Referrals & Seminars

Methods & Scripts from Bill Cates, CSP, CPAE

Educational events can be a powerful way to add value to your existing client relationships and position yourself as a valuable resource to prospective clients.

Many financial professionals like to combine referral strategies with seminars to bring down the cost per opportunity.

Before I get into some specific scripts to help you leverage the value of referrals for your seminars, here are a few best practices to consider adopting and adapting to your business growth efforts.

1. Seminars should be problem/solution oriented, not product oriented. Even IF the solution to the problem is a specific product, don't lead with that. It's like the old metaphor, people don't necessarily want to buy a drill, they just want a hole. Spend approximately 70 percent bringing forth the problems and opportunities and 30 percent on the specific product/solution.

2. At every seminar: *Educate* – provide significant value. *Entertain* – keep it lively and have some fun. *Entice* – leave them wanting more information.

4. Team up with other experts/speakers – including CPA's and attorneys. Ask them to invite attendees as well.

5. Host seminars on a predictable basis – perhaps monthly or quarterly. Always have an event on the horizon so attendees can invite others to upcoming events.

6. Ask clients for referrals to your seminars. Always better to do this in person or on the phone. Mailing to clients for referrals to seminars is usually not very effective.

7. Ask seminar participants for referrals/introductions to others who should attend a future seminar or who should schedule an appointment with you to review their financial situation.

8. Ask for referrals at the seminar using the formula provided later in this guide.

SAMPLE CONVERSATION #1 – Asking Attendees to Bring Others with Them

George – I'm calling to confirm that you and Martha will be attending our educational event at the end of the month. We have two seats reserved for you. I'm quite confident that both of you will gain some great insights and perspectives to guarantee a successful retirement.

We'd be happy to reserve a few seats for your friends, family, and colleagues you think might appreciate this topic. Who comes to mind who should at least know about this session?

SAMPLE CONVERSATION #2 – Asking Attendees at the Event to Think of Others

You can ask for referrals/introductions by using this formula…

1. **Discuss the value recognized.** Set aside a few minutes near the the end of your seminar to discuss the value the participants have received.

   Before I provide a few clear action steps, I'd love to hear from a few of you – to see what part of this session was helpful to you. Who would like to go first?

2. **Treat the request with importance.** Make sure you have set aside at least five minutes for this entire conversation. People expressing *value received* will increase our appointments and referrals.

   I'm so glad that you have found this session a valuable investment of your time. So with that in mind, I have an important question for you.

3. **Make the request in terms of bringing value to others.** This request in not about you building your practice. It's about the next person to receive the value of your work.

   I suspect that just about everyone here knows one or more people who you think should have been here – to gain this knowledge and perspectives. True?

   I'd like you to think for a minute about those you care about – friends… family… colleagues… who you and I might invite to a session just like this one.

4. **Record their referrals on the form provided.** Provide a 3x5 card or special form. Have them write the names of those they think would find your work valuable (either a referral to the next seminar or to have you call for an appointment / complimentary strategy session),

   You'll see in front of you a very simple form that we can use to get this process started.

   I'll I need you to do is write your name, email, and phone number. Please print clearly. ☺

   Then write the names of others you think should receive an invitation to our next event. No need to write their contact information. We're not going to reach out to anyone without a quick conversation with you first. We want everyone to feel comfortable with this – no pressure whatsoever.

   You can leave them at your place to collect later or you can hand them to my staff as you leave. Thank you! As I mentioned at the outset of this program, we're on a bit of a mission to make sure everyone has the opportunity to make educated decisions that are in their best interest.

NOTE: If you collect the names of folks at your seminars, you *must* follow-up later. These are people that your attendees think you can help and want you to contact them. Don't burn this bridge.

SAMPLE CONVERSATION #3 – Asking Attendees for Introductions at 1st Appointment

This scenario is perfect for our popular **V.I.P.S. Method for Asking™**. **V** = Value Discussion **I** = Treat the Request with Importance **P** = Permission to Brainstorm **S** = Suggest Names & Categories

We covered several important areas in our meeting. What stands out as the more important to you?

I'm glad you're seeing value from our process. I have an important question to ask you.

I was hoping we could do a little brainstorming, to see if we might identify a few folks who you think should at least know about our process of helping people make educated decisions.

I have a few ideas to run by you, if you're open to it. (Who do you have in mind?) You mentioned that your sister and brother-in-law are in the area and that they're successful and busy. Whenever I hear "successful and busy" in know that they may not be taking the time to focus on some important areas of their financial lives. Can we could up with a way for you to introduce me to them – that would feel comfortable for all concerned?

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