and phone number is not enough. The more *detail* you can gather on the referral contacts you're given, the more professionally prepared you'll be when approaching the new contact and the greater the probability of a new sale.

To help remember the steps in asking customers for referrals, use my **WRAP®** technique. Think about the word "wrap" for a moment. At the end of a motion picture shoot, the director will yell to the cast and crew, "That's a wrap!" signaling the end of the filming. Anyone who knows about film-making however, will tell you that it's *after* the "wrap" where *real* movie magic begins—in the editing room. Wrap is also what you do to a gift. What you do (e.g. sell) is a gift you provide to others. But a gift, or "present," is more *presentable* when wrapped. WRAP each sale as a gift. The magic of helping more people begins at the end of the sale when you've delighted a new customer and earned the right to help more people with your "gifts."

Here are the WRAP "steps" when asking customers for referrals that will create a professional, effective, and customer-focused "gift:"

**W:** Wait for the right time.

**R:** Review the benefits.

**A:** Ask for names.

**P:** Pave the way.

Here's how to implement WRAP® technique:

**W: Wait for the right time.**

There will rarely be another time when customers are more delighted with their purchase than immediately after the sale. An excellent time to ask after you've wrapped up the details is when

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excitement peaks, or perhaps when you've shared a humorous exchange with your customer, or she volunteers information about her enthusiasm for the new product or service.

In other cases, particularly big-ticket or long-term sales cycles, your customers might be reluctant to refer you until they've had time to verify the performance of your product or service. Wait and call anywhere from one day to two weeks after the sale to follow through and check for satisfaction. Sometimes the test period may take months. If the customer is pleased at that point, it's an appropriate time to ask. If you detect that they still need more time, then call back in a week or two to check for satisfaction again. Staying in touch communicates that you have a vested interest in his or her success with the purchase. Ultimately, use your best judgment. Just be sure to verify a high level of satisfaction first before asking.

**R: Review the benefits.**

Review how your product/services have benefited the customer, focusing on how their lives have been enhanced. Examples:

*I'm so pleased that we were able to help you...(summarize benefits). This is what makes our work so worthwhile.*

Or let the *customer* explain how they have benefited: *How do you feel about it? Has anyone else made any comments?*

Or make an observation: *You look really pleased. Do you agree that it was worth the wait to get a custom application?*

**A: Ask for names.**

Now it's time to ask for referral names.

*By the way, I'm dedicated to helping people (name benefit.) I was hoping we could brainstorm some ideas on who else you think might be interested in (name the benefits of your product or service). I'd like to let them know what resources and options are available so whenever they need \_\_\_\_\_ they'll have a reliable, pre-screened source. Who do you think would be a good fit? How about people in your...*

Help jog your customer's memory by specifying different groups, naming whatever is appropriate for your type of sale. If you don't help them think through categories of contacts, they might say, "I don't know." Mention categories such as:

- business associates
- friends
- church/schools
- social groups
- neighbors
- hobby/sports connection
- relatives
- clubs
- professional groups
- acquaintances

Using the word "resources" and "options" is important. Everyone wants trusted, proven resources and to know what their options are when they need help. The referral may not need your services *now*, but will want to know who to call when the time is right.

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Jot down names, phone numbers, relationship to the referring party, and any other relevant information. Don't pry for an e-mail address unless the contact offers it and *has permission to give it out*. Once you've explored names, now it's time to pave the way.

**P: Pave the way.**

Paving the way creates a collaborative path for contacting the referral. Ideally, you want your customer to make contact with their referral first. Most people don't like incoming cold calls, even if it *is* a referral. Having the customer contact *first* warms up the call you'll be making, *allows your customer to provide a glowing testimonial*, builds interest, and generates receptivity. Your customer may make the sale for you!

*I'd be happy to contact them. To pave the way, would you mind contacting them first just to let them know I'll be calling—maybe a phone call or an email?*

Collaborate on who will make the first contact. If the referring party is unwilling to make the first contact, let him know that you'll call back to report on the outcome of the conversation.

If he agrees to contact the referral first to pave the way, then ask for a re-contact time-frame. Specify when you'll be calling back or your customer may never pave the way. To avoid letting the referrals cool off, you might say:

*Thanks for agreeing to call ahead. When would you like me to follow through with you before I make contact with your referral? Is tomorrow afternoon too soon, or would the next day be better?*

Offer a choice of re-contact times, letting him know that you're going to follow-through with a call or email. This follow-through gives you a chance to get feedback from your customer about the referral's level of receptivity.

**WRAP**<sup>®</sup> helps you set the stage for asking and always focuses on *how you can help others*, not how your customers can help you. Do-Not-Call regulations make referrals more critical than ever. **WRAP**<sup>®</sup> *gains you permission to call*, opens opportunities to have positive things said about you and your "resources," and collaborates on how best to move forward with introductions.

**Application Activity**

On your next five sales calls, set a goal to ask for five referrals from each customer. If you do this *one* activity, your sales leads will immediately skyrocket. You could easily be on straight referrals within three weeks. If you have a longer sales cycle, it's even more important to keep your business thriving on referrals using **WRAP**<sup>®</sup>.

Create a referral contact management database to track your referrals. If you already have one, you may want to include additional fields of information so that your referral files allow for sufficient detail such as: name of the referring party, relationship to the referral, possible interests, contact information etc. Your database should give you a perfect memory. Now

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equipped with a supportive database and a method on how to ask, set a date to being making WRAP a habit *after every sale*.

*Don't let yourself stand in the way of your success!  
Don't keep yourself a secret!*

We are our own worst enemy when it comes to asking for referrals. Put your fears aside, your intimidation in the closet, and your insecurities to rest. Don't manufacture your own roadblocks for career stallers. Success takes a determined, positive mindset. *Be determined to help others by focusing on others*. This is not about *you* so get out of the way! This is about increasing your ability to help more people in less time.

The only way you can help others is to reach out. Be easy to find by allowing others to *help you help them*. The greatest riches come from connecting and building relationships with other people. That's a WRAP!

***You will get everything you want in life  
when you increase your contribution to others.***