

Asking for Referrals: Seven Excuses and How to Fix Them

As a small business owner, the prospect of asking customers for referrals can sometimes be met with hesitation. Factors such as preserving customer relationships and uncertainties about the right timing and approach can contribute to this reluctance.

However, reframing these concerns as opportunities for growth and improvement can ultimately strengthen both the business and its connections with customers.

This guide aims to help small business owners navigate these challenges and leverage the power of referrals effectively by providing insights, tips, and best practices for overcoming these hurdles.

As a small business owner, there are several reasons I might be hesitant to ask customers if they would refer my business or not:

1. **Fear of rejection:** Asking for referrals can be uncomfortable because it leaves me open to the possibility of rejection. I might be afraid that customers will say they wouldn't refer my business, which could be discouraging.
2. **Insecurity:** I may feel insecure about my products or services, and not want to risk receiving negative feedback or confirmation that my customers are not happy with their experience.
3. **Intrusiveness:** I might worry that asking for referrals could come across as intrusive or pushy. I don't want to make my customers feel uncomfortable or pressured to recommend my business if they don't genuinely want to.
4. **Damaging relationships:** I may be concerned that asking for referrals could strain my relationship with my customers. If they feel obligated to refer others but don't want to, it could create tension or lead them to avoid my business in the future.

5. Timing: I might feel that it's not the right time to ask for a referral. For example, if a customer is going through a difficult situation, it may not be appropriate to ask for their help promoting my business.
6. Inexperience: As a small business owner, I might be unsure about how to ask for referrals effectively or professionally. I may worry about coming across as inexperienced or unprofessional, which could deter customers from referring my business.
7. Overburdening customers: I might be concerned that asking for referrals could overburden my customers, especially if they've already provided feedback or participated in other promotional activities.

Ultimately, while there are reasons a small business owner might be hesitant to ask for referrals, it's important to remember that referrals can be a valuable way to grow a business.

By overcoming these concerns and learning how to ask for referrals tactfully and respectfully, a small business owner can potentially generate more leads and expand their customer base.

1. Fear of rejection:

While rejection can be uncomfortable, it can also be a valuable opportunity for growth. By facing rejection, you can learn more about your customers' needs and preferences, which can ultimately help you improve your products and services. Furthermore, not every customer will reject your request for referrals. In fact, many may be happy to help, which can lead to new customers and increased sales.

You can use the fear of rejection to motivate yourself to improve. Make sure you are providing excellent products and services, and use any negative feedback as an opportunity to learn and grow. Additionally, practice asking for referrals in a way that is genuine and polite, which can help make the process feel less daunting.

2. Insecurity:

Insecurity can be turned into a strength by using it as a catalyst for self-improvement. By identifying areas where you feel insecure, you can take targeted steps to address those weaknesses and become more confident in your business offerings.

You can benefit from your insecurities by focusing on continuous improvement and growth. By addressing your insecurities and working to improve your products and services, you'll increase the likelihood that your customers will be happy and more willing to refer your business to others.

3. Intrusiveness:

While you don't want to be pushy when asking for referrals, being too passive can also hinder your growth. You can find a balance between being assertive and respectful by asking for referrals in a tactful, non-intrusive manner.

You can benefit from this concern by mastering the art of tactful communication. Practice asking for referrals in a way that is both genuine and non-intrusive, and consider offering incentives or rewards to customers who refer others to your business.

4. Damaging relationships:

While asking for referrals can carry a risk of straining customer relationships, it can also strengthen them by demonstrating trust and confidence in your customers. By involving them in your business's growth, you can foster a sense of loyalty and commitment.

You can benefit from this concern by being transparent and respectful when asking for referrals. Make it clear that you value your customers' opinions and are genuinely interested in their feedback. This can help strengthen your relationships and make customers more likely to refer your business to others.

5. Timing:

While timing is important, it can also be used as an excuse to procrastinate. Instead of waiting for the perfect moment, you can create opportunities to ask for referrals by incorporating the request into your regular interactions with customers.

You can benefit from this concern by being proactive in seeking referrals. Develop a strategy for asking for referrals at appropriate times, such as after providing excellent service or resolving an issue, and make it a routine part of your customer interactions.

6. Inexperience:

Inexperience can be an advantage, as it allows you to learn and grow without being burdened by preconceived notions of how things should be done. Embrace your inexperience and use it as an opportunity to develop your skills in asking for referrals.

You can benefit from your inexperience by seeking guidance and learning from others. Research best practices included in Asktra for asking for referrals, start small and you're your confidence, and network with other business owners to learn from their experiences.

7. Overburdening customers:

While you don't want to overburden your customers, involving them in your business's growth can also make them feel valued and appreciated. By giving them the opportunity to contribute to your success, you can foster a sense of loyalty and commitment.

You can benefit from this concern by being strategic in your approach to asking for referrals. Consider segmenting your customers and targeting those who are most likely to provide referrals, or space out your requests over time to avoid overwhelming your customers.

Here's a tip you mustn't ignore: Offer incentives or rewards as a token of appreciation for customers who refer your business to others. This not only demonstrates gratitude, but also encourages further referrals and helps maintain strong customer relationships.

In conclusion, while the concerns mentioned above may initially seem like barriers to asking for referrals, they can also be opportunities for growth and improvement. By addressing these concerns and using them as motivation to refine your approach, you'll strengthen your business and increase the likelihood of receiving valuable referrals.

Asktra is a potent solution for small business owners to measure customer loyalty and contribute significantly to business growth. It simplifies sending one-question surveys to customers. And provides an extensive library featuring over 100,000 words of content for small business customer service, leadership, marketing, and sales.

Idea Sheets provide quick and actionable suggestions to drive more referrals and sales. Visit www.referralsafe.com/asktra frequently for new additions.