

## FORMALIZING LEAD GENERATION: HOW ONE NON-TRADITIONAL PROGRAM LED TO \$70 MILLION IN SALES

Bill Johnson, Marketing Team Director,  
BI WORLDWIDE

By inspiring 83.5% of their customer-facing technicians to participate in a lead referral program, a telecommunications company generated \$70 million in additional revenue.

The biggest challenge when launching a new sales lead-referral program is getting your customer-facing teams on board. If you can successfully motivate the majority of them to participate, you're guaranteed an increase in revenue.

Take this for example – a major telecommunications company launched a lead-referral incentive program called “Just Ask!” and successfully inspired 83.5% of their customer-facing technicians to participate. The program encouraged technicians to identify up-sell and cross-sell opportunities when doing an in-home repair and then simply ask the customer if a sales rep could call them at later date to discuss the additional products or services. As a result, they generated close to \$70 million in additional revenue.

### **What's in it for me?**

Let's face it – this extension of your sales force may balk at the idea of going above and beyond when you first launch the program. By training, recognizing and rewarding those participants who help build revenue, you can easily prove they are contributing real value to the organization and in turn, increase their interest in participating. (It also doesn't hurt to show you are freely sharing the increased revenue with them in the form of rewards.)

Having a direct impact on the company's success creates what Harvard researchers Teresa Amabile and Steven Kramer call the *progress principle*. The progress principle states that “of all the things that can boost emotions, motivation and perceptions during a workday, the single most important is making progress in meaningful work. And the more frequently people experience the sense of progress the more likely they are to be creatively productive in the long run.”

The telecom company took advantage of this principle in their lead-referral program by providing frequent progress reports, account statements and real-time entry of referrals 24/7 via web, mobile and company-automated machine-to-machine technology. They also put a considerable amount of effort into publically recognizing referral activity, giving technicians well-deserved visibility among their peers and throughout the organization.

## The Keys to Success

If you're considering starting a sales referral lead generation program in your organization, here are seven things to consider.

- 1. Include target participants in the planning process.** You will likely be asking both sales and non-sales employees to take on additional tasks. Including key influencers in the planning process will help them feel a sense of ownership and provide you with real "feet-on-the-street" information.
- 2. Communicate why the program is important.** Spend time explaining to participants that additional revenue helps build job security, allows the company to expand and grow and creates opportunities for long-term career success.
- 3. Offer meaningful and appropriate incentives.** The increase in sales will be incremental revenue so you have tremendous leeway to share the gain. Participants will more willingly participate if they see you are being extremely fair to the point of generosity for their extra efforts.
- 4. Publicly recognize both effort and achievement.** Not every referral will result in a sale which can be discouraging for participants. Make sure you recognize and thank participants for their effort, regardless of the end result. Recognizing progress will keep participants engaged.
- 5. Sustain participation with intermittent promotions and contests.** Keep the program fresh and interesting by offering the opportunity to earn more rewards during key selling seasons, for new products, during slow times or for other situations in your business. Mix it up!
- 6. Actively communicate on an ongoing basis.** Provide information, updates and reminders about the program using a mix of media. This can include print pieces, text messages, environmental signage and displays, emails, social media private group sites and of course, a program website. Make your content relevant, providing information on how to make referrals more successful.
- 7. Analyze and share results.** You'll gain valuable data during your program. Study it to see where improvements can be made and where successes can be repeated. Share the data with participants so they can provide additional insight and see how they are contributing on a company-wide basis.

A sales lead referral program will not only boost your revenue but will likely improve your employee engagement and customer satisfaction scores as well. When building your next program, keep these seven key factors in mind and don't underestimate the power of the progress principle.

BI WORLDWIDE can help you design and implement a sales incentive program. Our programs translate your goals to actionable initiatives that change behavior and deliver measurable results. For more information on how BI WORLDWIDE can assist you, visit [BIWORLDWIDE.com](https://BIWORLDWIDE.com) or email us at [LATAM@BIWORLDWIDE.com](mailto:LATAM@BIWORLDWIDE.com)