

# 3 WAYS TO BUILD YOUR BUSINESS SUCCESS STORY

***Drive More Customers to  
Your Doorstep Now!***



***by Yolanda A. Facio***

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# Introduction

Sales and selling.

Marketing.

Advertising.

Have you ever wondered if there might be a better way?

There is. I know, because I've done it.

Of course, part of my coursework in college was to learn about marketing, selling, and advertising. The thing is, I never had to actually practice them in real business settings.

No marketing, selling, or advertising ever took place in the family construction business I've participated in for 20 years.

Then, when I started a local small business with my partner of 18 years, we didn't market, sell or advertise either, because we couldn't.

Here's what happens when you are forced to get "creative" at finding customers... you do.

When the bills start coming in, you figure out how to find customers to pay those bills super quick. It's a sink or swim kind of thing.

We did it and built a successful local business that we ran profitably for 11 years. I loved it! I mean, what's not to love about a marketing system that means you never have to go out and drum up work, or troll for clients, or advertise (expensive), or push, push, push, people to buy?

Sit back, grab some java and let me tell you our story and three super effective ways you can start building a your business success story.

Let's go!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Y. Facio', with a small dot at the end of the line.

Yolanda A. Facio

# The Business Building Journey

So here's my story...

It's January 2002.

Four months previously, the twin towers came down and the economy became unstable.

We had decided in the summer of 2001 to open our own business, not knowing that the world would change dramatically in such a short period of time.

We were committed to opening our business; we weren't ready to be stopped by the way the American economy was reacting to all the distress and change.

I was not familiar with starting and running an automotive repair/service business, but I had started and been helping to run a family-owned business. I figured a widget is a widget is a widget.

My partner had been working on Porsches for years, was a certified technician and was very good at it.

We figured... what could go wrong?

Meanwhile, just about everyone we told about our plans looked at us like we were crazy.

**“Really? You're gonna start a business *now*? What about September 11<sup>th</sup>, what about the economy, what about...”**

We held our ground.

In March 2002, Exotic Motorwerks, Inc. was born, a Porsche-only repair/service business. We were off to the races!

The problem was, we had no way to advertise our services to our target market. In Arizona you can't just buy a list from the Motor Vehicle Department with the names and addresses of all the Porsche owners.

None of the list services could help either.

Big problem.

So there we were, open for business and no customers.

I'll admit, I hadn't really practiced much advertising or marketing. My family's business was powered by my father's reputation and we never needed to go out and drum up work.

Now, the part I did understand was the bit about taking care of customers, and providing high quality, high integrity work and product.

The problem is that when you move into a new business without reputation, no amount of high quality, high integrity work and product is going to get you to the profit-line. How could it? No one knows where you are or that you exist!

So we sat and waited, day after day.

A few friends would stop by. They would try to help by sending folks to us, but there were no Porsches in the bunch... not a one.

It was a very stressful time.

In those first three months, we literally lost 10k a month paying out with nothing coming in. Yeah... 10k a month.

Then, one day it all turned around, **we hit the tipping point** and slowly we began to get customers and get profitable.

What I learned getting those first customers, and every single one since, is the foundation of the "By Referral Only" method.

We work with customers and clients we **want** to work with. We turn down work we don't want to do. We turn away folks who don't have a

referral. We turn away work that we don't like. Most importantly, we "fire" customers regularly when they aren't a perfect match.

And, here's a little secret – sometimes, even with a referral, I turn the work away.

Why?

Because my mantra is this:

*I want to have a good day every day.*

If I'm working on stuff I don't like, with people I don't like, or who give me frustration and headaches... I'm not having a good day. It's that simple.

It also means I have control over my day, so that I can spend time running trails, playing with my dogs, going for a long lunch, and am not chained to the phone waiting for potential customers to call.

You want to have good, stress-free days too. You want to feel good about leaving your desk, computer, and phone knowing that the customers will still arrive even if you aren't spending every last minute of the day promoting and selling. That's what a "By Referral Only" business can do for you.

But enough about me.

Let's talk about how you can begin to build a "By Referral Only" business and start having more power and control over who you work with and what you do!

# Building A “By Referral Only” Business

We can't possibly cover every step necessary to grow a “By Referral Only” business in one small ebook, but we can start by following a couple of simple but highly effective principles.

Following are three very powerful things you can do, to begin to build a reputation that fosters referral and repeat business.

## 1. Solve the Big Problems

You may have heard this bit of advice before... “solve problems”.

It's good advice, but not good enough to build a “By Referral Only” business.

Nope.

You're going to have to step it up.

You're going to need to solve “BIG” problems. The kind of problem that no one else wants to deal with, the kind of problem that others have tried and failed at, the kind of problem that scares you because you fear you might not be able to solve it either.

Solve **that** problem, and people will start talking about it... a lot.

Our Porsche business tipping point came just after the “dreaded car” arrived.

The customer called because he'd been to several other independent Porsche repair shops and no one could figure out what was going on with his car.

Everyone was scratching their heads.

When the “dreaded car” arrived we were nervous, but we dug right in... sort of.

Truth be told, we were terrified. We thought we knew what was wrong but it would take digging into the engine to confirm. What if we were wrong?

My partner was more nervous about it than I was, so I said, "Just open it up... what's the worst that could happen? We lose time." At that point we had lots of time so I figured things couldn't get any worse.

My partner looked at me and said, "Are you sure?"

Me: "Yes... do it. Let's get this over with."

We opened the engine up and guess what... we were right!

BIG problem solved. We were able to replace a component that was failing. Had it been left much longer he would have had some serious engine damage.

We took the risk and it paid off.

Word got out and before long all the other Porsches no one could fix started showing up at our doorstep.

Scary? Yes.

Risky? Yes.

Profitable? Absolutely.

The thing is, no matter what kind of business you have there are a handful of customers with BIG problems that no one else wants to solve.

The easy problems are easy to solve and when you look around at everyone else in your niche, you'll likely notice that they are solving those easy problems.

But who goes the extra mile? Who creates the take-out gourmet pizza, 'cause it's not Dominos? Why be plain?



How about this... who is solving the problem for very busy folks who still want their Yoga time, but don't have time to drive to a studio for a class or worse yet the classes don't align with their schedule? YogaGlo.com that's who. They've solved a BIG problem by bringing the yoga studio to the yoga student.

I mentioned YogaGlo.com to one person. Based on that person's experience, and mentioning it to others, I know at least 10 more people who have signed up for and taken classes. This was before I even visited the YogaGlo.com site.

That is how powerful solving BIG problems can be, and that's how you build a referral machine.

## **2. Ask**

There's no shame in asking for referrals, but this is an often overlooked aspect of building a "By Referral Only" business.

The thing is, the more confident you are and the clearer you are about asking for referrals, the more likely you are to get them.

This is one area where you cannot be vague.

I say very clearly on our web site that referrals are required, and when someone asks why, my answer is this:

"I have the best customers on the planet, and they know awesome people who will appreciate what we have to offer them, which means we get more awesome customers."

If you know whom you want to work with and why, then tell everyone you know.

But be clear. You can't just say, "Please send me customers." You need to be very clear about what kind of customer you want.

There have been times when a customer sends a referral that isn't a good fit. Sometimes it isn't their fault because our customers tend to be great people who like to help other people.

But if they refer someone who misses the mark we tell them.

I either call or email them, thanking them for the referral and letting them know it isn't a good fit and why. I make sure they know how grateful I am for the referral and make sure they understand why the person doesn't fit our customer profile.

99% of the time the referring customer will tell us they are sorry and that they didn't really know the person very well but wanted to help them. We get it because we want to help when we can too. But "good days first"!

Generally, the next time the customer refers he calls to tell us who he is referring and why and lets us know that he knows the person and can vouch for them.

That is the kind of referral system you want, but it only comes with knowing who your customer is clearly, and with letting people know who that ideal person is.

Asking your existing customers and friends/family for referrals is a critical part of building a "By Referral Only" business.

Asking doesn't mean begging for work; it means asking people to keep you in mind if they come across someone who can use the kind of services you provide.

Here are a few examples to get you started:

- Have special business cards printed that have a referral coupon on the back, then give your customers a regular business card and a referral business card. Have a spot where you can include a customer number or last name so that when the card comes back to you as a coupon you know who did the referring. Then, send the referring customer a Thank You note!
- Send out "Thank You" notes to new customers. The note should be handwritten and should thank them for choosing you. Then it should include a line like: "If you know of anyone else who could

benefit from our services, please be sure to send them our way, we love customer referrals!”

- Hand out the referral business cards to friends and family that you think can help you spread the word, so that if they meet someone who could be a good fit, they will have a way to send them to you easily with a benefit.
- Happy customers make great advocates. I get requests frequently from customers who want to know what more they can do to help spread the word. Things like writing reviews or testimonials. That’s the perfect opportunity to remind them that you are a “By Referral Only” business and, therefore, the only thing you ask of them is that if they know someone who could benefit from your services to please send them your way.

Make the process rewarding for the referring customer by sending them a Thank You note, or extending to them a free service or discount.

### **3. Align**

Align your actions with your message. This is by far one of the biggest factors in driving referral business your way.

What I mean by “align” is this: Everything you do in your business should be in complete and total alignment with your message and brand.

So let’s see some examples to make this a bit clearer.

We’ll use the Porsche business since we’ve been using it as a model.

Now, the tagline for Exotic Motorwerks has been Premium Porsche Service since we started the business. Our job is to align with that tagline since that’s our differentiating statement. We do that in a number of different ways.

First, we provide a premium service and that means we use only the highest quality parts and supplies in our work, even if those items cost more. It means that if we order a part from our local parts distribution

house that is manufactured by the original manufacturer of the genuine part and we don't like the way it looks or the way it's made, we send it back and order directly from Porsche. Yes, it costs more but a **premium** service means that price is not the primary customer concern, **quality** is.

Next, we further align by offering a 2-year parts and labor warranty. Only Porsche offers a 2-year warranty on parts. Other parts manufacturers do not. So that means if we use a part that fails in 18 months and the manufacturer only provides a 1-year warranty, then we buy the customer a new part out of our own pocket and we install it at no charge.

Even the Porsche dealership doesn't warranty the labor on failed parts.

We do.

Alignment.

Now, there are many ways to align but these two examples should get you thinking about how you can align to your message, mission, and differentiating factors.

If you want to build a "By Referral Only" business you need to align in a big way. Every part and function of your business needs to align.

If you sell zen-like services, then your receptionist can't be overtly hostile every time she answers the phone.

If you sell "piping hot pizza" then the pizza better get to the table piping hot.

If you sell "the toughest tires" then they better hold up in extreme conditions.

If you sell "the best way to make money" it better be the best.

Why? People talk and talk and talk.

The cold pizza won't go unnoticed, a stranded Jeep wearing your tires won't go unnoticed, and you don't want to start those conversations.

If you say you 'Are' then you must work to 'Be' it.

Alignment isn't easy. Alignment takes careful and constant assessment of all your processes and procedures.

When you align perfectly with your message and brand, people remember. They talk about it. Why? Because if you look around you'll see that it doesn't happen very often.

### **Building A "By Referral Only" Business**

Want to stop selling? Want to stop advertising?

Then start solving big problems, start asking for referrals and start aligning.

Referrals come because people talk about their experiences.

When we experience "above and beyond" we remember. We tell others because we are surprised and pleased. When was the last time you had an awesome experience that you kept to yourself?

### **The End of the Story**

So after one short year in business, our parking lot was filled with Porsches, customers were sporting Exotic Motorwerks t-shirts and hats, and the racetrack was filled with Porsches sporting Exotic Motorwerks logos on their fenders.

With that kind of referral system we never, in 11 years formally advertised in any way. We continued to build a business with new and repeat customers based solely on referrals.

No selling was required because once someone became a "member" of our business family they knew they could trust that they would be well cared for.

It's no-nonsense, pain-free selling, advertising and marketing at its best...  
by word of mouth!

The best part is this, I sold my share of that business, and within a few short months I had started another auto repair business focusing on higher-end vehicles by referral only. The system works!

## Your Next Step...

Your next step is to start implementing. Pick one of the three strategies and start building your "By Referral Only" marketing machine.

You can also follow me on Twitter @yolandafacio where I share relevant information about business, marketing, productivity and "workstyle" strategies. I do the same on Facebook at <http://facebook.com/balance.driven.business>.

If you want to step it up even more, you can check out the Red.Hot.Referrals course at <http://byreferralonlybusiness.com>.

Finally, if you've enjoyed this report and found it helpful, please feel free to share it. Remember, you become more successful by helping others become more successful.



Yolanda A. Facio

Want to send me an email?  
You can! yolanda at yolandafacio dot com

