

Contact Information: Andy Masters, (314)368-2250-Phone, (954)370-0839-Fax, andy@andy-masters.com
MPI, 1021 Mockingbird Ln, Ste 106, Plantation, FL 33324, www.andy-masters.com

Want Referrals From Your Staff? **ARM Them and CHARM Them**

by Andy Masters

Many practices and small businesses overpay for advertising, while neglecting the single MOST effective—and single LEAST expensive—method for gaining new clients. That’s right, capitalizing on personal referrals from within your office is the first place to ignite your next big business boom.

It has been estimated that the average American knows about 250 people. For instance, look outside your office at Jill. Jill knows 250 people. Now, this is where it gets even more exciting: Everyone in Jill’s “250” also knows 250 people. Therefore, 250 people x 250 people is 62,500 people, just between who Jill knows, and who they know.

Question: *“So, how do I get my staff to create referrals from their 62,500 people?”*

Answer: *“ARM them and CHARM them.”*

1. Are they TRAINED?

I know what you might be thinking. *“That sounds great, but my staff aren’t salespeople. They don’t possess those types of skills.”* Possibly. That’s why you must first ARM your staff with the training it takes for each to help your business. (Not to mention, I would add that this is yet another critical reason why practices should be hiring people with PEOPLE skills!)

Nevertheless, this is where training comes into play. Millions of businesses have also promoted workers to managers who didn’t have managerial skills...so they trained them. The same can be done for training people on interpersonal skills, networking, and even how to introduce someone to the great benefits of *your practice*.

People also need to be ARMED with the right tools. Perhaps this includes promotional business cards they possess at all times, with a special offer on the back for first-time customers, which they can hand to anyone they meet. Or, maybe it is a small trinket, toy, or item of candy they can give to children, and say... *“There’s more at Dr. Jones’s office—he gives these away to kids free every visit!”*

Question: *“We all know that just because someone understands how to do something, doesn’t mean they will necessarily do it. So, how can we motivate people to obtain referrals??”*

Answer: *That’s where the CHARM comes into play.*

2. Are they MOTIVATED?

The first knee-jerk reaction in creating any incentive program is money. Sure, money might work...sometimes...with some people. However, one of the first rules of employee motivation is that “different things make different people tick.” So, a \$100 gift certificate may really motivate Susan, but Kevin would really just like an extra day of vacation.

*******FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*******

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Karen might want an award and heart-felt recognition at the year-end banquet, while Steve would love to get **YOUR PARKING SPOT** for a week (I know, let's not get carried away here). The bottom-line is: The creation, communication, and implementation of a program, is what determines its' success. A program should have a start and end date, clear instructions, a tracking method, and award recognition which motivates that particular team or individual.

Question: *"What steps should be taken to put a referral program into action?"*

Answer: *Follow This 8 Step Program:*

1. Decide that your business can benefit by the amazing potential of staff referrals.
2. Provide your staff the training, tools, and resources to succeed.
3. Devise a program structure, either on your own or with the help of a professional.
4. Communicate the program to your staff.
5. Track the program meticulously.
6. Award your employees by touching their heart, mind, or wallet.
7. Make any changes/improvements deemed necessary
8. Re-evaluate the costs of traditional advertising vs. benefits of referrals.

The Bottom Line!

If each of your employees brought in just one new referral per year, how much revenue would that mean to your practice? What if the outgoing employee...the contest winners...brought in 20 just by themselves? And, what if those customers turned out to be lifelong clients? How much revenue could be realized throughout the life of your business? Lastly, how much money could you save from other costly forms of advertising while bringing in more clients?? The benefits are great, while the cost and effort is minimal. Capitalize on the great potential of staff referrals right away.

About the Author: Andy Masters has written 4 books, earned 4 degrees, and is a member of the National Speakers Association (NSA). Andy presents entertaining and impactful programs on sales, service, and work-life balance topics. Visit www.andy-masters.com or email andy@andy-masters.com for books and schedule availability.

Contact Info:

Andy Masters, M.A.

Author/Speaker/Trainer

314-368-2250

andy@andy-masters.com

www.andy-masters.com

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