

Vinyl Fence *Tip*

Practical and Proven Ways to Sell More Vinyl Fences

From your friends at National Vinyl Products

How to reward people who give you referrals



Did you know that your customers are your most valuable sales tool? It's true. Satisfied customers tell their friends and family about your fencing company and your quality products and services.

According to research by Small Business Trends, 85% of small businesses in the U.S. report that referrals are their primary source of new business. And, according to a study by the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, referred customers are more loyal, have fewer complaints and remain customers longer than other customers.

So how can you tap into this valuable customer base even more successfully? The answer is by encouraging customer referrals with rewards and incentives.

First, let's define what we mean by rewards and incentives. They are gifts and services you offer to your customers that motivate them to continue using your fencing products and services and to tell others about them. They can range from a simple thank you card to a monetary reward or discount.

All rewards programs are not the same, and if you find that yours is not working, it is time for some changes. Let's look at some ideas to jumpstart your rewards program.

Share the news

Have you had a reward program for years, but no one seems to take advantage of it? A program that no one knows about cannot trigger sales results, so your first step is to share the information.

Use email blasts and banner headlines on social media posts to announce your program. If you tie it into a holiday or a season, the promotion will seem more immediate and timelier. Use dates and deadlines to encourage participation.

Gift certificates

As a thank you for referring new customers, a gift certificate for your fencing company or for another popular local business, such as a coffee shop or restaurant, can get their attention. Be sure to enclose a personal note with the gift card.

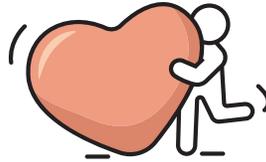
Flowers or fruit

Another way to thank your customers for their referrals is by sending them a small gift such as a bouquet of fresh flowers, a potted plant or a basket of fruit. These gifts are attractive and always appreciated. Remember to include a hand-written note that explains your appreciation for the referral.

Raffles and drawings

Another idea is to ask customers to fill out cards with both their name and a potential new customer's name and contact information and to drop the cards into a box in your showroom.

Each week, draw a new card and reward the existing customer with a small gift or discount. You can "one-up" this idea by placing weekly winners into a grand prize drawing for a more substantial prize (such as a grocery store certificate or tickets to a concert or sports event).



Use “likes” on Facebook and other social media

Create an opportunity for customers to be part of a contest for prizes by “liking” your fencing business on Facebook. You can make this idea even more fun by asking folks to post photos of themselves in front of their new fences. After a few months or so, you could select the best photo for a special prize.

Match the rewards for referrals

You have gotten to know your customers, so you can make your incentive program more personal by matching rewards to their interests. A certificate to a pet store for the couple who bought a fence to corral their dogs is one idea. A rosebush for the new business that has a flower bed beside its new fence is another one. Use your imagination to make your program your own.

Showcase your top customers

Let your best customers shine on your website and your social media pages. Ask permission to feature their comments and then put them in the spotlight with photos. They will feel special, and others who read about them will feel good about your company too.

Don't forget those closest to you

Don't leave out your employees, friends, relatives, and neighbors when asking for referrals and offering incentives. You may want to offer something different such as a bonus for referrals to these folks, however. Perhaps a bonus vacation day or a Friday lunch to the people on your team? Or a coffeeshop gift card for family members?

Keep up the energy

A one-time announcement is not enough to keep an incentive program going full steam. Here are a few ways to make sure people know about your incentive program on an ongoing basis:

- Send a monthly email reminder with fresh copy and a photo or two.
- Ask your sales team to mention it during the purchase process.
- Place reminders on print and emailed receipts.
- Place prominent links on your website.
- Try radio and TV ads to share the news.

Ask

Texas Tech University did a marketing research study that found that 83% of happy customers are willing to refer other people to a company, but only 29% actually take the step. What's the disconnect? The ones who don't tell their friends were probably never invited to do it.

Finally, here are some examples of referral incentives we found online from some successful small businesses.

“Introduce us to new friends, and we will give them a gift of \$15 off their first purchase or order.”

“New Client Referral: Refer a friend and receive a gift certificate for \$10 off your next service.”

“A friend of a friend is someone we would like to know. If a friend of yours has computer problems earn valuable service credits simply by referring your friends, family members or business associates to us.”

“Refer a friend and receive a free 30-minute consultation on the topic of your choice.”

“Refer a friend and receive a full month of service for FREE.”

“Know someone who needs our service? Refer them to us, and when they sign up for a one-year agreement, you will receive a \$50 Credit on your next regular service.”

“Refer us to your colleagues and friends for a chance to earn a \$100 referral credit or a \$100 gift card.”

“Thank you for putting your trust in us! Tell your friends about your awesome experience. You and your friend will both get \$20 in referral credits.”

“Know a business with computer problems? \$100 can be yours for each referral that becomes my client.”

Don't leave your best sales tool unutilized. Try one or more of these ideas to get people in your community talking about — and purchasing — your fencing and your service today.



If you have questions about this newsletter or marketing in general, e-mail NVP's marketing expert: marketing@nvpfence.com.

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