

ASKING FOR REFERRALS IN THE DIGITAL AGE



Referrals and introductions should be central to building a quality pipeline for your business. However, in our research, most sales professionals are leaving up to 75% of the available referrals and introductions on the table.

Before we give you a new perspective and execution strategy for asking for referrals, let's first discuss the very word "referral." We believe the word typically has a negative connotation. The first thing that often crosses someone's mind when they are asked for a referral is "OK, now my reputation is on the line." Since most people are guarded with their reputation, the common response is, "Let me think about that, and I'll get back to you."

The other thing that asking for referrals does is puts an unnecessary burden on the contact to determine who your ideal prospect would be. Most people have enough to juggle with their own companies and the thought of you asking them to rack their brains or go through their database may make them uncomfortable.

For this reason, we recommend using the word "introduction" instead of referral. It is much more effective to ask for an introduction to someone specific. LinkedIn and other social media platforms help you to determine who your contact knows and which of them would be good prospects for you.

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Here are five steps to help you ask for referrals on social media:

- 1.** Develop a comprehensive list of contacts who are people you are confident would be willing to introduce you to potential prospects.
- 2.** Create five templates of sample recommendations you would be comfortable writing.
- 3.** Use a CRM program to schedule 3 people per week from your list to write a customized personal recommendation for use on their LinkedIn profile.
- 4.** Send them an email request asking them to write a recommendation for your profile.
- 5.** Research their profile to find potential prospects for you that they are directly connected to on LinkedIn and request that they introduce you.

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By knowing exactly who you want to be introduced to and protecting the email recipient if they are in any way uncomfortable, you take all the anxiety out of the discussion. The email recipient simply has to ask themselves "Do I know that person well enough?" and "Would I be comfortable enough making the introduction?"

How much easier would it be if you were on the receiving end of this email?

Hi, Robert, I hope you are doing well. I noticed that you are connected on LinkedIn to Shelley Jones, Jack Petersen, and Linda Larsen. I wonder how well you know them and if you would ever be comfortable introducing me to discuss business opportunities. If you do not know them that well or would not be comfortable introducing me for any reason at all, I completely understand. If you are comfortable, all it needs is a simple email introducing me, offering a brief insight into your experience with me, and suggesting it is worth at least a conversation. If you can copy me on that email, I will take it from there and get you out of the middle of it. I so appreciate your consideration.

To learn more, please contact us at al.simon@sandler.com, 770-622-7000 or find us on [LinkedIn](#).