

Get More Referrals and Break Into New Neighborhoods



Source: www.TurfMagazine.com

Shhh! It's easier than you think!

The backbone of a thriving landscaping company is referrals. I chatted with Dan Pestretto, a business consultant that specializes in helping green services industry get to the next level of growth and business development (www.sodinc.net). I asked him how to avoid the awkwardness of asking clients for referrals, and how to break into new neighborhoods based on those referrals. Dan believes it all starts with the initial sales process and making the referrals as frictionless as possible for clients.

1. Set the expectation: From the very beginning of the sales process, be sure to explain your best business comes from happy customers and referrals. Let them know that your goal is to provide superior installation or service experience that they would be happy to recommend to friends and neighbors. Set the expectation by explaining that at the end of the service/installation, you intend to ask for a referral knowing you would have had to earn their trust for them to do so.

2. Facilitate the process: During the scheduling of the final walkthrough, ask them if they would be like to give a testimonial interview. If they give permission, craft your testimonial by asking them specific questions related to the transformation of their property and their experience with your company. Take notes from the perspective of how the results of working with your company has helped to enrich their lives and exceed expectations.

3. Do the work for them: From the notes during the interview, draft a short testimonial quoting the customer about their great experience working with you. Show the customer the final draft and get them to approve before you incorporate it into your marketing.

4. Target specific neighborhood by distributing the pieces in the

neighborhood: Create a beautiful high-quality marketing piece with before and after pictures and include the short customer testimonial quote with a fantastic offer valid only for that neighborhood. (Hint: HOAs frequently have neighborhood newsletters. Put an ad in and include your offer.)

5. Follow-up with prospects in the neighborhood: If at all possible get telephone numbers or email addresses. Remember, marketing rarely works on the first try. It's a matter of the number of impressions your company can make. Ads in newsletters, tasteful signs on the property, signs on your truck, an offer that to redeem requires their email address—all of these are impressions and will pay off when the time comes.

***Out-of-The-Box Bonus Idea:** Dan mentions if you have a great project on a fantastic property in a neighborhood that has lots of potential, consider hosting a garden party at your client's house. The client can invite close friends and neighbors and talk you up while allowing neighbors to experience firsthand how beautiful and enjoyable your work really is!

Simple right? To connect with Dan and learn more innovative systems and strategies to increase sales, reach out to him [here](#).

I would love to hear other referral strategy systems are working for you in your business. Let us know in the comments below, and feel free to reach out and connect with me on LinkedIn.

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