

Marketing Your Reference Information[©]

by Kathy Ellis, Business Lab Marketing Coach

In response to requests from last month's newsletter on reciprocation and our tip of *giving the gift of reference information*, this month we'll share some ideas on how to market your reference information and turn prospects into customers. In addition, sharing your "information" is a great way to demonstrate your knowledge within your particular field and/or specific industry.

Define The Reference Information To Market: With your team, determine the information your prospects/customers is likely to find most useful. Here are some examples: If you are an accounting firm, a calendar/listing of important "tax" dates (along with a brief description) would be useful. If you are a builder or architect, a ruler for reading blueprints that has common building terms, abbreviations and symbols, along with key questions for selecting a builder would be useful. If you are a PR firm, a booklet on how to create a successful PR campaign complete with a glossary and case study would be useful.

Tip From The Business Lab: When determining what information to provide, keep in mind the benefit of "reference" and specific information your prospects/customers can refer to over and over again. Frequency is also an important consideration. This means if you can offer your prospects/customers reference information on a continuous and consistent basis, you will begin to build a strong relationship.

Reference information can come in a variety of ways such as: statistics, lists, frequently asked questions, glossaries, calculations, industry trends, free evaluations, short-cuts, case studies, etc. When meeting with your team, start by asking them what questions they answer most frequently in their sales presentations or what aspect about your company/industry is most complex or interesting.

Marketing Your Reference Information: Once you've determined what information is most useful to your prospects/customers, you'll need to develop a marketing plan to disseminate your reference information. Meet with your team and develop a budget and time-frame for this information marketing plan.

Tip From The Business Lab: List all of your ideas for sharing useful information with your prospects/customers and pick the top three or four to focus on first. Determine the best way to "offer" this information—i.e., a booklet; a direct mail piece; a seminar; a series of articles; etc. Determine how often you'd like to share this information with your prospects/customers—i.e., quarterly, monthly, annually, etc. Determine how you and your team will follow-up on the reference information you've sent. In addition, create a feedback loop with your team so that experiences are shared and new ideas are fostered.

While you don't want to "give-away" your magic, providing reference information about your expertise/profession is a proven way to instill confidence and convince your prospects/customers how much they need you.

Lastly, the way you present your reference information is critical. Keep the identity of your company in mind when preparing your materials and double check to ensure you've given your prospects/customers a reason to contact you and of course, an obvious way to easily reach you.

More Information? If you would like to learn more about this important topic or would like to receive our FREE Service Ideas Booklet, please send an E-mail to kathy@thebusinesslab.com, visit our website at www.thebusinesslab.com, or fax a note on your letterhead to 281-517-0789.

Author's Note: Kathy Ellis is a Marketing Coach and the owner of The Business Lab, a full service marketing and graphic design company. We specialize in relationship marketing programs including database marketing, company brochures, client newsletters and promotional marketing materials for our clients. We share with you our FREE newsletter to showcase powerful marketing tips, techniques and ideas to help you improve your business. The Business Lab is based in Houston, TX at 281-517-0998 or by E-mail at kathy@thebusinesslab.com