

Adviser guide to equity release



Customer Referrals

- Identifying opportunities for referrals
- When and how to ask for referrals

This section gives consideration to a referral model that will:

- Assist you in identifying opportunities to ask for referrals.
- Encourage clients to provide leads.
- Increase the number of self-generated leads.

The model is called the 'Hold Technique' and there are 3 stages:

Stage 1

Positioning

Stage 2

Holding

Stage 3

Confirming

Positioning

- This stage involves positioning the concept of referrals with the client at an early point in the advice process. You will agree to discuss referrals at a later stage with the client.
- Positioning the subject of referrals allows you to manage the client's expectations throughout the advice process.
- This ensures that whenever you choose to ask for referrals, it will not come as surprise to the client.
- Positioning referrals at an early stage often projects an impression of credibility, by suggesting to the client that you are confident that you will provide a professional service worth referring.

! Tips for Stage 1

There are many ways in which referrals can be positioned during the sales process.

Below are some possibilities:

- Use a written or verbal agenda to outline the structure of the client meeting. The concept of referrals can be incorporated as one of the bullet points in the Agenda. This reinforces to the client that providing referrals is a normal part of the business process (in the same way that business is usually conducted over two interviews).
- When you formally introduce yourself, provide the client with at least 3 business cards, explaining that they can be distributed to their friends and family who may be interested. In addition, write the client's name on the back on the cards, so that in the event of a referral being made, you will know where it originated from.



Created and sponsored by



Holding

- This Holding stage is used throughout each interaction with the client (particularly when identifying client facts).
- During conversation the client may mention details regarding their personal circumstances that could potentially lead to a referral opportunity, for example having a large group of friends of a similar age. When this happens you can probe this area further.
- After obtaining this information you do not immediately ask for a referral there and then, as this could disrupt the flow of the conversation.
- Instead, you can make a note of the referral opportunity and 'hold' the information until the appropriate time to ask for referrals arises.
- It is good practice to write down the 'held' information in the margins of the document used for recording facts. This will help you to remember the conversation with the client at the time the referral opportunity arose. It also acts as a quick and easy indicator in order to tally the number of potential referrals.

Confirming

- Confirming represents the final stage of the Hold Technique. It involves referring back to the discussion regarding referrals during Stage 1.
- This stage is used towards the end of the advice process, at a time when you are preparing to, or have concluded business with the client.
- It consists of actually asking for the referral (or confirming the referral names where they have already been provided earlier in the advice process).
- Asking for referrals can be a daunting task. Before doing so you need to create the right environment in order to allow the client to provide referrals. This involves providing a high quality of service and being professional when asking for referrals.
- On asking for referrals, if the client cannot immediately think of anyone, you can use the 'held' information to prompt the client.



Created and sponsored by



Example using the Hold Technique

Confirming

The following passage is an example script to illustrate how the final stage of the 'Hold Technique' could be implemented.

- You remember when we first met? I outlined how I go about my business and we agreed that if you felt my service was beneficial to you, if I was professional in the way I dealt with you, and if you were happy with the complete service experience I have provided, you would be happy to recommend me to your friends.
- Tell me, how do you feel the meeting experience was for you?
- You confirm that they have achieved what was set out in the contracting stage.
- So tell me, is there anyone you might have in mind that you could refer me to?

Using 'Held' Information

The following text provides an example script to illustrate how 'Held' information can be recalled to prompt the client into offering referrals.

- I remember during our initial meeting you said you had a large group of friends you meet with regularly. Do you think any of them might be interested in considering equity release?

People buy people

It is important to remember that 'People Buy People'. Another successful method in asking for referrals is to reinforce the Adviser relationship and service with the client. An example of this is shown below;

- ✓ Thank you for taking the time to speak with me over the last few weeks. I feel that during this time we've established a good business relationship and so I'd like to take this opportunity to ask if you know of anyone who may benefit from our product/service and would relate to me in a similar way that you have done?

Alternatively, where a client cannot immediately think of names to refer, an Adviser can allow them to change mind sets by asking;

- ✓ If you had my job for a day, who might be the first 3 people that come to mind who might be interested in equity release?



Created and sponsored by



Stage 1

Positioning



Stage 2

Holding



Stage 3

Confirming

- ✓ Positioning the concept of referrals at an early point in the advice process.
- ✓ Managing the client's expectations so that the subject of referrals does not come as a surprise.
- ✓ Agreeing that the client will, where possible, provide referrals at a later stage in the process.
- ✓ Identifying opportunities for referrals within client conversations.
- ✓ Probing to identify further details.
- ✓ 'Holding' the facts until the time when you can ask for referrals.
- ✓ Referring back to Stage 1 and reminding the client of the earlier discussion and agreement.
- ✓ Asking for the referral.
- ✓ Using the facts 'held' from the previous stage to prompt the client for referral names.



Created and sponsored by

