



**Life is too short to be**  
**The modest professional**



An introduction to the 'art'  
of the introduction

**John R. Spence, Martin Byrne**

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**Life is too short to be THE MODEST PROFESSIONAL**

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*5next.io*



# Life is too short to be The modest professional

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**An introduction to the 'art' of the introduction**

*'A comfort zone is a beautiful place  
but nothing ever grows there'*

**- Unaccredited**

LIFE IS TOO SHORT TO BE THE MODEST PROFESSIONAL

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# Introduction

We have all heard the comment that; 'it's not what you know but who you know'. There is a truth in that. All of us have seen professionals with equal technical skills and ability yet achieve different career and business outcomes. Ambition does play its part but time and time again the better connected person will achieve more with their skills set on the basis of who they know.

Life is too short to rue that reality and this publication will guarantee that you succeed in building your network into something that delivers the results you are seeking if you develop and follow the processes described.

Professional introductions are recognised to be the most cost-effective and trusted way to win new business opportunities. It is the simple, yet not easy, process of working with a network of individuals who understand and trust your offer well enough to refer you into their network of connections on the basis that the need and relevance of your service or product exists.



Within the profession of business development the ability to find new clients, new customers, new commercial introductions and the appropriate professional strategic connections decides whether or not your business development is a success and whether your career reaches its maximum potential. However so often people search for alternatives.

This may include; hard copy marketing such as handing out leaflets, placing adverts in shops, buying internet leads and investing heavily into the use of social media. It can also include distributing dozens and dozens of business cards in the hope that this will create some type of meaningful connection with a market place. Then there is the process of meeting as many people as possible on the basis of some sort of 60 second burst of information as part of a club or group.

Any time spent with a top performing adviser within any profession or industry will make you realise that being referred and introduced by a 3rd party is the only way to create meaningful connections.

*'Take a long, hard look at your lead generation methodologies. It's really all about the leads. Do your best to always move from less assertive methodologies to those that are more assertive and more effective. That's where the results are'*

**- Ken Krogue**

In business it really is about leads and lead generation is where the real commercial results are achieved. If you master your ability to make introductions count then you will count.

There are many reasons for referral marketing being the only way to generate success.

The first reason is the use of your time.

*'If you love life, don't waste time, for time is what life is made up of'*

- **Bruce Lee**

Meeting people that are not interested in what you are able to offer or what you represent is an immense waste of your time. The top business development professionals protect their time use dramatically as this is their most valuable and finite resource. Time is potentially free but time wasted can never be recovered.

*'Time wasters are life wasters'*

- **Sunday Adelaja**

If you are referred by a 3rd party it is highly unlikely that they will introduce you to somebody who is not fit for purpose for a conversation about what you do. Also the people that have been introduced to you out of respect for the person making the introduction will give you the appropriate time to present your professional skill. They would not have agreed to be connected if otherwise.

The second reason is that you will also discover that when you start to be introduced to people in this manner that they are mostly just like the referrer. What that means to you is they will refer and introduce you in exactly the same way because that is just how they met you.

This process cuts down dramatically on the amount of time that you have to spend searching for new connections and allows you to focus on your existing ones. This will help them

feel more comfortable in recommending you as you become less of a commodity and it eventually becomes a virtuous circle that takes your business development to a much higher level of success.

*'92% of respondents reported that a positive recommendation from a friend, family member, or someone they trust is the biggest influence on whether they buy a product or service'*

- **Paul M. Rand**

This unique publication courtesy of 5next.io is to equip you with a proven referral and introduction process that is professional and appropriate. It will link you and your profession to your target audience.

*'The aim of marketing is to know and understand the customer so well the product or service fits him and sells itself'*

- **Peter F. Drucker**

Our journey in building this skill is to understand that when you are asking to be referred it is absolutely crucial to ensure that the referee recognises that your skill set is relevant to the person that they are introducing you to. If you are not relevant it is very difficult for a referral to introduce you to a 3rd party. You are essentially asking them to make a potential connection on no clear cut relevance which is very, very, difficult.

We are going to use the acronym **RELEVANT** © to master the process because being relevant is everything in being introduced.

- **R**eveal how you build your connections to your referral and introduction source
- **E**mphasise the value you deliver to introductions
- **L**ook for listeners to meet...not for leads to do business with as you are building a network
- **E**xpertise is the key to getting an introduction as this is an easy currency to buy into
- **V**alidate the process in your mind before making the ask
- **A**ction comes from validation and this is an action activity
- **N**ext moves after receiving an introduction decide if you will get another
- **T**raining is the key to generating this ability

This acronym will help you position the strategic steps that you need to make when asking for a referral. Do not assume that asking for an introduction will be a natural conversation that you can invent as you go along.

*'Practice does not make perfect. Only perfect practice makes perfect'*

- **Vince Lombardi**

It is recognised that 90% of the reason the top business development professionals are able to build client banks is through the soft skill of asking for introductions. On that basis you need to invest as much time in this technique as you did on the hard technical skills you possess to perform in your profession.

*'Hard skills are specific, teachable abilities that can be defined and measured, such as typing, writing, math, reading and the ability to use software programs. By contrast, soft skills are less tangible and harder to quantify, such as etiquette, getting along with others, listening and engaging in small talk'*

**- Unaccredited**

In this publication are the steps that you need to follow through to ensure that each client you acquire introduces you to at least one more and that the connections that you possess are able to support you connect with your market. Make yourself relevant by using the tools that we have provided in this publication.

*The 5next application manages and supports this process for you.*

CHAPTER ONE

# How do you find your contacts and your clients?

In the first instance you must reveal to your clients and current professional connections exactly how you obtain and connect with potential clients. Communicate that you work through introductions only. Make it clear and share why you are obliged to work in this manner and that you are also happy to be introduced via this method. Make sure that they are comfortable with that knowledge.

*'People influence people. Nothing influences people more than a recommendation from a trusted friend. A trusted referral is the holy grail of advertising'*

**- Mark Zuckerberg**

This is the key conversation that you need to master and deliver in the style that is appropriate to you, your offer of service, your marketplace and your relationship with the client or professional connection. It is vital that you explain that you work via introductions and that your network of connections gets value from you being part of their circle too.

Consider the style of the conversation as essentially you are looking to raise your professional profile. Conversations are always different depending on who you're talking to and it is easy sometimes to slip to the left or the right of what is the centre ground you should be looking to occupy. Too formal or too casual can make the connection, client or professional, question whether they will look good by association in recommending you to their existing relationships. If the reward for the connection or client is not primarily about remuneration, then it can only be about enhanced reputation, theirs before yours.

If your offer is one that a customer would not wish to refer to a competitor then think about who you could form an alliance with that is not competing with you but is speaking to the type of people that you wish to connect with. Who has the same natural client bank as you? This is what you are looking to achieve.

Your professional profile is everything in terms of being visible as someone competent in offering the service that you do. Every connection you have will decide to refer you on the basis of their perception of your competence.

*'One customer, well taken care of, could be more valuable than \$10,000 of advertising'*

**- Jim Rohn**

Be very clear that you are not only looking for people in the market for what you deliver professionally. Think in terms of developing strategic relationships especially introductions to those that you can be introduced to who may have connections and relevance into the market place that you perform in.

In the **5next.io method** we refer to these connections as having 'joint venture potential'

'Alliances and partnerships produce stability when they reflect realities and interests'

- **Stephen Kinzer**

Talk all these different points through with your potential introduction source. Often examples given of existing relationships makes it easier for them to visualise themselves working with you. If they can place themselves in the shoes of one of your happy and successful relationships they are very likely to aspire to achieve the same relationship with you. Your objective is to be a valuable point of reference to as many people as possible in the market space you wish to generate a leading profile in.

**So let's go through the concept of that conversation.**

You need to reinforce that you build your professional reputation only through referral and introduction. If you are not a big corporate, and maybe you are not, it is easy to position yourself as the opposite of a large, possibly impersonal, potentially uncaring, not as focused on detail and less accountable for a poor service, company.



You don't have a million pound advertising budget, and you alone are responsible for the satisfaction of your clients. In real terms this is a very powerful statement that you are making. You are communicating that you are confident about who you are in the marketplace. If you take that further then you are confident about what you offer and you are prepared to stand on your own personal reputation to deliver the service for that offer.

**If you don't say it people won't hear it.**

People often buy the "why" of what people do more than the "what". Remember, you are not bragging about your own perception of your reputation but sharing the "why" to make it easier for people to introduce you to their connections.

Here are three reasons you must reveal the crucial information that you are building a long term professional network and intend to work by recommendation only.

**Reason number 1**

The marketplace you work in is not worrying about how you intend to grow your business and professional career. It doesn't care. Do not assume that, your clients, your friends or your business associates, are reflecting on this for one moment as these groups are focusing on their:

- Own life
- Own core business
- Own career
- Own revenue challenges

The reality is most people you talk to are more interested in their own business than yours, and therefore, the only way to really engage with them on any meaningful basis is to talk to them about their business in the first instance. They will (or should) ask you about yours, which leads on nicely to you being able to share your crucial information with them. If they don't, well, it's already a one way relationship and you will have to consider the value very carefully.

### **Reason number 2**

Good works are not enough to grow a business. It is a modern myth that your reputation alone will generate enquiries. There is no evidence that this will happen. It is unlikely your reputation standing alone will create the connections that you need.

Do not assume that delivering good work will generate more work and on top of that consider this:

- The results you achieve for your clients will not create introductions, unless you ask for them
- It is not a client's priority to introduce or market you
- Clients focus on the day-to-day workings of their own business and their own lives

### **Reason number 3**

You might appear to be too busy to take on more work and this may inadvertently send the message that you are already fully committed and could suggest you may become overwhelmed if introductions are made. You must communicate that you are continually open for business and make it clear that you have the professional capacity to handle more work.

Explaining the upgrade in systems you have undergone since becoming busier is a good way to explain it. Not in an overly techie way. Even asking how they cope with increased business volumes and relating it to your own situation make a stronger connection as they see similarities in business character, growth and innovation.

CHAPTER TWO

# Communicate your total value as a connection

The way to be introduced accurately is to package clearly and easily the value that you deliver to a 3rd party connection. This is a series consideration as we all face the same problem, which is the evaluation of potential connections in a shorter and shorter time frame due to time pressure and the volume of potential introductions. The two barriers we all face to being introduced as being of value are:

## **Noise**

The market is awash with 'ME TOO' offers which means meeting new contacts with: a similar education, a similar online profile, a similar marketing message, a similar 60 second elevator pitch and this all becomes similar 'ME TOO' noise with the punch line: 'SO WHAT'?

## **Time**

Professionals are too time poor for strategic evaluation to work out 'what is what' and 'who is who'. So our ability to communicate our total value as a connection is vital to attract the attention of the audience that we seek.

If you fail to communicate this then you are also noise and part of the networking arena of exchanging of business cards, attending networking groups, schmoozing at mixer events, shaking hand at trade shows, connecting via net-based tools. The value that you deliver is what existing connections, your new connections and potential clients will understand and buy into and the potential involved by building a relationship with you. It is your value that can be communicated more clearly rather than your skill set and technical ability. We all have qualifications, offices, staff, crms and mobile phones...So What? People connect with value more easily and more accurately. You need to emphasise your value. What is the benefit of working with you, who can benefit, how can they tell others about it easily?

*'Here is a powerful yet simple rule. Always give people more than they expect to get'*

**- Nelson Boswell**

You have to make it easy for the referrer to do this. This means developing a transferable soundbite that they can repeat to others that conveys your value easily. Your value will need to be something that is easy to buy into.

One method is to think about the financial value of the service that you deliver in a context that makes sense. Another is demonstrate that be working with you they solve one of their

potential problems: client acquisition and retention.

*'People are not interested in your product or your business; they are interested in solving their own problems'*

- **James Dillehay**

The easiest method of communicating worth is to convert the benefit case straight into money. However this can sound too much like a 'pitch' unless handled correctly and not everyone will be motivated by additional revenue, especially when it may be far less proportionate to their own revenue/client value. Also some offers are less able to be converted into a cash value and therefore the value must lie elsewhere. The currency of social-commercial-comfort is one that is discussed at length in the **5next publication 'The 3° of separation'**.

Does your position and status generate opportunities to the person referring you? Most people are looking for two-way relationships. That can be a major consideration when professionals consider advancing you as an introduction over other options? What do you represent in those terms to the person you are being introduced to beyond what you deliver as a profession? It has to be customer or client centric so think about what you represent. What is the value you bring over and above similar individuals in a similar profession?

Don't forget, they have to like you as well or at the least not dislike you. The reality is if they don't like you what you have to offer and how much it is, is irrelevant, they will find someone they do like. That is human nature. Have you ever wanted a product or service but been put off by someone being rude to you and thought "I'll buy it somewhere else then" There has to

be a know, like, trust element to the proceedings as if it is purely transactional, it is unlikely to last.

*'It's not the employer who pays the wages. Employers only handle the money. It's the customer who pays the wages'*

- **Henry Ford**

So in terms of a logical process that will work for you think about the following structure:

- Take the time to build a personal element to the relationship, build the rapport.
- Reinforce the value of your delivery and skill to your client or connection.
- Do not assume that they will appreciate the application of your skill unless you explain it in layman's terms so that is absolutely clear what you have delivered.
- Hidden expertise will not help you become referable.
- Your clients 'do not know what they do not know'.

*Plain English (or layman's terms) is a style of communication that uses easy to understand, plain language with an emphasis on clarity, brevity, and avoidance of overly complex vocabulary. It is commonly used in relation to official government or business communication. The goal is to write or speak in a way that is easily understood by the target audience. It is clear and straightforward, concise, free of clichés and needless technical jargon, and appropriate to the audience's developmental or educational level and their familiarity with the topic.*

If they are a client for example why not explain exactly what actions you have taken, that they may not be aware of that ensured what you delivered and the service that they received is a bespoke match to their needs? Think in terms about your 'total value' clarity.

*'If you count all your assets, you always show a profit'*

- **Robert Quillen**

Make sure that all your assets are being counted by your connection or client:

- Turn your results into money where it is appropriate
- Discuss the measurable results they achieved by working with you
- Remind them and re-explain why they decided to work with you
- Remind them and clarify why people work with you
- Remind them and clarify the benefit to them of you being part of someone's network

The key to this process is to remember that you are not reminding them of the obvious and also gratitude has a very, very, short shelf life when you are dealing with satisfied clients.

*'Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it'*

- **William Arthur Ward**



Consider it from the point of you of your connections and client's:

- They are too busy focusing on their lives to reflect on what you do
- They take you for granted
- They have not considering the total value of what you have delivered
- They are not focused on you or your value at all

Open the referral process at the right time in the conversation by asking the appropriate leading questions which could include the following:

- What does your client or contact think about your delivery?
- What has been their experience of working with you?
- Why did the client choose you?
- Why do they think that clients chose you?
- What financial results were achieved?
- Explain and quantify the results you delivered
- Explain how you value them and how you would value a relationship with them
- Monetise the outcome by converting the overall outcome into a cash value

If you use this process you will create testimonials of real power and of real financial value.

*'No matter what your product is, you are ultimately in the education business. Your customers need to be constantly educated about the many advantages of doing business with you, trained to use your products more effectively, and taught how to make never-ending improvement in their lives'*

**- Robert G. Allen**

Think about the bigger picture of being connected to you and the value that it reflects back to them. Search for the suggestions that cue up what you should talk about. Don't forget the "Small stuff" which is vital in building a relationship. Like, know, trust.

CHAPTER THREE

## Can you describe your preferred audience?

Look for potential listeners to meet... not for potential leads to sell too. This is the 'L' in relevant. You need to communicate that you are not looking to connect with a 3rd party that is 100% certain to be in the market for what you do. If they are that is a real bonus. This is more about raising your profile and building relationships, business is a by-product of relationships. You are looking to connect with people who would appreciate the value of having a professional business development professional as a key connection.

*'Character is like a tree and reputation like a shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing'*

**- Abraham Lincoln**

In the course of life the majority of us will at some point need to sit down with; business development professionals regard-

ing a range of requirements from law to financial services to IT services and banking and so on. So make it clear that you are looking to create connections and not looking for connections that have immediate needs. It can be a real leap of faith to focus on building relationships and not leads to convert immediately. Of course leads, and lead conversion is vital but the cart cannot go in front of the horse. This is a key distinction in the way that you ask to be referred.

*'Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are'*

- **John Wooden**

Your job is to help them identify the people you should network with and connect with too. Think in terms of the value of what you offer. The vocabulary to communicate this might be to search within your offer and to talk to them specifically about that. You might talk about it in the following way as an example:

*I am looking to connect with professionals that are likely to have a network of quantity surveyors in the commercial area of real estate. They may wish to connect with me as I am active in that area via my professional status as an award winning architect. I possess connections within the sector that maybe a talking point when we meet. I'm happy to add value to their network as well as looking to enhance mine*

It has to be more than just your skill. Will you make them look good by association?

When you have discussed the group you are focusing on then

think about how your expertise serves the needs of those people. In real terms we are looking for potential clients but also for other types of introductions. If you were me who would you try to reach out too? I am looking to raise my profile and would appreciate direction if that is appropriate.

It would be fair to say that a typical business development professional would need to build and manage a network of between **60-100 people to achieve their business and career goals**. It's critical that you find the right contacts as it is likely that you can't manage more than that and the volume of wrong contacts reduces the capacity for right contacts.

*'Position yourself as a centre of information and knowledge. That will convert you into someone of value and people will respond to that and you will become what you project'*

- **Unaccredited**

In terms of building a network that really delivers results you must search for listeners and identify an audience you can really work with. Think in terms of those who have an obligation, of some sort, to be connected to your profession because of their profession or their personal needs.

Start thinking with that in mind and think in terms of:

- Those who will listen to you
- Those that would value an introduction
- Those that would appreciate information that they are unaware of

Make it very clear that you are not asking for some type of sales

lead but you are raising your profile in the community that you are targeting. What most people fear, when they don't know you very well, is that they refer you to someone and you treat it like a hot sales lead (when it isn't) and the person they referred you to comes back to them and says: **"Why did you do that?!"**

So it's very important to reassure them that this isn't the case and you highly value the relationship with them and would NEVER do that. You may know you would never do that but it needs to be crystal clear to the party referring you to remove that fear of the unknown outcome.

Engage with the referrer in identifying who you want to be introduced to:

- Identify who they potentially know
- Describe the group you want to connect with
- Be precise in describing this audience
- You are not looking to connect with just anyone
- You need a specific kind of connection
- Someone who potentially recognises the value of your offer

The more specific that you can be in describing this target then the easier it is for a 3rd party to identify an introduction of value. In terms of taking the process a step further then this method can support you connect into the market where you are potentially the most value.

It could be that you know the names of the people you want to develop better relationships with and can name them.

If so, then do so. If that is so and you have yet to meet them then

an introduction via a 3rd party will support the connection.

If you don't know the people that you need to connect with by name you may consider describing them by their job title or profession. As examples: a banker, a lawyer, a broker, accountant or a HR manager.

If you want to meet people who can introduce you to their contacts it will 'help them to help you' by making a list of those you already know in that area if that is possible.

Another alternative is to ask if the referrer is aware of any specific membership organisations that it might be worth your while to be introduced to.

*'A friendship founded on business is better than  
a business founded on friendship'*

**- John D. Rockefeller**

CHAPTER FOUR

# What is the key to being introduced?

Expertise is the key to getting referred. People are more likely to meet an expert than any other type of introduction. Quite often just describing one aspect of what you do can make it easier for people to refer you. Giving them too many options turns focus to blur and this is something you should resist.

*'Very narrow areas of expertise can be very productive.*

*Develop your own profile. Develop your own niche'*

- **Leigh Steinberg**

You need to position yourself as an expert in your field within the community as this is what will separate you from the other players that are also talking to your audience.

*'People who have expertise just love to share it.*



*That's human nature'*

- **David Baldacci**

Think about the strongest words that deliver the real value of what you do rather than just – describe what you do. What is the benefit of your offering, who can benefit from it?. There are many benefits of dealing with an expert and you need to build up your benefit case so that is clear what your expertise means to your target market.

*'Take a long, hard look at your lead generation methodologies. It's really all about the leads. Do your best to always move from less assertive methodologies to those that are more assertive and more effective. That's where the results are'*

- **Ken Krogue**

Ensure that you can describe your value in terms that a layman could communicate it. If they were engaged in a conversation with the potential referee, what words would they actually say to communicate your value?

- "I know someone that can....."
- "I know someone that is....."
- "I know someone who....."

Be assertive and clear as to what your value is. The more specific that you are then the more likely you are to create meaningful openings. Think about how you can make it clear what your expertise could mean to the 3rd party?

What is your total perceived value financially to a 3rd party?

This could be revenue or a saving of costs. You need to assert this rather than presume that there is an understanding.

**When you make ‘the-ask’ look for two or three introductions.**

Be very clear about this. It does not feel intrusive to ask for two or three. It might be out of your comfort zone to do this right now, but the sooner you step outside it, the sooner it will become the norm for you.

If you ask for this then you will probably get one or two really good connections. Usually the names that are first thought of will be the best ones to connect with as these will be the introductions where the referrer has a real connection to the 3rd party. It is normal that they will also be the most qualified. If they are happy and have gratitude for what you have done then you have the relationship to work hard at sourcing introductions that will value meeting an expert.

*‘Gratitude is a currency that we can mint for ourselves,  
and spend without fear of bankruptcy’*

**- Fred De Witt Van Amburgh**

When names are put forward then you need to double check that you are relevant. What is the potential that you will be relevant? Again be assertive on this point. Taking vague connectivity as a sign of a potential connection will potentially waste your time. It is so important to ensure that a proposed introduction has the potential to be a productive use of your time as well as theirs and you may have to ‘kiss a lot of frogs’ before you find a connection.

*‘The way I see it, if you want the rainbow, you gotta put*

*up with the rain'*

- **Dolly Parton**

This is not the easiest process but it is vital in terms of sorting out the reality of an introduction. So ask questions and test the validity.

**'What did I say that made you think of them to refer'?**

Then consider are they really a match for your ideal connection? Remember that you are seeking to be in front of your prime audience and this is the key to success. Source the introductions that really make a difference. You need to know about them as it is not enough to accept that the names offered have potential.

*'Silent gratitude isn't very much to anyone'*

- **Gertrude Stein**

CHAPTER FIVE

# How to take action

Validate the process in your mind before you push on. It is as straight forward as this you must 'V'validate it as the process that decides what you are capable of within your profession. No other method of marketing will create the market place for your expertise. If you cannot be referred you will not have introductions and you will fail at some point. Fail need not mean leaving your profession but also means continually underperforming throughout your career.

*'Small deeds done are better than great deeds planned'*

- **Peter Marshall**

So you must focus on your communication skills at this point. If you have the communication skill to explain why someone should use you then you have the skill to explain why someone should introduce you.

It is critical that you must ask the referrer to make the connection and ask that the referrer take immediate action and ask

your referral source to make contact with the connection.

*'Action is the foundational key to all successes'*

- **Pablo Picasso**

You must take this action while they are clear on your value and the benefit you deliver. The reality is that if you do not ask for the introduction the process will not work.

*'There are risks and costs to action. But they are far less than the long range risks of comfortable inaction'*

- **John F. Kennedy**

Without a professional introduction an approach is a COLD CALL. This includes that if you call someone who doesn't know you or you make contact with someone who is not expecting the call.

*'Take a long, hard look at your lead generation methodologies. It's really all about the leads. Do your best to always move from less assertive methodologies to those that are more assertive and more effective. That's where the results are'*

- **Ken Krogue**

CHAPTER SIX

# Reflection upon positive action

'Action comes from validation of how you work. You need to replay this in your mind and why it is in the best interests of your target community that you focus on working with them in such a professional manner. Reflect on this method of supporting the needs of your target community. What is stopping you?

*'A comfort zone is a beautiful place but nothing ever grows there'*

- **Unaccredited**

Remember the benefit to you of this process as it is to get you in front of the people you want to meet and who will value you a meeting with you. If you are referred then the initial meeting with the new prospect has an easier opening.

Your meetings no longer commence with the thoughts:

- 'What am I going to say to begin a conversation'?
- 'How can I connect with this person'?
- 'What if the prospective introduction doesn't see the benefit'?

When we are referred and meeting a referral we are able to engage immediately in a relevant conversation as we know why they are sitting down with us. Information gathered on potential common interests also help get the conversation flowing and make it easy to segue onto why you are looking to connect with them professionally. We have to generate our openings in a manner that support our client bank building.

*'God provides the wind, but man must raise the sails'*

- **St. Augustine**

Creating connections is always about quality and not about quantity. To take your career forward the emphasis has to be about the quality of what you do before quantity is a question or a point of reference.

*'Quality is never an accident. It is always the result of intelligent effort'*

- **John Ruskin**

Introduction based marketing is not a numbers game. If you are doing the wrong things or taking unprofitable actions then numbers will not compensate for that.

*'Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and*

*expecting different results'*

- **Unknown**

Saying the wrong things to the wrong person is not a numbers game and neither are meetings with the wrong market place. Skill and focus are required.

As a business development professional a bench mark of 75% conversion is typical as you build your client bank and as you become more skilful then this will improve too. The professional outcome is that referral marketing increases revenue. This includes the client acquisition process improving it and shortening it so that your time use is improved. This process increases revenue as you reduce the number of unproductive prospect meetings that you get involved in. This process increases revenue as referred prospects give introductions as they were referred and so do the introductions.

Reflect upon this. Think about someone you know and trust in business or in your personal life. If this person came to you and asked you for an introduction would you make the connection if you thought that the connection was relevant? Of course you would. If you are asking a client & you have done good work you have earned the right

*'Those who dare to fail miserably can achieve greatly'*

- **John F. Kennedy**



CHAPTER SEVEN

# Follow through counts for everything

'Next steps are the moves that you should make after asking for an introduction. You need to ask the referral source to let the 3rd party know that they have made a connection and that you will be making contact.

Remember the referral source is doing their contact a favour by referring you and essentially you are asking your referral source to be helpful to someone else. Your referral source knows you are a professional solution which you are.

*'Make the customer the hero of your story'*

**- Ann Handley**

A key feature of this type of client bank development is keeping your referral source abreast of developments. Let them know how you got on.

It is critical that you feed back the results of making the connection to the person that introduced you and show gratitude whether the outcome was successful or not. This is part of an ongoing educational process to them on what is a good introduction for you and also reinforces the fact that they will not look bad by association, as they now know what happened. The unknown becomes the known. So thank them if it is a positive meeting and thank them even more if it isn't. Let them know why you think they connected with you. Let them know why you think they didn't connect with you.

*'The only people with whom you should try to get even are those who have helped you'*

- **John E. Southard**

CHAPTER EIGHT

# What is the 10,000 hour rule?

To close off **RELEVANT** © we get to the 'T' in Training. This is the key to generating the ability of asking for a referral and it is an ability that can be developed and improved upon. For most business development professionals asking for an introduction in the right manner and at the right time is nearly an art form.

*'There are two paramount differences between art and science. The first is that art is subjective while science is objective'*

- **Unaccredited**

This is because that they have not broken the request down into a manageable and measurable process. On top of that asking for a professional introduction can be very stressful yet it can be a

career defining skill if you master it to the degree that is possible.

*‘Formal education will make you a living; self-education will make you a fortune’*

- **Jim Rohn**

The author Malcolm Gladwell referred to the concept of the 10,000 hours rule and this essentially suggests that it takes 10,000 hours of practice to create a skill set to a superlative level. Here are two guaranteed shortcuts to the 10,000 hour rule

**The first is deliberate practice.**

It is that simple. You must make a deliberate effort to practice the micro skill of asking for a professional introduction. So few professionals do this yet this skill above any technical skill or competence will help you make a connection to the type of client that you wish to be introduced to. And that’s where the idea of deliberate practice comes in to build expert habits. Deliberate practice in a nutshell means that rather than just going through the motions to say that you have done something that you are quite intentional in doing the work. You focus on it and you pay attention to the process and the outcome (and how can you change the process to improve the outcome). You are definitely not just: ‘getting your reps in’.

**The second is to study and replicate the masters only.**

The material here has its root from interviewing literally dozens and dozens possibly even hundreds of business development professionals over a period of twenty years and prior to the internet and post the internet. It has not been generated by the thoughts of one ‘guru’ speaker but has been organised into a se-

ries of steps and the method is clear and definable. So no matter what anyone else tells you it is exceptionally doubtful that there isn't a whole lot that hasn't already been done before. We accept that no one has put your spin on it, but learn from the best and don't reinvent the wheel.

The foundational principles are the foundational principles. Essentially right now we are iterating from what the thought leaders in our field are doing. By reading about and studying the greats in business development – both their successes and their failures – you will accelerate your learning curve by not having to go down a path they have already gone.

*'I fear not the man who has practiced 10,000 kicks once, but I fear the man who has practiced one kick 10,000 times'*

- **Bruce Lee**

To make deliberate practice work the next step is to identify someone you know really well that you can talk through the method. Again, this may be outside your comfort zone but feel the fear...and do it anyway! You are looking for someone in business development then so you now have someone else who faces the same challenge which is to master how to request a professional introduction.

*'When it is obvious that the goals cannot be reached, don't adjust the goals, adjust the action steps'*

- **Confucius**

You will discover that the majority of professionals in business development welcome the opportunity to listen to someone

else's craft. It also gives you the opportunity to listen how they would do it and this may inspire you to rethink how you are making the request. So let's keep it simple and identify a 'practice partner' someone you know really well and it could be a friend or a peer and any serious about business development who would welcome the idea of practising dialogue with a non competing professional.

*'Practice is not the thing you do when you get good. It's the thing that you do that makes you good'*

- **Malcolm Gladwell**

To improve your delivery record yourself and play it back. Take it from two musicians with less than average voices, no-one like the sound of their own voice recorded; this is not unique to you! Very, very, few people do this yet this process of self reflection and self critiquing will be how you move forward. If you don't do this you are actually practising on your clients and connections. If you put aside one hour per week to do this then you are addressing this skill set more than anyone else that you know in your area in this profession. It will pay off.

*'Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work'*

- **Thomas Edison**

You are developing this crucial skill set to the highest professional level and remember professionals get paid and amateurs don't!

*'The harder you work, the luckier you get'*

- **Gary Player**

*'Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity'*

- **Roman philosopher Seneca**

The differences between amateurs and professionals:

- Amateurs show up to practice to have fun
- Professionals realise that what happens in practice happens in games
- Amateurs think good outcomes are the result of their brilliance
- Professionals understand when good outcomes are the result of luck
- Amateurs focus on the short term
- Professionals focus on the long term
- Amateurs show up inconsistently
- Professionals show up every day

Don't be an amateur!

*'The difference between an amateur and a professional is in their habits. An amateur has amateur habits. A professional has professional habits. We can never free ourselves from habit. But we can replace bad habits with good ones'*

- **Steven Pressfield**

Remember you are not asking people for business leads but you are asking people to introduce you professionally. This is a crucial distinction and it will shape the dynamics of the conversation, it will influence how you approach the task, it will alter how they listen to you and it will alter how they respond.

*'Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit'*

**- Aristotle**



CHAPTER NINE

# Our template for a professional introduction request

You build your career and network through professional introductions only:

Because you listen to peoples private affairs, referral is the only way. Essentially you are looking to raise your professional profile You are not looking for people in the market for your services only. You are looking for people that will benefit from the connection

The majority of people will need your services at some point Reinforce that you build your business through referral and introductions only. This is a very powerful statement you are making:

- You are stating you are confident about who you are
- You are confident about what you offer
- You will make them look good by association
- You stand on your personal reputation
- Reinforce the value of your delivery/skill/monetise

If your referral source is a current client/ambassador, discuss the results they achieved by working with you/you deliver. Remind them/explain why they decided to work with you:

- What does your client/ambassador think about your delivery?
- What has been their experience of working with you?
- Why did the client choose you?
- Why clients do chose you?
- What results were achieved?
- Quantify the results you deliver
- Monetise the outcome if appropriate
- Identify who they potentially know
- Describe the group you want to connect with

Be precise in describing this audience .You are not looking to connect with just anyone, you need a specific kind of connection Someone who potentially recognises the value of your offer. Describe your value in terms that a layman could communicate it It is quite clear what your expertise could mean to the 3rd party Your total perceived value. Ask for two or three introductions. (You will probably get one or two good ones). The first people thought of will be the best, also the most qualified. It doesn't feel intrusive to ask for only two or three.Double check that you are relevant.

CHAPTER TEN

## Your next steps

Your ability to be introduced & connected to your target market will define what you are able to achieve within this industry. The key to your productivity is being introduced at the highest professional standard.

*'Productivity is never an accident. It is always the result of a commitment to excellence, intelligent planning, and focused effort'*

- **Paul J. Meyer**

You know have to take responsibility for your network of connections and your ability to be referred by them. You will discover that with this skill tomorrow will improve dramatically.

*'This is a wonderful day. I've never seen this one before'*

- **Maya Angelou**

# Authors

## **John R. Spence**

John R. Spence is a recognised authority on business development & has qualified for the Million Dollar Round Table on two separate occasions in the UK. He is referred to by the UK Insurance industry on various subjects around business development. Authored the ILM endorsed: 'The Executive programme in Business & Professional networking'

Spence is an accredited trainer working in the US, UK & Central Europe working in the UK Legal Sector with Wilkinson Read & Partners and also in Central Europe with Kosalko Consulting.

## **Martin Byrne**

Martin Byrne arrived in the UK from Auckland, New Zealand in 1985, lived in London for 20 before moving to Manchester in late 2006. The move was what started Martin on his networking journey as a new territory meant having to make new connections. In 2010 Martin took 4Networking in the northwest from 9 to 26 groups in a calendar year and built a network that presented

many opportunities to him. He runs Business Protect Limited, a financial services company that focuses purely on business protection. He is a senior partner in Core Business Solutions, an international strategic consultancy with offices in Manchester, Dubai and Beijing.

## **Further reading**

2018 the publication 'The 3 ° of separation – improving prospect management' will be released. This is an advanced strategic publication aimed at business development professionals.

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