How to get multiple pre-qualified leads from every client.
SEVEN STEPS to Getting Referrals

By Tom Hopkins

The easiest lead to close is a referred lead. Unfortunately, not many mortgage brokers have mastered the art form that the process entails. I've developed a simple, seven-step process to obtaining referrals that will give you so much more success in developing your referral business that you will make it an automatic part of every selling situation.

Begin by setting a goal for how many referrals you want from each contact. Start with a goal of just one referral every time, and work your way up to a place where you know the steps so well and they flow so naturally that you'll get at least three referrals from every client.

Then, memorize these seven steps to getting referrals. The better you know them, the better you'll mine the rich lode of referrals that's just waiting for you in your current client base.

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1. Help your clients think of specific people they know.

2. Write the referrals’ names down.

3. Ask qualifying questions about the referrals.

4. Ask for the referrals’ contact information.

5. Get the referrals’ addresses from the phonebook (if the client doesn’t have them).

6. Ask the client to call and introduce you to the referrals.

7. If the client shows nervousness or refuses to call, ask if you can use the client’s name when you contact the referral.

Those are the basic steps. Now, let’s review them in detail so you’ll see how to work with each one most effectively.
Step #1: Help your clients think of specific people they know

When you ask for referrals, you have to give your client a group of faces to focus on. Centering on one or two faces is impossible when their thoughts are bouncing off the wall with their new home—which means your job is to get them focused again.

SALESPEerson: Bill and Jane, you’re excited with your new home, aren’t you?

CLIENT: Oh, it’s wonderful. We can’t wait to get settled!

SALESPEerson: So tell me, who will be the first people you tell about your new home?

CLIENT: Well, our relatives, of course. Then, our friends who live in the same area. It’ll be nice to be close to them.

SALESPEerson: That’s great. Are there any of your relatives or friends who might also be in the market for a new home?

By mentioning family and friends, the client focused in on those people he is closest to and with whom he’ll be in contact that very week . . . while his excitement over his home is still fresh. And the salesperson has helped him do that.

Step #2: Write the referrals’ names on cards

When your clients come up with a few people who are in the market for a home, take out a 3-x-5 index cards or a small notepad and write down the names of those referrals. (Be sure to ask how to spell the names.) Keep the cards out so you can jot down the information they give you. Plus, you’ll need those notes to qualify the referrals.
Step #3: Ask qualifying questions

While Bill and Jane are busy answering questions about the referrals, you should jot down notes to help you remember specific things about them. Here’s some information you may want to know when you contact the referrals:

* Where do they live now?
* Would they be moving up to a larger home or are they just interested in something new?
* What did they say when you told them you were looking for a new home?

When you get in touch with the referrals, you’ll be able to begin conversations with them based on Bill and Jane’s answers to your questions. When you’ve taken a few notes, move on to the next step.

Step #4: Ask for contact information

Asking for the addresses and phone numbers of the referrals is more difficult because your client may not know this information offhand. But don’t let that deter you. You can’t just settle for the name, because there may be several people with the same name in the phonebook when you try to look it up later. And knowing how to contact the referral is critical.

Step #5: Use the phonebook to get the information you need

If your client is willing to give you a referral’s address but doesn’t know it offhand, reach for the phonebook and politely ask the client if he would be kind enough to help you out and look up the address in the phonebook.

Your request could be as natural as the one in the following conversation:

SALESPERSON: I don’t know about you, but this has been thirsty work. What would you
like to drink, a soda? Or would you prefer coffee?

BILL: Water would be fine with me.

JANE: The same for me. Thanks.

SALESPERSON: Tell you what. While I run to get us some water, would you mind looking up the addresses of the names you gave me in the phonebook so we can get this done?

Ask this last question while you hand the customer the phonebook, and then leave the room to get the water. At this point, you’ve all but “closed” on how to contact the referral.

**Step #6: Ask your customer to call the referral and set up the appointment**

This step is where most novice salespeople balk. They won’t even try it. But those clients who will make the call will help you comply with the Do Not Call Registry. If the referral’s name is on that list, you can’t call them without their permission. Your existing client can, at the very least, get that permission for you.

Also, keep in mind that this question is simply setting the stage for the final step. Those clients who are uncomfortable calling for you will be so relieved that you offer them Step #7 that they’ll jump on it. If you had gone directly from Step #5 to Step #7, you may not have gotten the same response. There is a method to my madness here. Here’s how it works.

SALESPERSON: Thanks so much for the referrals, Bill and Jane. You know, since I won’t get to see your excitement when you show off your new home, would you mind calling Don and Mary and sharing your good news with them? Then we can work on arranging a time for me to talk with them.

If your clients are fine with that, then good: Start dialing. But if they hesitate and act uncomfortable, take the pressure off immediately by moving on to the next step.
Step #7: Ask to use the client’s name when you make contact with the referral

Your clients may not know the referral all that well, or they may feel uncomfortable making the call. If this is the case, let them know you understand their hesitation, but ask if you could bother them for one more favor. Ask for permission to use their names when you contact the people they referred you to. They’ll probably be relieved to be let off the hot-seat and be more than happy to give you permission to use their names.

Always give three or five of your business cards to each client and ask them to give them to others who come to mind who might need your services. Then, invest in a little follow up after they’ve gotten settled in their new home. Ask them how it’s going and who they’ve showed the home to. Once again, help them focus on small groups of people they know and ask qualifying questions as to the needs those people might have. Ask if they have given your card to anyone. If they have, get that person’s contact information as well. If they haven’t, thank them for their business anyway and repeat your request.

The “S” in the word “sales” stands for “service.” The better service you provide, the bigger your sales volume will be.

It may take you a few tries to get this pattern down to where it flows naturally. However, it’ll become a natural part of every contact once you see the phenomenal results it generates. Many of my students have gone from getting one or two referrals from five or more clients to getting five referrals from every client. Don’t you think it’s worth a try?

Bio: Tom Hopkins made his first million in sales by the age of 27. He accomplished this by making the subject of selling his hobby—studying every aspect of the sale in incredible detail. Today, he is world-renowned as a master sales trainer. Let him show you how to be a more effective and successful salesperson. www.tomhopkins.com