

## Generating Unending Referrals from Affinity Marketing

Affinity marketing simply means forming a mutually beneficial business relationship and continuing to nurture and grow it. It could be a relationship between a financial planner and mortgage professional, a Realtor and mortgage professional, a corporation and a mortgage professional and/or Realtor and/or financial planner, etc. A sword has two edges. Just as you will only refer your clients to professionals you know, trust and respect, you will only receive referrals from those who know, trust and respect you.

Affinity marketing takes an investment of time to develop the relationship, but once developed it can be an incredibly powerful asset to your business. Here are some ideas to develop those relationships strongly and fully. Once you have formed an alliance with a partner:

1. **Set an intention** for yourself to form and nurture a target number of affinity partnerships this year. Review your progress and rate it monthly. Change your plan accordingly.
2. **Choose your partners carefully.** Not everyone may be the caliber affinity partner you desire. Target and invest in only those with whom you really will enjoy working and with whom you can truly offer and receive value.
3. **Outline your mission – in writing.** The best affinity relationships have two or more people who share a common goal or goals. It is best all the way around if these goals are fully discussed and even written down. What do you hope to accomplish together? How can you help each other? Brainstorm many ideas, then implement one at a time.
4. **Set goals** for the number of referrals you expect to send and receive each month.
5. **Regular meetings** are a must (once a month is good) to review your progress, educate one another and discuss how to improve.
6. Most importantly, **send them referrals** and valuable contacts whenever possible.
7. **Show support** and interest in your affinity partners' industry. Join local trade associations as an affiliate member. Then become active and advertise in their newsletter. Offer to speak at a meeting or have a booth at their trade show.
8. **Tailor a brochure or create a PowerPoint presentation** to emphasize the services you provide that meet the needs of these professionals. Include how you will benefit them and their clients.
9. **Offer to hold seminars together**, and mail an announcement to your combined databases to guarantee a good turnout.
10. **Market together.** Whether or not you are targeting a new market you are both interested in or marketing to past clients you have in common, joint marketing allows you to recommend each other as well as cut your marketing costs in half. Endear your affinity partner to you by offering to manage the marketing yourself for the both of you.
11. **Be irreplaceable.** The very best thing you can do to solidify your relationship with your affinity partners is to consistently 'wow' them with great service, dependability and dedication to providing them and their clients with absolute excellence.
12. **Affinity partners can be your best lead sources**, treat them like it! Invite them to events, send them your newsletter or postcard mailings, and let them know how you are helping



other clients. Keep all pertinent information in your database regarding their spouses, children, birthdays, hobbies, etc.

Don't be afraid to make a substantial investment of time and energy in these relationships. In the end, it will pay off, because building strong partnerships builds good business.

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