

Foundations—a Pedestal Group Publication

VOLUME 10, NOVEMBER

FOUNDATIONS

The Pedestal Group

Get Referrals

Special points of interest:

- *Easy Scheduling*
- *Hiring is Critical*
- *New FTC Guidelines*
- *Printer Woes*
- *Tools*
- *AND MORE!*

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Referrals are such a great way to get business. People who come in from a referral have a different set of expectations and understanding of your business. To get good referrals, you need to make sure you have a couple things prepared.

First, your message should be designed and controlled. When we say designed, we mean your message should be short and to the point so that it is easy to get passed on as a referral. If you have a complicated service offering with a lot of information, you are setting your referral sources up to play a game of telephone. What comes out at the other end will be garbled from the original and now you will have to overcome incorrect expectations of the prospect. Keep your message simple and repeat it often. The best referral is one where the client says, “she always says she’ll xyz, and it is legit!”.

As far as control goes, you don’t want the wrong expectation set. If you did something for someone that you wouldn’t normally do, make sure they understood the circumstances involved. You want to

own the message passed on as much as possible.

Now in some cases the temptation to design and control the message leads the person to think about printed material. After all, if I have a card from you, I can easily pass it. But, the minute you introduce additional collateral, you are now counting on TWO people to find a document rather than focusing on their communication. What do I mean by two people? If I have a flyer from a company and want to give it to a friend, I have to remember it when I see him the next time. Then, to act on it, he has to remember it too. Neither of us has any emotional attachment to that document.

But, if I don’t have anything to remember, when I see him I can just explain the great service or product I want to pass on. I don’t have anything to find, remember or juggle. He then just has to either write down the information on something he has or put my email / Twitter message / LinkedIn posting somewhere he can find it again. That is much more in keeping with what he typically



Your message must be designed and controlled.

does and if he had to write it down, he’ll be more likely to remember. So that means that the message has to be succinct and simple; and of course backed up by your service.

Spend some time writing down what you want customers to say to each other. In your head or with co-workers play out different scenarios that should result in referrals for you. When two people are talking, invariably they will vent frustrations with something. What are those frustrations you can fix? Telling your clients, “if you hear someone say X, tell them about me” is such a better direction than just the typical,

Easy Coordination of Schedules

We've all been there—you need to coordinate a meeting of multiple parties all on different calendar systems. What a nightmare! Until now! www.whenisgood.net is a great service that helps you coordinate everyone's calendar.

This service does not require an account (although you get more features that way) and requires very little set up. Just go to the site and click on the times you are available



for the meeting. Be sure to offer enough options to make it work. Give your event a name, save it and you will receive an email with the event link.

When you send the link to the attendees, the times you chose are what they can see so they just select the time that works for them. Since you control when and how to send the invitations, you can send it to one or a small number of people to determine the best times first, and then follow up with the rest of the group or send it to everyone at once.

The simplicity of the tool allows you to stay focused on what is important and not spend all your time calling around trying to coordinate schedules.

BNI Chapter Presidents
Select your local time: 4:10 PM (GMT-4)

Below are the proposed time slots for this event. Paint over all that are good for you.

Mon 2 Nov	Tue 3 Nov	Wed 4 Nov	Thu 5 Nov	Fri 6 Nov	Sat 7 Nov	Sun 8 Nov	Mon 9 Nov	Tue 10 Nov	Wed 11 Nov	Thu 12 Nov	Fri 13 Nov
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Hiring Is Critical To Success

As we start to see glimmers of economic improvement, more and more small businesses will look to hire people to meet the demand. In a recent article in the New York Times, *\$13 an Hour? 500 Sign Up, 1 Wins a Job*, the process used by a trucking school company is outlined. Basically, they posted an ad for an administrative assistant, received more resumes than they could manage, got through a portion kicking out as many as possible, and then interviewed eight candidates asking over 100 questions. Their final question had to do with the candidate's reaction if they were at a baseball game and a ball was coming toward them.

This kind of story is so frustrating because there is nothing in the article to help a company see how to handle the situation better or even if the company did things right or wrong. In truth, many things were done wrong.

When you are ready to hire, be sure to consider where to gather candidates carefully. In many cases a recruiter will

be cheaper and more effective option vs. posting and managing resumes yourself. In others, posting a position is certainly an option.

Be prepared for the responses. It is that vital you know you will get responses and how you will handle them. Every applicant deserves a response so build into your system a way to let the candidate know their information was received.

Once you receive resumes, your first job is to eliminate those that aren't a good fit. You want to really compare the skills you know are needed to those on the resume. If your position requires a degree, you can eliminate anyone without the degree. If your position requires a specific industry experience, someone without it can go in the "no" pile. But, don't just file those resumes and forget them. After going through the candidates with the right skills, it may turn out you want to review those that were set aside just in case someone has something to bring to the table that is unique.

At this point you should carefully consider your questions for the phone screen and interview(s). Questions should be behavior-based, such as "could you please describe a time when you encountered X, and how you handled it?" This kind of question gives you better insight into what a person has done, and what they might do in the future. Standard questions that give yes/no answers are not informative enough and cutesy questions like the baseball don't really tell you how they will apply their skills to the workplace. There are many sources of questions, but one that had good choices was <http://blog.emurse.com/2007/05/21/complete-list-of-behavioral-interview-questions/>.

When hiring, it is vital to spend some time on it and get it right. Don't settle for "middling talent" as the people in the article claimed to, as a small business can't afford to have any mediocre players. Everyone needs to be able to work together and get the job done. And everyone deserves respect.

Get Referrals (con't)

“if your friends need me, feel free to send them along”.

Create five to seven or more of those scenarios so you know what answers are best. Don't overload your clients with all of them, but work them into conversations where appropriate. If the client mentions a particular concern, you will be poised and listening for it so you can show the value you provided to answer that concern. Now, the client has that information at their fingertips.

It is easy to relate a specific problem

to a friend who has the same problem. But it is more difficult to connect the dots between a problem you haven't experienced and a solution unless someone has helped you make that connection in the past.

The final important thing about referrals is to be sure you ask for them. Be as specific as possible—ask for names at specific companies, people in specific places, or who have specific concerns. If you need to, break the referral down into multiple steps—ask if they know someone who X (big cate-

gory), and then ask for Y as a specific.

Make getting you a referral as easy as possible for your clients. Being able to hook someone up with something to solve a problem makes the person doing the referring look good too so help them look good too!



Help referral sources connect the dots between problems and your solutions

New FTC Guidelines on Endorsements, Testimonials, etc.

On October 5, 2009 the FTC announced additional guidelines for endorsements, testimonials, and advertisements.

The most important change from what we have read, is if the results discussed by an endorsing client aren't typical, not only does the ad have to say “results not typical?” but the actual expected results must be listed as well. This is a big change and should make for some interesting infomercial changes.

For the rest of us, it is vital to make sure a testimonial used in advertising and marketing represents an experience we would expect anyone to get with our companies. As long as that is the case, you can use them freely. If not, we would highly recommend not using them—not only from the FTC regulations side, but from an ethical business standpoint.

The new rules also specifically address bloggers compensated to discuss a particular product. These relation-

ships must be disclosed.

At TPG we are not lawyers and this is not intended to replace legal advice, but it is something to be aware of and make sure your marketing is in line. The safest way to go is to always be truthful!

For morning information, see:

<http://www.ftc.gov/opa/2009/10/endortest.shtm>

Printer Woes Solved

Printers are so vital to everyone's business, there is very little more frustrating than when they go down. But, there are only so many things the average printer owner can do to fix them. And what about all those crazy printer codes for errors?

If you are having a printer problem, your first stop should be the printer

interface. What does it say is wrong? If the wireless has stopped working, shut the printer off and back on. Paper problems are pretty obvious. Otherwise, check out this great resource for information:

www.fixyourownprinter.com

At this site you can look up error codes, download things called repair

kits which are software packages that run to clear up problems and download the latest printer drivers. The database here has proven to be very complete and a huge time-saver in solving problems. Best part—it is free!

Fixing your printer through fixyourownprinter.com

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Putting our clients where they belong.

The Pedestal Group was founded to answer a need we saw in small businesses to have a source for help. That could be how to find and integrate the right technology, how to better hire and manage people, how to set goals and create a strategic plan, or really attack and own your marketplace.

Our team has worked in a variety of industries including staffing, recruiting and executive search, retail, technology, healthcare software / IT, higher education and franchising and the consistent theme we have found it is very hard to see the forest for the trees. In small business, that is compounded by the number of resources available.

Our approach is unique in that we don't just say it is all about the customer, it really is. The Pedestal Group puts our customers on a pedestal – right where they belong. That isn't to say the customer is always right because that is an adversarial relationship – in our case, we always come to agreement. We are always in a partnership with our clients but also remember who's the most important – YOU.

The Pedestal Group - Putting our clients where they belong.

A Few Tools Worth Mentioning

We are constantly finding new resources and tools to help in our everyday lives. Here are some of our latest, most useful tools.

PDF to Text—So often I receive PDF documents that need to be turned into other things. I need to pull the text out and use it elsewhere. But, with traditional PDF's, that is very difficult. Using the PDF Extractor tool located at <http://www.pdfedittool.com/pdf-text-extractor.htm>,



I am able to accomplish this in no time. Priceless—oh wait, it is free!

Mybrainshark is a service that allows you to upload a PowerPoint, and then call in and record the talk that goes with it. This is a great marketing tool allowing you to create presentations and share them with multiple people, imbed them on your website or generally link to from anywhere. One feature I am looking forward to using is to create a podcast through their service. Podcasts can then be uploaded to iTunes or your website. And again, this one is free!

Email Prioritizer is one we have just started to test. The idea is with your phone you can turn on Do Not Disturb, a great time management tool. But with email, you just constantly get

those interruptions and if you are like me, have to see what someone wrote right away. Email Prioritizer is DND for your email. This program allows you to program how long you want email held and even allows you to specify certain people to get through no matter what. If you are waiting on a client message or something from your boss, you can make sure that is delivered but everything else is held back. We'll report later as to how well this works out but it sounds like a great tool without having to constantly tweak settings.

If you have any questions about these or other tools, drop us a note at kathy@thepedestalgroup.com