

Rapid Result Referrals - A Personal Message from Roy Sheppard

A chronic shortage of time is almost certainly the most common challenge facing business people today. Few business owners or professional sales people can afford to waste it. Like you, I lead a busy life. Travelling, speaking and interviewing executives at conferences, consulting and running my own business chews up my own precious time. To stay up with the latest business thinking, learning from books has always been an important part of my own personal development. However, it requires a substantial time commitment to wade through hundreds of pages to find the most useful and insightful 'Knowledge Nuggets'. Sometimes too much time; and too many authors and publishers seem to conspire against readers - by hiding this material (or leaving it out altogether)!

No wonder, research has shown that over 60% of non-fiction/business book purchases are never read from cover to cover. Readership tails off dramatically after chapter two. I wanted to write a book that a busy owner manager or sales executive could pick up and benefit from in the least time.

My new book, Rapid Result Referrals, has been structured with this in mind. No matter whether your business is tiny, small, medium or large, is high, low or no-tech, this book has been edited to eliminate waffle and focus on delivering a large number of practical, easy-to-implement ideas often in a bullet point format.

All the best ideas are deliberately in the first two chapters. If you don't have the time or the inclination to read the rest of the book - that's OK with me. I'll know that you've got your money's worth if you implement any of the ideas in the first two chapters. If you choose to read on (and I hope you want to), you will benefit further from my People Portfolio® Referral Plan. The most common feedback from the team of people who kindly agreed to read the book manuscript was that they sometimes felt overwhelmed by the sheer number of ideas. So, please don't be intimidated. Choose the 3-5 ideas you can work with immediately, then dip into the book again and again. Remember it's structured this way to help save you time - not to induce stress!

On Referrals...

What do your colleagues and clients say about you 'Behind Your Back'?

Your success is determined more by what OTHERS say about you or your business than anything you can say about yourself. We all know that word-of-mouth is powerful, yet few people fully understand or harness this power of endorsement and testimonials.

Do you know what people say about you? What words do they choose to describe you to people who don't yet know you? And what effect could this have (positively and negatively) about how they would then treat you, talk to you or listen to you? Perception and endorsement can be a powerful partner or a formidable foe.

What would they be prepared to say - if they knew you would like them to?



Roy Sheppard helps companies and individuals increase their sales through applying his PeoplePortfolio® Referral Plan as a conference speaker or in-house seminar leader. He is author of the books *Rapid Result Referrals* published in June 2001, *Your Personal Survival Guide to the 21st Century*, published in 1998 and reprinted 1999.

As a conference speaker his specialist topics are building profitable business relationships through networking and referrals, whilst as a conference moderator he helps organisations ensure their live events are as valuable as possible for the contributors as well as the delegates. He is a specialist at chairing complex open forum discussions and works with many of the world's largest organisations such as Andersen, HP, HSBC and Nortel Networks.

Originally from Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire in West Wales, Roy lived in London from 1987 to 1999. He has now escaped to the Somerset countryside where he lives in a 350 year old farmhouse. He also spends time in deepest Burgundy, France and travels extensively on business in the United States, Canada and the Far East.

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Even if you don't run a business - does your CV or resume include testimonials from highly respected figures within your industry? I recommend you add them. Your CV has only one purpose - to generate a job interview. Your references are useless if you don't get a meeting. Communicate reassurance to a potential employer by including a collection of testimonials at the beginning of your CV. People are afraid to make hiring mistakes - testimonials allay those fears. Forget about CV convention. Stand out. Be different. Get a better result.

Work with a team? Do they REALLY know what you say about them or how much you appreciate their skill and talent? Possibly not. Write down each of their names on a piece of paper and include under each name a couple of sentences about their BEST qualities and what makes them so special. (Don't do this exercise on a computer - it de-personalises it) Copy and share it to each of these people.

To illustrate its communication power - a true story (*From Chicken Soup for the Soul*).

Helen Mroska, a maths teacher and nun asked her very young class to write down the names of their classmates and include the nicest thing they could say about each person. She collected everyone's papers. Later she took a separate sheet for each pupil and compiled what everyone had written. Each young pupil was given their own list of what their classmates wrote. No one ever mentioned it again. Many, many years later The Eklunds, parents of Mark one of those children called her to say that he had been killed in Vietnam. At the funeral, the church was packed with Mark's friends. Afterwards Mark's father took Helen aside and said "He talked about you a lot." He took something from his wallet and said "They found this on Mark when he was killed." It was an old sheet of notepaper, that had been taped, folded and refolded many times - the list she had given Mark all those years before. "Thank you for doing this - Mark treasured it", said his mother. Other former classmates had gathered around. Each one quietly said that they too still had the list she had given them, all those years before.

We all crave sincere appreciation. What other's think of us is important. It's certainly too important to leave to chance.

Find out what others are currently saying about you and your business - good and bad. Or perhaps they don't bother. What does that say?! Ask. Survey. What specific words do they use? These words have a huge impact on how much business you attract (or lose). Based on this feedback, clearly define and articulate what you would prefer others to say about you. Identify your biggest supporters and key influencers. Tell them just how important what they say about you is to your business. Some may be prepared to put it in writing. Capture their comments, collect others and use them widely.

No matter what I say about my new book and how I think you could benefit from it, especially if you work for yourself, work in professional sales, run a business and want to grow your sales - even if you 'hate' selling - it would never have the same credibility as what others say about it.

Increasingly, cynical consumers are likely to question what you say about yourself in advertising, brochures, letters or during presentations, yet willingly accept as fact comments from existing customers. Why? They have no vested interest.

Factors That Determine an Organisation's Referral Gathering Capabilities

Low Level of Referrals		High Level of Referrals
Emphasis on transactions/short term sales		Emphasis on longer term value of client relationship
Inwardly focused company		Client focused company
Closed-book mentality		Commercial transparency with clients
Inconsistent and/ or incongruent corporate values and behaviours	↔	Staff and clients feel alignment with corporate values and behaviours
Selling function monopolised by business development and sales staff		Widespread involvement of staff working closely with sales and business development department
Ad-hoc referrals		Planned referral generation
Weak or non-existent sales processes		Robust sales and business processes

To illustrate what I mean - Tim Drake, the Co-founder of the hugely successful retail chain Cobra Sports and the author of *Wearing the Coat of Change* wrote this about my new book *Rapid Result Referrals*. "...lifts referrals from being a supplicant begging "help me please" to a balanced and dignified dialogue between equals. A noble book on what was an ignoble subject." Many others have started to offer similarly positive comments. Aren't they so powerful?

Do you make your life more difficult and stressful than it needs to be when you could be benefiting from what others choose to say about you? Think about how you could benefit if more of your customers and clients were prepared to allay the fears and anxieties we all have before we buy a new product or service.

A FREE download of Chapter 1 from *Rapid Result Referrals* and on-line ordering details is available at <http://www.RoySpeaks.com/rrr.htm>. Take a look. Print it out.

If you like what you read, feel free to tell others about it. Especially your friends and colleagues who are in business for themselves. Either forward this email to them all or simply point them towards the above web page. Perhaps others who send you newsletters would like to tell their readers about the free chapter? The readers might appreciate it too.

Not yet available in the shops. GBP £9.99 USD \$14.95 (approx.) ISBN 1-901534-04-9. Free and First Class postage anywhere in the world. If you choose to buy it on-line, fill in the special box with your name (or if it's a gift - your friend/colleague) and I will be delighted to sign the book for you.



One more thing, my website now has video webstreaming. I have yet to include an example of my latest speech based on the book - but you can see me working on TV and at conferences. No download. Simply click and wait 3-5 seconds. Take a look if you can. The technology is rather clever. Go to <http://www.RoySpeaks.com/video.htm>

May I wish you many Rapid Result Referrals.

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