

Public Relations (PR)

Another way to use the trade press is through PR. Got some news? Just started running a new service, or using new products? Just revamped your lab? Received an industry reward? Write a Press Release and send it out to all the trade press. Remember, they're desperate to fill space for the least amount of work possible, so give them as much of a story as you can. Add interesting tidbits and a different angle to your tale so that they don't have to think about it.

Referrals

Most people claim that their business has grown through word-of-mouth, but when you ask them what referral strategy they have in place they go a bit quiet.

How to implement a referral strategy

- 1. Create and promote your referral strategy.** Determine how much a new client is worth to you. How much are you willing to invest to get one? The more generous you can be with your reward, the more likely your clients will be to take the time to do it. Your clients are very busy people, and even if they really like your services, they've got lots to distract them. Make it worth their while and they're more likely to remember it and take action.

Once you've decided on your referral strategy, don't forget to advertise and promote it. Send the details out with every job and include them in all your promotional material.

2. **Ask clients for referrals.** This is kind of fundamental and people tend to be uncomfortable about doing it, but the truth is, if clients are happy with your service, they'll be happy to recommend you, as long as you make it as easy as possible. One way to do this is just by asking them for a name in person or over the phone. *“Do you have any colleagues who you think would benefit from x?”*
3. **Tell them exactly what to do.** If you're asking them to recommend you personally to their friends and colleagues, make how they should do this as clear and as easy as possible. For example, you can hand them promotional cards or offers with their details already written on them (so the referral can be recognised and rewarded), which they can then pass to their colleagues.
4. **Reward and thank clients for referrals.** Be generous with your rewards for referrals. Send them a handwritten thank you note, too. If you make it a great experience, they're more likely to do it again.

If you're looking for inspiration on how to set up a referral scheme, take a look at mine in Appendix B.

I offer my customers an Amazon voucher for a referral, which gets incrementally bigger the more people they refer. The value of the first voucher is £75, while for the 5th referral they get £250. I've tried to make the system as easy as possible. They can