



Expand Your Fempire Podcast #38 **14 Ways to Generate Referrals from Existing Clients**

Welcome to Expand your Fempire with Caterina Rando, the podcast for women in business on a mission. Sharing ideas to support you to grow, lead, and thrive. Now here's your host, Caterina Rando.

Caterina Rando: [00:00:24] This is Caterina Rando, and I am blissing to be with you for another episode of the Expand Your Fempire Podcast! **Today, we are going to talk about how to generate more referrals from your existing clients.**

[00:00:43] Because there is nothing better than when a client sends you an email or Facebook message or a text, and they say, "Hey, I was just talking to my friend so-and-so and I was raving about you, and I know you can help them. And I'm gonna introduce you to her." I love it when that happens, it makes me so happy all day long.

[00:01:06] Now I want more of that for you. I want you blissing in your business because you're getting tons of referrals. **You know why referrals are so great? Because whoever is referring a client to you, they've already warmed up that person.**

[00:01:24] **I'm going to give you many tips and many ideas right now on how you can get more referrals from your existing clients.**

[00:01:32] First thing. **Number one, educate your clients.** Now, just because they're your client, doesn't mean that they know everything that you're offering. Doesn't mean they know everything that you're doing. **And in fact, one of my favorite ways to bring on a referral from an existing client is I invite them to come to my workshop.**

[00:02:00] Let me give you a perfect example. I had a lovely conversation a couple of days ago with a fabulous gal, very positivo, who I think is a great match for me, a great match for our community. She has an established business. She wants to get more clients. Guess what? That's my ideal client. Positive, already has a business, wants to grow it.

[00:02:24] Now, we had a great conversation. We talked for about half an hour. Clearly, we resonate. I did not say to her, "Hey, my friend, do you want to sign up for my Thrive at Sales class that starts in two days? Clearly, you're a great match."

[00:02:41] Now. Clearly, she is a great match. **But before I do that, I want to build influence with her.** Because it is the client that has the influence with her. I've gotten a little bit in my one conversation.

[00:02:57] **What I do is I invite someone who's been referred to me to come to my next workshop as my VIP guest.** That is what I did in this case. And that's what I do all day long.

[00:03:10] **Now here's another super tip though.** At the time when I'm inviting her to come to my next workshop, I am also (super tip alert, super tip alert), scheduling the follow-up conversation for after that workshop. **Because I'm going to build more influence with that workshop and then the follow-up call is already on my calendar** for us to *then* talk about what she got out of it, what her needs are. And then, after I built some influence, I'm going to invite her to join my next class.

[00:03:43] Now I could invite her in the first conversation. And sometimes I do. I use my intuition in this. But in this case, it was clear to me she needs to get to know me more. Because remember everybody, there's four kinds of clients: the instant client, the slow cooker, the super slow cooker, and the super, super slow cooker. **And not everybody's "insta." So, in an effort to not come off too salesy, in this case, I invited her to join the workshop and I'm sure she's going to become a VIP client.**

[00:04:20] **Remember that it is the person who refers them to you, who has the influence. It's very important for you to recognize that you still have to build influence with that person before you ask them to buy.**

[00:04:34] Okay. So, number one, educate your clients. So, what that means is make sure your clients know when your next workshop is. Make sure your clients know about any services that you're offering, that they may not be getting themselves, but that they have other people that they could refer to you who might need this new service that you have. Educate your clients, educate your clients, educate your clients.

[00:05:00] **Number two, equally as important, stay in touch with your clients.** I just called a client today; it was her birthday. We had a lovely brief conversation, and not only did she tell me she's going to iHop to get her free stack of pancakes for her birthday, which I loved. She also asked me about when was the next sales blitz? And of course, we talked about that and "Hey, when does my class start?" We talked about that. And I said, "Hey, do you know about this other thing?"

[00:05:32] Make sure you're staying in touch with your clients. Now, of course, we stay in touch with our clients in a variety of ways. Let me underscore that. **We stay in touch with our clients in a variety of ways.**

[00:05:45] **Do not, let me underscore, do not only stay in touch with your clients via email.** I stay in touch with my clients, yes, via email. I also use Facebook messenger quite a lot, and LinkedIn messenger to make sure that they saw important communications sometimes.

[00:06:08] By the way, we use Facebook messenger and LinkedIn messenger to send people links for tomorrow's workshop. I signed up for somebody else's workshop that was supposed to be last night. I spent 60 minutes looking for the link. Not 60, literally about 20. I checked the Facebook group. I checked my email. She said, "Hey, text me if you get lost." I texted.

[00:06:32] You know what? It would have been wonderful if somebody put the link in Facebook messenger. Not all of you do that. It's another great way to stay in touch with your clients and your potential clients.

[00:06:45] Also, postcards, direct mail, pick up the phone, customer care calls, "How are you doing?" Stay in touch with your clients in a variety of ways. By the way, that keeps you top of mind. **So, when somebody asks for something you're top of mind, because you've done a good job of staying in touch.**

[00:07:08] Okay, let's continue. **Now I just said number three, which is connect with them on social networks.**

[00:07:15] Let me also say this. Do you have on your onboarding client checklist... you say "Caterina, what's an onboarding client checklist?" That's all the big and little things you do when you get a new client. Is that on your onboarding clients checklist that you are following them on LinkedIn on Facebook, Instagram, Clubhouse? Even if you're... now, I know everyone's business is different...but even if you're a health coach or something like that, like that's a business to personal service. But don't you think they'd like it if you followed them on Clubhouse or Instagram? I know they would. **Make sure that's part of your onboarding clients checklist to connect with them on social media.**

[00:08:09] Okay. Those are the first three tips that I want to share with you, but you know, I have a lifetime supply more. So, let's talk about more. Now, remember, we're talking about how to **generate more referrals from existing clients.**

[00:08:24] Okay. Number four, here we go. **You want to identify some of your clients that you want to cultivate a deeper personal relationship with.**

[00:08:39] I went to University of San Francisco and I have a master's degree in Counseling Psychology. And what that means, part of what that means, is that I studied a lot of the same ways that therapists study. I didn't do my 3000 hours to be a therapist, but I was taught that there's separation between your clients and your business that you don't want to have personal relationships with your clients. And some of you may have been raised that way in your career upbringing.

[00:09:18] And I want to say to you that, I very quickly realized that that was ridiculous, at least for my business. Because I'm all about love and genuine caring, and so I do have personal relationships with my clients. I love to have personal relationship with my clients. At the same time, I do not go to my clients with my challenges du jour, or my big challenges. I have other support in my life for that. And I'm hoping that you do too.

Because you want to have personal relationships with your clients, but they're not your counselor.

[00:09:57] This is a sidebar to saying what I want to say here, which is **some of your clients cultivate a deeper personal relationship with them. And look, if you want to cultivate them as a referral partner** where you're referring people to them and they're referring people to you. And you have a referral partner agreement.

[00:10:20] Now we talked about this on our previous podcast, was cultivating your referral partner agreements and relationships. Make sure you listen to that podcast episode, if you haven't. **This is something for you to look at here: who do you want to be referral partners with that are your existing clients?**

[00:10:41] Okay. **Number five. Invite your clients to go where you're going.** Now, this episode is recorded while we're still living the pandemic lifestyle, so we're not going anywhere. Or I'm not going anywhere. Hopefully soon that won't be the case.

[00:11:01] I love to invite my clients... if I'm going to a charity event that I think that they would like, if I'm going to hear a speaker that I think they would like, if I'm having an afternoon tea party, or I'm going to somebody else's afternoon tea for ladies. I absolutely love to invite my clients. **Invite your clients to go where you're going. That does cultivate a deeper personal relationship. They also super appreciate it. You get to know them better. They get to know you better. This equals more referrals.**

[00:11:36] **Also, number six, be on the lookout for what else, besides you, would serve your clients?** For example, if a client says to you, "Hey, I'm looking for a new virtual assistant," be on the lookout. Go a little extra mile. If they say, "I'm looking for a new graphic designer," if they say, "I'm looking for a babysitter." **Whatever they're looking for, go a little out of your way to see if you can help them. Because that builds influence. It builds social capital. And as a result, that will support you in having them remember how awesome and amazing you are.**

[00:12:23] **And if they are a business, number seven, refer them clients.** Be on the lookout for who you can refer to them to be their client. They will love you forever. And sometimes it's not a client, it's an associate that you think they would be good referral partners.

[00:12:49] I have a fabulous client. She works with construction companies, helping them get government contracts. That's her business. I have another client who helps businesses get funding for scaling. And she works also with construction companies. I put the two of them together because I thought they would be good referral partners for each other. That builds influence for me too, if they vibe with their relationship.

[00:13:19] **Really something important for you to look at my friends. Are you on the lookout for getting your clients, clients? And referring people to your clients?** This is something I want to strongly encourage you to do.

[00:13:32] And in fact, I'm going to tell you something. One of my vendors that has been my vendor, I won't say what it is, for about 30 years, as long as I've been in business. I asked him for a referral for another vendor that was, somebody, he must have 10 people he knows that do this. And you know what he said to me, he said, "I don't want to give you a referral in case that person doesn't work out. I don't want it to interfere with our relationship."

[00:14:05] Now, after 30 years, it's not much that's going to interfere with our relationship. But I got to say, I did not appreciate that. Okay? **You want to be on the lookout for how you can help your clients, not be concerned if something doesn't work out.** And I want you to look at that for yourself.

[00:14:25] Okay. I got more here. I'm going to keep going.

[00:14:29] **Number eight.** I'm laughing at myself as I'm about to tell you number eight, because it's so obvious. But it's so often that we don't do it. **Are you asking your clients for referrals?** Are you asking them for referrals?

[00:14:45] I just finished a Thrive at Sales class. It's nine weeks. Every week we talk about different hot topics related to selling. Not only the conversation, also the being side of selling, the systems. The ladies are getting massive value from this class.

[00:15:03] And when the ladies graduate from this class and I do a follow-up conversation with them to ask them if they want to continue with something else, what else do I ask them? "Who do you know that might be interested in joining the Thrive at Sales class? Who do you know?"

[00:15:25] **Now, if I don't ask, they may not think about it.** Yes, they're telling me they enjoyed the class, but they're running their business. They're not running around thinking who can I send to Caterina? When I specifically asked them, "Who do you know, that has an established business that wants to grow their business? One or two people you think might be interested?" that gets referrals.

[00:15:55] If you don't ask, my friends, they're not spending their time thinking about how they can grow your business. Only when you ask. **Make it an SOP, make it standard operating procedure, that when you have a follow-up with your clients after they complete a class, or a course, you ask for referrals.** Bing bing. If you do it, I promise you you'll get more referrals and you will get more clients.

[00:16:23] Another thing. **Number nine. Are you acknowledging your clients publicly and thanking them for their referrals?** Lynn Twist wrote the book, *The Soul of Money*. And Lynne Twist is one of the founders of the Pachamama Alliance. I consider her to be my fundraising mentor. And in one of the trainings I attended with her, she said that in fundraising, the fund raiser thanks the donor seven times.

[00:17:03] You thank the donor in the newsletter. You thank them with a plaque on the wall. You thank them with a call. You thank them with a thank you note. You thank them with a gift. You thank them in person the next time you see them. You thank them

publicly at the next event. Same donation, one donation. **You thank them seven times. And I remember that for business.**

[00:17:30] Now, there's a difference between a referral and a donation. Where a referral and a donation are the same, is you want more donations if you're in fundraising and you want more referrals if you're in business. **I want to encourage you to look at: do you thank your clients for referrals publicly?**

[00:17:56] And this is something I'm going to say for me, an area where I'm going to shine the spotlight and put more attention. Because I don't necessarily do it consistently. And I want to do it consistently. Because it always feels good to be acknowledged. "Hey Sheila, thank you so much for your fabulous referral to so-and-so. They're a great match for our community. I had a great conversation with them and they're gonna come to my next workshop. I so appreciate you and your trust in me." That is a great way to acknowledge a client publicly for their referral.

[00:18:35] **Number 10 is appreciate your clients privately.** One of the things that we do is that every quarter, when I send commission checks to anyone who has sent us a client, I include a little gift, **which is number 11, give gifts.**

[00:18:58] Now remember that there's five love languages. **Or for business, we could take those and say client appreciation languages.** Physical touch, gifts, acts of service, words of appreciation and acknowledgement, and quality time.

[00:19:16] Because it's the pandemic lifestyle these days, and we're not getting together live and in person so much, inviting people to lunch, inviting them to a special workshop or a special event... because we're not doing any of that, this year every quarter we've sent a gift. A custom gift for our business. We sent custom cards, I'm sending, don't tell anyone, but I'm sending purse hangers in another quarter because I love purse hangers.

[00:19:47] A lot of people really appreciate gifts. Not everybody. A lot of people really appreciate it. And it's something that you may want to make standard operating procedure - a special little something when you send commission checks. Or even if you don't send checks, cause we do a lot of commission via Venmo or another virtual transaction at the same time as you're doing commissions.

[00:20:16] Now the thing is though that what I've started to do of late is not wait until the commission checks go out, but I send a little something when the referral comes in, even if that person didn't become a client. Or even if I don't know yet, if that person became a client. I have two people recently that have been really great about sending referrals. And of course, what do I want to do? I want more referrals. So, I'm sending them a little thank you gift at the time of the referral.

[00:20:48] Now, some people like to do a \$5 gift card, I'm sending a pack of note cards that are custom branded for our company. You do what works for you.

[00:21:00] **Now I'm giving you lots of ideas here. You don't have to embrace them all.** I want to make sure though that you embrace some of them.

[00:21:09] I do want to give you a word of caution on gifts. If you know me, you know that I don't really drink. I have maybe five beverages a year. I don't really drink coffee. Again, I have five cafe mochas a year. I do like tea and I'm a big fan of chocolate, especially See's candy, dark chocolate, nuts, and chews. Why am I telling you this?

[00:21:34] Because you know what, there is nothing worse than someone sending a gift that is a clear indicator that they have no idea who you are. If someone sends me a bottle of wine, it goes in the closet for me to bring as a hostess gift to another party. But it also tells me that that person doesn't know who I am. If they send me a bottle of scotch or something like that, I wouldn't even know what to do with it because it's not a part of my life.

[00:22:07] And by the way, a lot of people don't want alcohol because they are former alcoholics. **Very important that you give special attention to any gifts. That you send the right gift, if you're going to do that. Or pick something that's neutral, okay?** Very, very important, bing, bing.

[00:22:27] I remember one year, one of my vendors sent me a huge basket as a thank you for some referrals that I had sent him. And it so, not only made my day, I felt so appreciated. **And when people feel appreciated, that's going to have them feel really good about sending you more referrals.**

[00:22:48] I remember a time way back when, when I had sent someone a referral for a very large company that asked me for a specific type of service that I did not provide. But I knew someone else who did, and I referred her to this big company, and she got a big contract. I never got a thank you note. I never got a thank you gift. And you know, I wasn't so quick to share her name whenever somebody asks me about that. And I consider myself a very generous person, but you know what? It just didn't feel good. Because she didn't even say thank you.

[00:23:28] **So it's very important, my friends that you remember the fundraising motto and you say thank you in multiple ways so that people feel really seen and gotten and appreciated for the referrals that they send you. Bing bing!**

[00:23:44] Okay. Guess what? I got more. **Number 12. Write checks or send money.** I'm not only looking for referral partners and you're not only looking for referral partners. You're looking for long-term and lifelong referral partners. One of the things I know as someone who's in business, and I want other people that are in business to send me referrals. And my clients who pay me, I want to send them checks to say thank you for what they've done to help me grow my business.

[00:24:22] And this is what I said to you earlier. We pay commissions quarterly; we send a thank you card. I usually send a thank you message at the same time with a small gift. Why? Because I want more referrals. I want them to want to send me referrals for life. **If you do not have a commission program in place, a thank you program for people that send you referrals, I want to strongly encourage you to do that.**

[00:24:50] And I believe we talk about it in the previous podcast as well, where we talked about referral partners. I encourage you to make this public, put it on your website, because as a result, that makes people have trust that, okay, well, you're making this public so clearly you are going to send the referral commission. Very, very important. That's number 12. And we could talk all day about this. **The bottom line is: give a commission for referrals.**

[00:25:21] **Now, why would you do that? Because the commission will keep them sending you referrals, feeling good about the referral, but here's the other thing: that referral commission that you're paying is the money that you did not have to spend to get that client. It's the marketing money you didn't have to spend. And that person was warmed up before they even got to you. And we want a lot more people like that bing, bing!**

[00:25:50] Okay, next one. **Number 13, provide resources for your clients.** And let me say it this way. **You want to make it easy for your clients to give you referrals.** Which is why you want to have affiliate links, or you want to have discount codes so that whoever they refer will be tracked back to them.

[00:26:14] Now, I want your business though, to not just be high tech, I want it to also be high touch. And that means that they can just send you a note, "Hey, I'm sending you Sheila." And as a result, you can tag them in your system so that anybody they refer to you gets a tag in your system or even a note in your system, that the referral came from one of your clients, noting who it was.

[00:26:43] Bing bing! I've got a couple more things I want to share with you as we round out this very important discussion. **Look at the possibility of every year, and this could be virtual or live and in-person, hosting an event to appreciate your clients.**

[00:27:03] And in addition to hosting an event to appreciate your clients, you might want to have a little event before the event, which is where you do something only for the people that have sent you business over the course of the year. A special breakfast or a special virtual gathering. Or special gift or a special discount or something. **You have the event and the people that have sent you referrals above and beyond their commission, get a little special "something something" that solidifies them and acknowledges them and has them be blissing for all the referrals they've sent you and they're going to keep doing it.**

[00:27:47] **Because again, remember, we're not looking for clients to give us referrals. We're looking for clients to give us referrals for life.**

[00:27:56] **The last thing I want to say, as we discuss this very important topic of cultivating more referrals from existing clients: love your clients so much.** Love on them, love them in the five different ways we've discussed, so that they want to keep being your client and they want to keep sending you referrals. Because they're getting so much value from you that they want everybody else to come and get value from you, too.

[00:28:30] My friends, you have massive value to bring. There is a lifetime supply of people to serve. And I'm sure you want more people just like your existing clients. **Take some of these things that we have discussed today, and I've given you many, and pick two or three of them that you're going to implement right away.**

[00:28:57] **And then go back and find a couple more to implement next. Because having a solid business that is going to be around for life is set up for success when you have clients that are consistently sending you referrals.**

[00:29:14] My friend, I want to invite you to come to my next free workshop. We have workshops all the time, one hour for free, at least once a month, if not twice a month. Different topics, selling with authenticity. Sometimes we talk about getting booked for speaking. Sometimes we talk about hosting retreats.

[00:29:37] If you would like to stay informed about our upcoming free workshops, **make sure you're on our email list. You can go to my website, caterinarando.com to get on the list.** You can also send me a direct message through Facebook or Instagram to get on my list. Let me know you're enjoying the podcast.

[00:30:00] **Also, I'm hoping that you have downloaded our Expand Your Fempire app on your phone with lots of additional great resources for you.** I'm hoping you're following me on Clubhouse and Instagram and LinkedIn. I would love to connect with you in all those exciting places.

[00:30:20] **Make sure you've joined our fabulous Thriving Women in Business Group on Facebook.**

[00:30:26] **And hey, if you would like to grow your business, improve your sales, do more speaking, host a retreat, come to a retreat, please reach out to me. Because I've got an amazing community of like-minded, like-hearted women I would like to introduce you to, and I would love to support you to thrive more and bliss more in your business.**

[00:30:52] Can't wait to be with you again on the Expand Your Fempire podcast. Bing, bing, bing this is Caterina Rando. Until next time.

We hope you enjoyed this episode of Expand Your Fempire with Caterina Rando.

THRIVING *Women* IN BUSINESS

We invite you to connect with Caterina and the Thriving Women in Business Community!

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