

Networking 2

By Chuck And Sue DeFiore

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Another way to network is by using an 800 number and establishing a network of experts to refer your clients/customers to. An 800 number provides a way for your customers to reach you. You can answer information needs, resolve problems and obtain information from your customers. You will of course need to publicize your 800 number in your promotional materials, and advertisements. The best way to get the most out of your 800 number is to have a definitive plan on how you will employ it. Will you have prospects call to find out more about your products/services? Will you provide information when they call and then follow-up with printed materials, or will you direct them to a source?

After you have decided what you want the 800 number to do, put yourself in your customer's place, and be sure you are meeting all their needs. Ask yourself, if you knew nothing about what you were selling, would the information your 800 number is providing give you all that you need to make an informed decision.

An 800 number allows you to network on a broad level to areas and customers you might not have reached with just a long distance number. Many individuals will not make a long distance call, but will call an 800 number. If your business allows, have a network of experts to refer your customers to, or if you are selling products, additional sources for your products.

To obtain a network of experts, leave messages on the Internet; put ads in publications that relate to your business, go to trade shows, meetings and join groups that relate to your area or product. Be sure to determine that the individual you want to use as a referral is a good source for your customer base. Remember to contact a customer after giving a referral to insure that they received the information/product they needed and were satisfied, and if not ask why. A referral network is used to increase business. You want to insure that your 800 number increases business and pays for itself.

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