4 Ways to Ask For Referrals
4 Ways to Ask for Referrals

Like the sales presentation, asking for referrals is the most natural and comfortable when done sitting at the kitchen table. I like to ask for referrals either after the roof has been approved, or after the roof has been built. I feel that this is the best time because you have already delivered real value to your customer, so they are more excited to share the news about how this totally cool roof salesman hooked them up with a brand new roof and gutters. Another good time to ask is when you’re delivering them their final invoice. You’re giving them something, and subconsciously it feels natural for them to give you something back.

First of all, how you ask for referrals is important. Always say WHO do you know, not “do you know anyone who…” The reason behind this is simple. For the same reason you ask two times at the door, by asking “WHO do you know” instead of “do you know anyone who,” you are requiring an answer that is not a simple yes or no.

Here are 4 word-for-word approaches I use regularly to get referrals. Each one takes a different angle. Choose which one feels the most natural to you or suits the customer you’re dealing with the best.

1. Honest flattery

“You guys have been such a pleasure to work with. I’ve really enjoyed helping you guys out with your house – it’s been fun getting to know you. I tell you what, storm season is my busiest time of year – I’ve got over 80 claims in my pipeline right now, but I’ve had a lot of my customers that I’ve taken care of ask me if I’d be willing to hook their sister, mom, aunt, or best friend up like I was able to do for them. I believe awesome people associate with other awesome people, so I’ve been giving my favorite customers’ friends and family priority right now so I can make sure they get their stuff checked out and taken care of before we have to start pushing people to wait til after winter. I’ve been known to toss a nice gift card their way for their recommendations. Who in your family lives nearby that might benefit from a free inspection?  (let answer)

Cool! Well I’ve got my notebook here, I’m keeping a little running tally on who needs to be checked out. If you want to go ahead and just write their name and number down and how they’re related to, I’m doing my best to get in touch with them within the next two weeks.”  (hand pen and notebook)

Literally fill out half a page with several names and numbers, even if they’re names and numbers of customers you already have. When your homeowners see that other people are referring their friends and family to you, they are more likely to hop on board and do it too.
2. Sharing your goals

When you share what you’re working hard toward, people naturally want to see you succeed. Here’s an approach that gives your favorite customers an opportunity to help you toward your personal goals this year:

“So are you guys happy with your house’s new face lift? Way better than paying for it yourself, right? :-) I’m glad I was able to help you guys out. I really appreciate you letting me! By the way, I’m trying to squeeze in another 2-4 appointments this month to stay on track with my goal this year. I’m basically working from sunup to sundown everyday right now as you’ve probably noticed, I’m really working to (be #1 in my company this year / to qualify for the company trip to Mexico / put kid through college / whatever you’re working toward). I’ve had a lot of people send me over to check out their parents’ or sister’s or best friend’s house here recently, which has been great because most of them got a free roof too. Who do you know that lives nearby that might benefit from a free inspection like I did for you guys? (let answer)

Cool! Well I’ve got my notebook here, I’m keeping a little running tally on who needs to be checked out. If you want to go ahead and just write their name and number down and how you know them, I’m doing my best to get in touch with them within the next two weeks.”

3. Hail swath

Yet another great way to get quality leads that can also almost guarantee damage is by whipping out a hail swath! This doubles as a thought jogger.

Here’s what to say:

“Mrs. Jones, want to see something crazy? This is an actual map of the hail storm. The colored area is the path it took. This is where you guys live, right here (point). This was a pretty crazy storm, huh? We’re definitely keeping busy! There will probably be roofs going on for 2 years or more from this storm – which is great news for us! Haha. I tell you what, I’ve had a lot of my customers that I’ve taken care of ask me if I’d be willing to take a look for their sibling, mom, aunt, friend, or whatever, and I’ve been doing my best to make friends and family of my personal customers a priority – who do you know who lives in this colored area here?

(let answer - mention areas, neighborhoods, streets, landmarks, etc.)

Cool! Well I’ve got my notebook here, I’m keeping a little running tally on who needs to be checked out. If you want to go ahead and just write their name and number down and how you know them, I’m doing my best to get in touch with them within the next two weeks.”

(c) Copyright 2014 - Roof Sales Mastery, LLC - All Rights Reserved
4. Incentivized

People love getting little things like gift cards or movie tickets. Like we talked about in “Acquiring High Quality Customers,” a referral is worth anywhere from $1,000-$2,500 on your average residential claim, so investing a few bucks into your current or past customers to hook you up with jobs that you don’t have to go out and generate yourself is a sweet deal.

Here’s what to say:

“Which do you guys like better, QuikTrip or Starbucks? (let answer) Great! How’d you like a $25 QuikTrip card? (they respond, sure!) Cool. Well I tell you what, it’s yours if you do me one small favor. I have to admit, I hate going around knocking on peoples’ doors. Nobody likes someone bugging them during dinnertime. Fortunately, where most of my claims are coming from right now actually are my current and past customers! People have been sending me over to their friends’ or family’s place so they can get hooked up with some free home remodeling, too, which is great for me AND them. I need to do (#) inspections each week to stay on pace for my annual goal this year. Who do you know that lives nearby that might benefit from a free inspection?”

Calling Your Referrals

Now that you have some referrals to call, it’s time to give them a shout and line them up for an inspection. If you want, you can ask your customers to give the people they referred to you a quick head’s up to let them know you’ll be calling. This warms them up for you before you even get a chance to introduce yourself.

Here’s what to say on the phone when you call a referral:

“Hi, this must be (husband/wife), is that right? Awesome, well this is (name) – your (friend/neighbor/sister/etc –name-) actually asked me to give you a quick call. Do you have a second or did I catch you at a bad time?

Great. Well the reason I’m giving you a call is because (referred by’s name) actually had me out to take a look at their roof after the big hail storm on (date), and as it turns out, they did actually have quite a bit of bruising on their shingles from the hail. Enough to warrant full replacement from their insurance company in fact – I went out and met with their adjuster and they’re paying to replace the whole thing.

Anyway, (referred by’s name) was so excited that they were getting basically a free roof out of the deal, (he/she) asked me if she were to write down a few friends and family members, if I would be willing to carve a little time out of my schedule to take a look at their roofs for them too. I told her that wouldn’t be a problem and I’d be glad to give them a shout!
(He/she) said you actually live in (area/neighborhood), is that right? Well I’m actually going to be out in that area on (day) and (day) to do a few other appointments, and he/she asked me if I’d be willing to hook you up with a free inspection. I could pop by at either (time) or (time) on (day) to take a quick peek at your roof for you. Which of those times works better for you?”

Put it to use.

Strive to get at least 1 referral from every customer you have this year. Some people will go nuts and write down their entire church directory, neighborhood, give you all their close relatives, or basically dump their cell phone on you. Other people will give you just 1 or 2 names. You’ll probably run into some people who won’t give you any, and that’s fine too. But if you need to get 80 jobs this year, and you only have to generate 40 of them because you get 1 referral from each of those, that gives you your 80 jobs and cuts your door knocking time in half.

There is absolutely no reason to feel weird about asking for or calling on referrals. You are offering an amazing service; you help people restore their homes for pennies on the dollar. It’s no different from going out and knocking on doors (except that’s way easier). Yeah, sometimes you might get a “no,” but there’s no negative consequence. Always, always, always ask for referrals. They’re awesome!