

5 Untapped Referrals to Gain Valuable Customers

By Naseem Mariam

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ABSTRACT: New customers need to feel confident that you will provide them with reliable service and products. Good referrals always help convince customers about the value and excellence of your services and products. Learn the 5 types of people who can help provide you with referrals.

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Many people have heard the expression, "It is not what you know that matters, it is who you know." Although this is partially correct, I once read an adaptation that seemed more relevant. It stated, "It is not who YOU know, it is WHO knows you." ~ Kelley Robertson Author of "Stop, Ask & Listen - How to welcome your customers & increase your sales."

Who do you know who will speak for you more effectively than all the costly advertisements and marketing efforts. Here is a list of 5 potential people who can help you gain valuable customers.

## 1. One-time customers, ex-customers, repeat customers

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Your customer database is your best bet for an unpaid, most effective marketing and public relations. A satisfied customer's word-of-mouth is 1000s time more believable and effective than all the advertising dollars that you can spend. Remember to keep in periodic touch and contact with all your customers: including one-time purchasers, repeat customers both past & present. You could name some day as Annual Day of your company and announce bonuses, free gifts and reduced rates on your products to your ex and existing customers. Show them that you care. Ask them what more you can do to help them. What are their current requirements? How can you help them now? 3 months from now?

Many of your customers - both current & past have expressed on a one to one basis the fact that they liked your work. However they are not actively involved in speaking about you or acting as referrals. Try to convert them to act as active referrals. What more should you do to delight them so much and make them so happy with your services that they voluntarily and willingly praise you to their acquaintances?

Try your best to move these passive customers into the active referral team. If you have any disgruntled customers, it goes without saying that you should address their concerns before they begin to bad-mouth you. Bring them into the passive positive state and then move them also into your active referral team.

2. Your share-holders

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Share-holders have already shown their trust and confidence in you by placing their money in your hands. They have researched and verified your credentials before investing in you and your company.

Thus these people will act as good referrals. However they would need to get regular updates about the company's progress in terms that they can understand. A few get together with key staff could also go a long way to increase their information and thus their capacity to act as referrals.

## 3. Your employees: ex-employees, current employees

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Employees are one huge living mass whose good opinion and referral capacity is a whole lot under-utilized. Often ex employees take decisions about whom their companies should

approach as vendors. By creating a healthy dialogue while they are with you, ensure that they love you wherever they may go in the future. You should be their first choice when it comes to buying what you make. The manner in which your employees discuss you with consultants, head-hunters and customers will go along way to establish your good credentials as a company that loves its workers and goes the extra mile to ensure that the customer gets the best quality deliverable always.

"The person who sends out positive thoughts activates the world around him positively and draws back to himself positive results." ~ Norman Vincent Peale

4. Your Marketing (pre-sales) & sales team

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How much confidence does your Marketing and Sales team have within their deepest minds and hearts on your capacity to deliver quality products to the customer? However much the sales staff try to fake it, if they have any doubt that the Delivery team will not satisfy the customer, their fears will get conveyed through their body language, their tone of voice.

"Tone of voice, look and manner can prove no less eloquent than choice of words." ~ Francois La Rochefoucauld.  
Similarly if they are confident about the Delivery and Support teams then their conviction often comes shining through, the customer senses their positivity and closes the deal.

#### 5. Yourself

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Whether you are the CEO of the company or a lowly clerk, remember that your actions and communications reveal a lot about the company you work for. Strive always to be positive and progressive in outlook. Do whatever you can to improve the processes and deliverables of your team.

Have a constant eye for better quality while at the same time know when to draw the line. Never allow better to become the enemy of good. Make a timely delivery of acceptable quality that will satisfy and delight the customer. Do not insist on superlative quality if it means unacceptable delay to the customer. Be aware of the trade offs and make good decisions fast.

"Success is at your fingertips, just close your hand around it."
~ Noreen E. Thomas, gettingrich@gettingrichmarketplace.com

About the Author

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Naseem Mariam is the editor of "Management that Soars" eNewsletter & author of "Project Serenity - How to gain happiness and peace". Her writings draw life from her 18 years experience as software Project Manager. Let her guide you towards Faster All Round Success and a Stress Free, Joyous Life. Her free ebook and Newsletter tell You How. Subscribe with <mailto:projectdioxide@sendfree.com> Visit her at <http://www.123projectmanagement.com>

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