

Asking for Referrals

This course is designed to help you feel more comfortable and confident asking clients for introductions to the people they care about.

By the end of the course you'll have the mindset, tools, and strategies needed to consistently get introduced to more ideal prospects.

Overview:

When asked the question, "Where have your best clients come from?" most financial advisors say, "Referrals". Yet, when the advisor is next asked, "And what's your proactive strategy for asking for and receiving referrals today?" we tend to hear, "Well, I don't have one. Referrals just happen—sometimes."

Greg Opitz, the longest-tenured Carson Executive Business Coach says, "If you don't want to ask for referrals, that's fine. But be okay with only growing half as fast as you would like. If you don't ask, then industry research documents—and my personal experience supports—that you'll only get around half as many referrals as you should."

Asking for referrals is a powerful strategy to build your business faster by connecting to the friends, family members, and professional connections of the people you already serve who are your ideal clients. And the concept is simple: Have a conversation with your clients about the value you provide and ask them to introduce you to other people they know—friends, family members, professional connections—who could benefit from the valuable services you provide.

This strategy doesn't have to take too much extra time—it can happen through the course of normal client contacts and conversations throughout the year, which that is the best way! You have great relationships with your clients. Asking for introductions is part of a healthy relationship where both people want to help each other.

And it's a fun way to grow your business because you're meeting people in a "warm" way—through your clients who already love you and your team! If you want to accelerate the growth of your business, asking for referrals is one of the best strategies to execute on.

The high-level steps are:

At a high level, asking for referrals is simple:

- **Step 1:** Commit to asking your clients for introductions
- **Step 2:** Choose an approach to asking clients that is authentic for you
- **Step 3:** Craft a value story that you can share with clients
- **Step 4:** Practice having these conversations with clients
- **Step 5:** Identify which clients you're going to ask first
- **Step 6:** Ask your clients for introductions to the people they care about
- **Step 7:** Follow-up with the prospective client

Let's dive into the first lesson and help you decide if asking for introductions is a growth strategy you want to commit to.

Step 1: Commit to Asking

The first step to effectively executing any business growth strategy is making the decision to fully commit. If you don't fully commit to pursuing this path, you won't maximize the opportunity that exists. In this lesson, you'll work through making the mindset shift to ensure you're thinking well and effectively about asking for referrals. And, once you have the right mindset and you decide to fully commit to the strategy, you'll be ready to take the next steps down the path!

One of the biggest obstacles holding advisors back from consistently and effectively executing on business growth strategies is their lack of conviction in the strategy.

At Carson, we've worked with thousands of financial advisors since 1993, and mindset is one of the key components of consistent growth.

To help you convince yourself, let's talk through some of the biggest "reasons" many advisors share about why they don't ask for referrals.

But, before we go any further, let's shift the language of this discussion. Asking for "referrals" is typically how most advisors think about this growth strategy. From our perspective at Carson, this term doesn't feel as "personal" or as "relational" as it could. We prefer to use the term "introduction" instead of "referral". For many advisors, "asking for referrals" feels too much like a business transaction. It's the phrase that has been used for DECADES.

We've found that making the simple shift to thinking of this strategy as, "asking for introductions", has helped skeptical advisors feel more excited to leverage this strategy. When you ask a client for an "introduction", it feels much more personal and relational. Some advisors even use the language, "asking for a warm introduction" when talking with clients to connote how much you like the client and want the introduction, and possible future relationship, to be warm and personal. How does this resonate with you? Do you prefer "asking for introductions" over "asking for referrals"? We've found that it helps many advisors to feel better about having this conversation with clients. And, if you feel better about having the conversation, you're more likely to have it more consistently with more people.

Here are some of the "reasons" (some might call them excuses) why some advisors haven't yet committed to a strategy for asking for introductions from clients. We'll share the reason (excuse) and then some alternative ways to view the reason so that you feel more empowered and excited about asking for introductions.

Reason 1:

"I feel salesy."

Alternative Perspective 1:

Yes, asking for introductions will certainly help you grow your business. And, in effect, that means it is part of a sales process. Here is a great opportunity to expand your perspective about what this means.

Instead of viewing this process as a sales process, think of it as a service process. When you're offering your client to introduce you to the people they care about, you're offering to add-value to the lives of the people they care about. Asking for introductions truly is a value-add service for you clients. It's not about YOU, the advisor, and growing your business. It's about helping your clients by helping the people they care about most. If you can make this mindset shift, you'll completely change your energy around asking for introductions.

Additionally, you are jeopardizing the relationship if you don't ask for introductions! Think for minute about a time when you told someone, a business, how much you appreciate their service or how they helped you, and they said, "Oh shucks, no worry; we do it for everyone"! Did you feel like they just said, "You really aren't important to us. You are like everyone else!" How would have you felt if instead they said, "Thank you! Thanks for appreciating how we helped you. We loved helping you, and we love this relationship. Who else do you know who would appreciate and benefit from what we do?" Stop taking the "Oh shucks, it was nothing" approach and not only losing the reciprocity opportunity that was on the table but also possibly jeopardizing a great relationship.

Reason 2:

"I don't like when other people ask me for referrals."

Alternative Perspective 2:

Sometimes advisors provide the analogy that it would be weird if their doctor asked them for referrals. Would it be? If you, at one time, were unhealthy, sick, and on a terrible downward spiral with your health, and then a doctor came along and helped you to radically transform your health and now you feel more alive, vibrant, healthy, and energize than you've ever felt before, would you *really* not tell anyone about it?

Advisors who share the "doctor analogy" as a reason for not asking for referrals are very often thinking of the situation where they simply go in for a check-up once a year, their doctor tells them they're OK, then they go away and never interact with their doctor for another year. If that's the experience YOU are providing your clients, then NO you shouldn't ask for introductions because your client experience is mediocre at best. A prerequisite for asking for introductions is providing your clients a "refer-able" client experience. BUT, if you truly know you're providing life-changing advice and service and a world-class client experience for your clients, then you owe it to the people you can reach by way of your clients to be asking your clients for introductions.

Additionally, if you just had the most extraordinary experience of your life at a restaurant—they had the best food, the best atmosphere, and the best service you've ever experienced—and your friend or family member said they're looking for a good restaurant to eat at next weekend, would you keep quiet about your experience or would you let them know about the place they could have the most extraordinary experience of their life? And would you be offended if the restaurant manager, owner, or server said, "We loved serving you tonight. Please don't keep us a secret. Tell your friends about us. We would love to serve them as well"? No! You would be reminded to ...*tell your friends!*

Again, this is predicated on providing an extraordinary client experience. If you're not quite there—or not sure if you're providing this kind of experience—then check out our lesson on [*Delivering a World-Class Client Experience*](#).

Reason 3:

“Asking for introductions feels selfish. I don’t want my clients to feel they have to help me grow my business.”

Alternative Perspective 3:

Clients will ultimately introduce you to people because they want to help someone - that's the source of any referral or introduction. It's rarely or never about your client helping your business. It's about them helping someone else they care about by introducing them to you.

Your clients will absolutely benefit from your asking for introductions. If you’re not growing, you’re dying. If you’re not consistently bringing in new relationships and growing your revenue, then you’re slowly losing traction and your business success will falter.

Would you rather ask clients for introductions to people they know and care about or would you rather spend significantly more time on other more time-consuming prospecting strategies? If your clients can provide you with warm introductions to people they know and care about, then you will reduce the amount of time you need to be out prospecting and increase the time you have available to serve your existing relationships.

Do you think your clients would rather you spend time out prospecting or focusing on their financial success? I’m sure this is an easy answer for you. Asking for introductions is not selfish. In fact, it’s in your clients’ best interest.

Reason 4:

“Honestly, pride gets in my way. If I’m asking for referrals, it must seem like I’m hurting for new business.”

Alternative Perspective 4:

First, you’re not alone. Many successful financial advisors worry about the perception of proactive prospecting. They feel that if they’re “asking for business”, then they might not appear as successful as they want to in front of their clients, friends, family, and professional connections.

Asking for referrals really isn't about growing your business or getting new clients—hat's the natural outcome. The motive, the reason behind asking for introductions, is to fulfill the mission of your firm. That's what prevents asking for introductions from feeling like a task—which advisors eventually get tired of doing. Focus on fulfilling your firm's mission as the reason you pursue referrals and introductions.

Additionally, refer to Alternative Perspectives 1 – 3 above. Instead of putting your attention and focus on how others might view you, shift your attention to how you’re adding value to your clients and the people they care about by asking for introductions. It’s a simple shift that can make a massive difference.

Ready to commit? Use our ***Convince Yourself First*** exercise to anchor the reasons why you want to commit to asking for referrals.

Check Your Understanding:

Who benefits from your asking clients for introductions to their friends, family members, and professional connections? (Choose all that apply.)

- You (the financial advisor)
- Your team
- Your client
- The people your client introduces you to

(Answer: All the above! All boxes should be checked for a correct answer.)

Step 2: Choose Your Authentic Approach

A key to success when asking for introductions is to ask in a way that's authentically you. If you don't ask in a way that's authentically you:

1. You won't ask consistently and effectively because it will feel extremely awkward, robotic, and not relational.
2. It won't resonate with your clients who know you well. They can tell—consciously or subconsciously—if you're being "you". If you're not being authentically you when you ask, your clients will also feel awkward and not as connected with you. Therefore, they'll be less likely to feel comfortable making an introduction.
3. Understanding the motivation for introductions is also important. There are two reasons that combine to account for almost 100% of the motivation for people introducing people they know to a business. One is reciprocity. You helped them. They now want to help you. This is part of our human DNA. Don't minimize or ignore the power of reciprocity. The second has nothing to do with you the advisor; it is about their motivation to help someone they know and care about! Certainly, you have referred someone to a business simply because you wanted to help that friend, relative, or neighbor with a specific item. Understanding this second motivation is often the authentic approach many advisors take to create an authentic ask.
4. Now, let's look at three primary approaches or styles of introductions.

Passive – This is the "show them" approach. You dedicate yourself to delivering a valuable experience to your clients and hope that, in turn, they introduce you to people.

Serving your clients at the highest level and creating an extraordinary client experience for them is a must. Although many advisors will say that their referral strategy is creating a great experience, serving their clients well, and expecting referrals and introductions, this is not a very effective referrals strategy.

Will you get referrals because you serve your clients at the highest level and provide them an extraordinary experience? Yes, almost certainly.

Will you miss out on some amazing introductions because you're not proactively asking clients for introductions?

Also, yes, almost certainly.

If you're serious about intentionally growing your business and serving even more people, you should not rely on the Passive approach for your referral strategy.

Neutral – This is the "tell them" method. You let your clients know that you'd like to get introductions from them. It's a "don't keep us a secret" style. As with the passive approach, you're trusting your client to take action. Think of this approach as "planting the seed" by informing your clients that you're "open for business" and happy to help anyone they care about.

An example of the Neutral approach:

"Jim, I always enjoy sitting down with you and reviewing what we've done and what you've accomplished. If you're willing, I'd appreciate any introduction you can make to someone you know and care about who could benefit from what we do."

See how this "plants the seed"? You're informing your client that you'd appreciate an introduction to someone he cares about. Yet, you're not actually asking directly for an introduction. For many advisors, this feels easier because you're not forcing your client to come up with names of people on the spot.

If you've historically been hesitant about asking your clients for introductions, this can be a great starting point! Test out this style. As you build confidence in having the conversation with clients, you can move up to the next level of assertiveness for your conversation with clients.

Remember your reasons for asking! As you get more comfortable with informing clients about your desire to meet the people they care about who could also benefit from the services you provide, you should regularly remind yourself of the mission you're on to serve people.

If you're not feeling motivated to have this conversation with your clients, go back to your "Convince Yourself First" exercise and remember all the reasons you **MUST** be asking your clients for introductions.

Politely Assertive – This isn't an aggressive approach, but it's more proactive. The key here is to have a purposeful strategy for talking about and gaining introductions.

Within this final style, you can land anywhere on the spectrum of "assertiveness". No matter how assertive, direct, and impassioned you are when you ask, always stay polite, and you'll find yourself achieving more success in asking your clients for introductions.

Part of the reason this style is labeled "Assertive" is fact that you will ask the client a direct question that they'll need to answer.

As an example:

Imagine you're finishing a client review meeting. The meeting went well, and the client seemed happy and appreciative of the value you've been delivering to her. Now is the ideal time to ask for an introduction. It might go something like this:

"Lisa, I sincerely appreciate your kind words and appreciation for the value we've been providing you and your family over the years. We love taking great care of our clients. You may have some friends who aren't getting that kind of service from an advisor. Is there someone who comes to mind that you could help by introducing them to us?"

The downside of this question ("Is there someone who comes to mind that you could help by introducing them to us?") is that it's a binary question. Meaning, the response you're asking for is a

“yes” or a “no”. This makes it easy for the client to wiggle away from the question by simply saying, “No, there’s no one I can think of now.”

To increase the “assertiveness” of your ask, here are some alternative ways to position the question:

1. *Who can you think of who might also benefit from the services we provide?*

The positive of this question is its “open-ended”. This means the client can’t simply say, “No.” (Well, they can say “no”, but this question increases the likelihood that the client’s brain will go to work thinking about the name of someone who they can introduce you to.)

2. *I see that you’re connected to Jim Smith and Sally Stevens on LinkedIn. What kind of willingness would you have in introducing me to one or both?*

This is one way you might consider asking the question if you’ve sourced names of people you know the client is connected with. (We’ll touch more on this idea of “sourcing names” later in this course.)

Notice how the question here is also open-ended. You’re asking, “What kind of willingness”. Therefore, you’ll position your client to let you know where they fall on the spectrum of willingness in making the offer. We tend to find that open-ended questions or “spectrum” questions like this will invite additional, beneficial information for you to be aware of.

You probably recognize the style you tend to utilize. But, be open to stretching yourself to the next style up the ladder. It may be that it's just not a style you'll ever feel comfortable or confident in. If you're convinced that's the case, then operate in your preferred style as best as you possibly can. On the other hand, if your lack of confidence is more about not feeling equipped, this lesson may help you reach that next level and produce better results. Remember, there's nothing "salesy" or aggressive about a genuine and active pursuit to help people by asking to be introduced to someone whom you can help.

Check Your Understanding:

Write down which of these above styles you currently use for asking for referrals. And then write down which one you’re committed to doing going forward. Will you execute on the one you’ve always used? Or will you take the next step up the ladder?

Step 3: Craft and Share Your Value Story

So far, you’ve committed to asking your clients for introductions and you’ve chosen your authentic approach to asking. Now, it’s time to craft your value story and share it with your clients.

You certainly know that you provide your clients value. How well can you articulate it?

It’s imperative that you craft a concise and powerful story that helps your clients understand the value you provide them (great for increasing client retention) and the value you can provide the people they care about who you’re wanting to be introduced to.

If you haven’t yet worked through Blueprinting, now is a perfect time to do that! By working through the Blueprinting exercise, you’ll have a better idea of your Mission Statement and Value Proposition.

If you've worked through Blueprinting recently, you can explore the specific Express Your Value section of the [Blueprinting Guide](#). ^[JM1] Refer to our Blueprinting course in Carson Coaching Online if you haven't gone through the entire process.

Essentially, you want to have an authentic and compelling story that you can share with clients to help them understand how you can help the people they care about.

Once you have your Value Story, it's time to share that story with your clients!

Here's how:

1. Make time to meet with your clients to share the story

Whether it takes place during a regularly scheduled review meeting or over a more casual breakfast or lunch conversation, make time to connect with your clients in-person (if possible) or via video conferencing to check in with them and share your story.

2. Position the story with your clients in a way that helps them to clearly see and understand why you're sharing the story

It might sound something like this:

"Sharon, I'd love to get together with you soon and share with you some of the exciting things that we're working on at our firm. We're constantly working to figure out how we can improve the way you and our other great clients like you experience working with us. Additionally, I want to ensure you're aware of all the ways we can help you and anyone you care about. We're only planning to take on 8 or 9 new relationships this year, and our best new relationships come by way of introduction from our best clients like you. Part of the reason I want to ensure you know all of the ways we're helping families today is so that if anyone in your circle of family, friends, or professional connections mentions a need in any of the ways we help people, we hope you'll think of introducing us to them."

There are virtually unlimited ways that you can phrase and position this conversation with clients. Pick one way, test it out, see how it works, make any tweaks and changes you feel are necessary, then test out the new way. And keep going until you find the perfect fit for you and your authentic style.

3. Ask clients for permission to ask them for introductions going forward.

Have a Mission-Based Approach. Don't think of asking for introductions as a "task" that you "must do". That's not very empowering or energizing! Think of asking for introductions as a mission that you're serving. If it's a mission that you're serving, you'll more likely exert the necessary effort consistently and over a long period of time which are both necessary for a successful execution of this business growth strategy.

Inform clients of this mission that you're on—to serve even more value to even more people through the services that you provide (or whatever YOUR specific mission is).

And ask for their permission to ask them for introductions going forward. By asking your clients for permission before you start asking for introductions, you'll already have garnered a small commitment from them which will better position you to get a positive outcome when you ask for

introductions in the future. Remember, humans have a natural tendency to act consistently with their previous commitments. If your client has previously agreed to be open to providing you introductions when you ask, they'll be significantly more likely to acquiesce when the time comes to ask them for an introduction (or two) in the future.

Check Your Understanding:

Complete the “Express Your Value” PDF and craft an authentic and compelling Value Story that you're excited to share with your clients.

Step 4: Practice!

You know your authentic approach and you've crafted your value story to share with your clients. What does any great sports team do before playing the big game? Practice! Role play being in conversation with a client and sharing your Value Story. Role play asking for introductions. You can do this with a team member, family member, friend, your coach, or your dog!

Almost every financial advisor who has ever used role-playing to practice and prepare for an important conversation says two things:

1. Role-playing is the most awkward and “un-fun” thing ever.
2. It works.

If you truly want to position yourself well to have effective and productive conversations with clients about your mission to meet more people who you can help, you must commit to regular role-playing.

Have fun with it! You'll try to convince yourself that you should be doing other things. You'll do whatever you can to get out of it. But, if you do it, you'll be glad you did. Practicing these conversations will help you to improve your effectiveness which will ensure you get more of the introductions you deserve so you can help more people who deserve your fantastic service and value.

Who knows your business and story better than your spouse, significant other, close family members, and/or your team? They can be your barometer. They can tell you how authentic you sound. They also can help you tweak the message for optimal impact. Role play with them, and ask for their constructive comments!

Check Your Understanding:

Decide who you will do role-playing with to practice these conversations. Ask that person—let them know why it's important to you! Then schedule time (even if it's just 30 minutes every week!) to practice. Stick to it! You'll see the payoff sooner than you might expect.

Step 5: Identify Clients to Ask

Your game plan for asking for introductions is coming together! Your next step is to identify all your clients who you want to replicate. These are the clients who you'll ask for introductions. Start with your top clients who are enjoyable to work with, highly profitable, and who love you! Then, go from there. Yes, you can find some great referrals from lower-tier clients, so take good care of everyone, but the old saying that “birds of a feather flock together” still rings true and it would be insulting and hurtful to ask a C-client for a referral and then turn away someone who is at their same asset level.

If you're not yet clear on who your top clients are, you may need to go through a client segmentation process. Review our course on client segmentation for guidelines and a segmentation spreadsheet template.

Your "asking for introductions" strategy should be focused on a smaller group of your best clients. If you need reminded of who your ideal client is, review our course on defining your ideal client. That course has a fantastic exercise to help you in this process!

COACH TIP: *To prevent a feeling of overwhelm with this strategy, start by identifying 10 of your clients who you want to ask for introductions. Execute on this strategy with them. Then repeat with more clients!*

Use our *Proactive Introduction Plan* resource to create a specific, actionable plan for who and when you'll ask for introductions.

Check Your Understanding:

Pick the first 5 clients who you're going to have this conversation with. And schedule time to meet them and begin this process!

Step 6: Ask!

It's game time. You've practiced your approach and you've identified the first clients you want to have this conversation with. Now, you ask!

One of the questions advisors ask is, "When should I ask?" Here are some situations that seem to be the best opportunities for asking clients for introductions:

1. Review meetings.
2. After you've helped the client with something and they say, "Thank you", or "I appreciate your help!"
3. After the client has mentioned the name of someone they care about and spend time with—a family member, friend, or professional connection.
4. When planning passion prospecting events.
5. When you have a great story to tell.

Asking at the right time will help it feel more natural, to be a part of the relationship you have with that client, and to feel more authentic. The best time to ask is when there is 'reciprocity on the table'! Whenever a client gives you a compliment or expresses gratitude, that should be the trigger for you to say to yourself, "Now is the time to remind the client how much I like them and would love to work with and help more people just like them." Often, it will simply be a "natural time" to weave it into the conversation.

This can also occur at an event when an attendee asks a question. You answer the question, thank them for the question, and say, "This is why we love doing these events. We love sharing information and educating our clients. Who do you know who would benefit from a relationship like this? We would

love to help them as well...next question?!" We love systems and processes at Carson Coaching. Some of you will create a system to always ask at the end of a meeting or some other system/process. We aren't opposed to you systemizing the ask. What we suggest is using the best time—the best when—to maximize your success.

COACH TIP: *One great way to increase the likelihood that a client thinks of a name of someone she can introduce you to is to think of names for the client. This is called, "sourcing names". One way to source names is to connect with your client on LinkedIn or other social platforms and see who they know. Additionally, you should always be asking the "Who" question every time you meet or speak with your clients. When a client says she went on vacation with extended family, played golf with some friends, or ate out at a new restaurant with some co-workers, you should be asking, "Who did you do that with?" Your goal here is to gather specific names from the client that you can then ask the client—in that moment or in a future meeting—for an introduction to.*

Additionally, it's important that you help the client to make the introduction once you ask. A best practice is to offer the client multiple means of making the introduction and allow the client to choose which one he feels most comfortable with. You have run 90% of the race. Now, provide a comfortable, non-threatening environment to make it easy for the client to introduce you. You likely know them well enough to suggest a place or two. Let them also help define the place.

As an example:

"Steve, I'm grateful and excited that you're willing to introduce me to your sister Liz to see if we can help her and add value to her life the way we do for you and your family. There are a few ways that you can make this introduction. I'll tell you the different ways that clients typically introduce us to their family members and then I'll invite you to choose which works best for you and Liz. First, you can simply let her know I'll be reaching out and provide me with her contact info. Once you let me know that you've mentioned to her I'll be reaching out, I'll take that as a green light to contact her. Second, you can send an email introduction where you email her and let her know I'll be reaching out and copy me on the email. Once I see that email, I'll know I have your permission to contact her at that point. Third, we can schedule a time for the three of us to get together for coffee, breakfast, or lunch—on me. Additionally, I'm open to any other method that you feel would be best for introducing us. What do you believe will work best?"

COACH TIP: *If possible, do not have the client say, "I'll give them your name and let them reach out to you." The chances of you connecting with the person the client has in mind drops significantly if you leave it up to the other person to contact you. As much as possible, take responsibility for making the connection. The more you take the work off your client's plate and put it onto your plate, the greater the chance that the introduction will happen. Not because the client doesn't care, but because he or she might not care nearly as much as you do about getting introduced! Additionally, there's a component of busy-ness in people's lives. The person being introduced by the client might be thinking, "I know it needs to get done, but it's not top priority!" Reaching out to them could help keep them moving forward on something they know they need to act on. For this reason, remind your client that it's in his or her friend's, relative's, or co-worker's best interest to have you, the advisor, reach out directly!*

Some firms choose to send letters to their clients letting them know that they appreciate introductions. A good time to send a letter when you have capacity, are providing great value, and you have a clear, compelling brand and value proposition. If you have a lot to share about those areas, then it is probably a great time for a referral letter!

The worst thing that happens with a *well-done* referral letter is that you updated and/or reeducated your clients on your value, brand, or recent investments into or enhancements of your firm. You help them

understand why they like you. The huge upside is you will receive introductions (referrals) and grow your business from a tiny investment...the time needed to write a compelling letter! Use our [Referral Letter Template & Example](#) resource to craft a personalized letter that is authentic to you.

Step 7: Follow Through

Congratulations! You've asked the client for an introduction. That tends to be the biggest hurdle for most advisors. Now what? Now, you follow through with the person you've been introduced to.

Regardless of how the introduction happens, your goal with the initial conversation with the person you're introduced to should be to make a great impression, plant the seeds for building a relationship, and learn as much as possible about that person, her family, and her needs, goals, dreams, desires, and fears.

You don't even need to "talk business" in this first conversation. Again, every advisor is different. Some advisors want to go straight to the heart of the person's financial needs and current challenges. Some advisors like to "play the long game" and get to know the person so they can build the relationship over time to the point they and the prospective client feel comfortable enough to "talk business".

Let your clients help you. Your clients should be able to provide insights on the people they introduce that will suggest the best approach.

Like finding your "Authentic Approach", you should figure out which approach you want to take for the first meeting with the prospect.

Review the Carson Coaching Online course on converting prospects to clients to help you learn how to ask powerful questions and have effective conversations with referrals.

COACH TIP: *If you're new to asking for introductions, don't feel obligated to "go for the jugular" and immediately ask the prospect to bring statements to your introductory meeting. Be prepared with some great questions that will help you get to know the prospect even better. By asking questions that help you learn more about the prospect, you'll put yourself in the best position to know how you could potentially serve this person going forward.*

"How should I follow up with my clients after they introduce me to the people they know and care about?"

At the very least, write a thank-you letter to you client—preferably a handwritten note. See the resource in this lesson titled, "Introductions Thank You Templates", to use as a starting point for what you might say in the note. Additionally, you can also send a small "thank-you gift" as a token of your appreciation. Last, but not least, you can host an annual "Introductions Celebration Dinner" for all your clients who have introduced you to someone they know and care about over the past twelve months.

This is a great way to celebrate your clients who make introductions for you. It can help them feel special. And it's something they can look forward to annually! Maybe they'll even view the dinner as an additional reason for them to connect you to the people they care about.

Your thank you letter can be simple – here's an example you can customize:

Dear **{Insert Client's Name}**,

Thank you for introducing me to **{Insert Referral Name}**. Client introductions are a very important part of my business and I appreciate your vote of confidence. We sincerely appreciate the opportunity to help someone you care about because this allows our team to fulfill our firm's mission— **{Insert Firm Mission Statement}**. It is because of clients like you my business can grow and still deliver a high level of service to all our clients.

Sincerely,

{Insert Advisor's Name}

{Insert Compliance Approved Advisor's Title}

Once your client has given you an introduction, make sure you have a system in place so you don't drop the ball! You can use our **Client Introductions Tracker** or use functionality in your CRM system to keep track of your conversations.

Check Your Understanding:

Choose some questions from the "Discovery Questions" that you could use in the first meeting with the prospect you've been introduced to. Test out using these questions and then develop your own approach as you become more comfortable with these conversations.

Summary:

If you truly desire to grow your business faster, one of the most powerful, effective, and fun ways you can achieve the growth you want is through asking your existing clients for introductions to the people they care about. Most advisors know that getting introduced to new prospects through existing clients works because many of their best clients came to them through other clients. However, not many advisors have a strategy that they've committed to and execute on consistently and effectively over an extended period.

Just like brushing your teeth or driving to work in the mornings, if you get into the habit of asking your clients for introductions, it will become easier and you'll become better—it will feel automatic. And you'll grow your business faster. View this as an opportunity to meet and serve the people your clients care about and take a Mission-Based Approach and you'll certainly make tremendous progress towards your business growth goals.

FAQs:

- Clients just refer people to me without asking. Why do I need a proactive strategy?

The short answer is you don't need a proactive strategy. Remember, this is only for those advisors who truly desire to build their business faster. If you're not interested in growth, then this strategy might not be for you! If you truly desire to grow (which you should because if you're not growing, you're dying) then asking for introductions can be one of the simplest and most straight-forward growth strategies available to you.

- My clients have been with me for a long time. Don't they know that I want and accept referrals?

Nope. Not always. To test this, ask yourself the question, "How do I know for certain that my clients know I'm open to receiving introductions from them?" Most advisors, when they truly

think about it, realize they've never actually told their clients that they're "open for business". In fact, if you've never asked for introductions, your clients might even believe that you don't even *want* to be introduced to anyone new! Don't assume your clients know you want referrals. Business growth isn't something you should leave to the strategy of hoping clients know!

- I want to commit to asking for introductions, but how can I feel more confident before I start?

Role play. It's not an easy solution, but it's a simple one. Find someone else in your office who can play the role of the client. Spend time practicing having the conversation. Ask your partner in the role play to start off easy and make the conversation easy. Then, as you progress, gradually ask the person to be more stubborn and not be as open to making an introduction. And see how you respond! The more time you spend intentionally practicing, the better prepared you'll be to have this conversation with a client. The more prepared you feel, the more confident you'll develop.

- Does this strategy work with Centers of Influence too?

Absolutely! Your COIs can certainly be great sources for introductions. There might be some nuances to these conversations, but the foundation of the strategy remains the same. The more often you have these conversations with your COIs, the more you'll develop your ability to have these conversations. This will lead to greater effectiveness and confidence! It's a virtuous cycle!

- I like the concept of sourcing names from LinkedIn! But I'm not yet on LinkedIn. How can I get started with it?

Don't overcomplicate things. Hop on LinkedIn. Connect with your clients. See who they know. You can easily get on YouTube or do a Google search to learn how to do simple searches in LinkedIn to source names. Don't let the fear of not yet knowing how exactly to use LinkedIn prevent you from getting on it and exploring it. It can be a very powerful tool.

Resources:

Learn more and download the resources referenced in this document from the [Asking For Referrals](#) course in Carson Coaching Online.

- **Convince Yourself First**
- **Client Referral Tracker**
- **Proactive Introduction Plan**
- **Referral Template and Example**
- **Discovery Questions**
- **Blueprinting Guide**