



Turn Your Relationships into Referrals



If you depend on referrals to grow your business, then you need to read this. In my business as a wedding and special event consultant, one of my top priorities is to refer my clients to the vendors that best fit their style, and most importantly, their budgets.

I have to consistently network and build working relationships with local vendors. The vendors that I have the best relationships with tend to be those that receive top priority when I am referring my clients. Referring a business is an art form in itself. It's more than just making a phone call or sending a quick email. The referral begins with the delivery of the referral to your client. Let's look at two examples of how this could be done.

1. "Here's the name and number of a local florist."
2. "We have come up with some great ideas for your event's floral décor. I work with a talented florist who fits your style and personality perfectly. She's one of the best florists in town and she's a dream to work with. I've referred several of my clients to her and I've received great feedback from them about her work. Here's her contact information. Is it OK for me to let her know that you'll be contacting her soon?"

It's pretty obvious which of the two examples would work best. In each of these examples, you can replace the word "florist" with any other type of business you work with, whether it is a caterer, business coach, interior designer, accountant, attorney, and so on. Just imagine the influx of referrals that would come your way if all of your contacts within your network referred clients to you using the second example.

Using the second example, not only will you refer your client to "one of the best," you will also gain an additional contact with that business when

you call. This helps build your relationship with that business. It's a win-win!

Again, imagine if you were on the receiving end of that call, when the person told you that he or she referred a client to you who will be contacting you for your services. If that person sent you referrals, wouldn't his or her name be at the top of your electronic rolodex when it's time to return the favor? It certainly would be at the top of mine! It is very important to remember that referrals should always be reciprocal. If you're not receiving referrals but only giving them, then it may be time for you to re-evaluate your relationships. Also, challenge yourself to discover new businesses and contacts that are open to forming a relationship and reciprocating.

The Women's Book is a great resource for advertising women-owned businesses in our local market. We should take the time to support and attend women-oriented networking events so that we can connect with new businesses and grow current relationships. If women business owners don't support each other, who will?

Love in Planning! ●



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Lucretia Williams is the owner and lead consultant of Distinct Event Planning, LLC. Distinct Event Planning, LLC is a full-service wedding and special event planning company serving brides and special event clients throughout the entire Columbus, Ohio. Their mission is to ensure that they offer you the best and most professional event planning services. Lucretia has more than 13 years in event planning and event design experience. She and her team strive to make sure each client experience a beautifully relaxed, uniquely designed and worry-free event. Lucretia can be contacted at (614) 577-1844, info@DistinctEventPlanning.com or visit her at www.DistinctEventPlanning.com.