

Sun Life | Consulting

# Igniting introductions exercise book

Your guide to having effective referral conversations



Referrals and introductions are the most preferable marketing strategy to growing a business, however many advisors lack a plan to proactively and confidently ask for them. Use this exercise book to ignite introductions and meet quality prospects by developing a clearly defined strategy to approach the conversation.

## **Part I – Accelerate client advocacy**

- Identify your advocates and deepen those relationships to build a foundation for growth.

## **Part II – Elevate your introductions**

- Apply the **RISE** method to confidently initiate introductions through your advocates.

We help. You grow.

## Part I – Accelerate client advocacy

Most clients are willing to refer, but the main reason they don't is simply because their advisor hasn't asked.<sup>1</sup> To unlock your business growth potential, it's important to engage with clients who are willing to advocate for you and ask them for introductions to people you want to meet. By identifying your advocates and strengthening those relationships, you'll be better positioned to confidently request introductions in the future.

Use this exercise to build a successful referral culture by:

1. Identifying potential advocates
2. Confirming their advocacy
3. Deepening those relationships

### 1. Identify potential advocates

Referral advocates are clients who promote or who are willing to promote your business to others based on their satisfaction with your services. These individuals are key to building a strong referral culture. To identify potential advocates, look for clients who:

- feel a strong personal connection to you,
- have seen your professional competence in helping them reach their goals,
- have worked with you for an extended period and frequently engage with your services,
- are connected to a network of peers you'd like to be introduced to,
- are comfortable discussing financial matters openly.

Reflect on your client base and list clients who could be potential advocates.

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### 2. Confirm their advocacy

Now that you know your potential advocates, confirm their willingness to advocate for you. Not every client will feel comfortable doing this, and that's okay! By proactively seeking their confirmation, you'll gain clarity and confidence, knowing which clients are open to advocating for you when the time is right.

#### A) Prepare your conversation script

Asking clients for introductions can feel awkward. Prepare for this by drafting a short, conversational script that's natural to say or send via email. Make sure it's easy to personalize depending on each client's situation.

**Key tip!** Keep the focus on the unique value you provide, not on your business growth goals. Clients are more likely to respond positively when they understand how others could benefit from your services.

Example:

*"Before we end our meeting, I want to thank you for being such a great client. I really value the relationship we've built over the years, so I'd love to get your feedback on something. My desire is to help people like you structure their businesses and support the family members of our clients. How comfortable would you be to share our value to people you know through a potential introduction?"*

<sup>1</sup>Dan Allison on the Psychology of Referrals, Becoming Referrable, 2022

Write your script.

**B) Create your action plan**

Now that you've prepared your script, it's time to put it into action. Develop a plan to ask your identified clients if they're comfortable advocating for you using the script you created. Decide when and how you'll initiate the conversation and track their responses to stay organized and intentional. Getting clear confirmation helps you stay focused on deepening relationships and continuing to deliver value.

Potential advocate	Key insights	Timing	Method	Response
i.e., Jane Doe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Client for 5 years</li> <li>Knows local business owners</li> </ul>	After the Q1 appreciation event	Phone call	Y
i.e., John Buck	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>President of ABC Medical Company</li> <li>Attends bi-annual conference for doctors</li> </ul>	At the charity golf event in August	In-person	Y
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

### 3. Deepen your relationships

Once you've identified your advocates and confirmed their willingness to support you, ensure you continue to nurture those relationships. Advocates are invaluable for your business growth because the referrals they bring will come with built-in trust and credibility. By consistently listening to their feedback, delivering value through your services and finding thoughtful ways to show appreciation, you reinforce their confidence in you and make future introductions feel natural and rewarding.

Reflect on the following ideas and continue to discuss with your team how to deepen relationships with advocates.

#### A) Ask your advocates questions for feedback

- Through our interactions and relationship, what have you found most valuable?
- How would you explain what our team does to people you know?
- How would you suggest making our review meetings more meaningful or productive?

#### B) Enhance your service

- How can you cross-educate on the services you provide?
- Are there opportunities to increase the number or quality of touchpoints and speed of service?
- What processes need to be developed or refined to improve your services?

#### C) Create WOW moments

- How can you surprise or delight advocates outside of your financial discussions?
- When is the best time to implement your WOW moment?
- How can you ensure your efforts are consistent and in line with your budget?

Examples:

- Give a baby gift basket for parents or grandparents to celebrate birth of new baby
- Mail a spa gift card one month before a big holiday (honeymoon or bucket list destination)
- Donate to a charity of choice to celebrate milestone years of working together (5, 10, 15+)

Record ways to deepen your relationships.

Congratulations!

Having a proactive strategy to identify, confirm, and engage with your advocates sets you up for success when the time comes to ask for introductions.

## Part II – Elevate your introductions

Positioning the ask for an introduction can feel awkward and unnatural. However, with the right strategy and with enough preparation, you can ask your advocates to introduce you seamlessly within your client conversations. The **RISE** method is an effective 4-step process designed to have you successfully initiating introductions with your advocates.

Use this exercise to refine how you ask for introductions so you can elevate your growth potential.



### Step 1: Reflect

*Reflect on who you want an introduction to.*

#### A) Review potential prospects

Identify individuals who match your ideal client profile and whom your advocates already know. These can be people you've met or are considering reaching out to. Note how your advocates are connected to them and why their situation makes them a strong lead.

#### B) Determine your value

Reflect on the prospect's needs or challenges and identify how you can help. Consider the specific value you offer and what a successful outcome could look like for them. This will help you confidently frame your ask.

Example:

Name of prospect	Connection to client	Key insights
i.e., Jane Doe	Sister-in-law to Jim and Jill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moved to Toronto from Vancouver</li> <li>Vice President of a large tech company</li> </ul>
<b>Prospect's need:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential financial guidance after divorce</li> </ul>	
<b>How you can help:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a financial plan, review asset allocation</li> </ul>	
<b>The successful outcome:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased confidence that she's protected and saving efficiently</li> </ul>	

1. Name of prospect	Connection to client	Key insights
<b>Prospect's need:</b>		
<b>How you can help:</b>		
<b>The successful outcome:</b>		

2. Name of prospect	Connection to client	Key insights
Prospect's need:		
How you can help:		
The successful outcome:		

3. Name of prospect	Connection to client	Key insights
Prospect's need:		
How you can help:		
The successful outcome:		

4. Name of prospect	Connection to client	Key insights
Prospect's need:		
How you can help:		
The successful outcome:		

5. Name of prospect	Connection to client	Key insights
Prospect's need:		
How you can help:		
The successful outcome:		

### C) Practice conversation curiosity

To find new prospects you'd like an introduction to, practice conversation curiosity with clients outside of your financial discussions. Ask open-ended, personal questions that build familiarity and trust, and help you learn who they know.

Review the list of questions and check the ones you feel comfortable asking. Use these selected questions to naturally guide your client conversations to discover potential prospects.

Remember:

- Start with broad questions and gradually move to more specific ones.
- Record any new prospects identified through these conversations into your CRM.

<input type="checkbox"/> How have you been recently?	<input type="checkbox"/> How are your kids/parents doing?	<input type="checkbox"/> What's new since the last time we spoke?
<input type="checkbox"/> What did you get up to this past weekend?	<input type="checkbox"/> How's everything going in your business?	<input type="checkbox"/> What's happening in your industry that's new and exciting?
<input type="checkbox"/> Do you have any upcoming vacation planned?	<input type="checkbox"/> In the past, which friends have joined you on [trip/excursion/hobby]?	<input type="checkbox"/> Remind me of your family situation, how close are you?
<input type="checkbox"/> What involvement, if any, do you have in any charitable causes or committees?	<input type="checkbox"/> What are your plans now that you're [specific activity or change]?	<input type="checkbox"/> Who else shares your passion for [specific interest client mentioned]?
<input type="checkbox"/> Who do you primarily go to for support with [home/business] needs?	<input type="checkbox"/> Who else in your circle is going through a similar life change?	<input type="checkbox"/> Who else in your life has recently experienced this major life event?
<input type="checkbox"/> Who's the most influential person in your life/career?	<input type="checkbox"/> Who's the main person you turn to for advice with [topic]?	<input type="checkbox"/> Who is your primary and alternate executor?

Record other broad or specific questions for clients.

## Step 2: Initiate

*Initiate the ask for an introduction.*

For many advisors, requesting introductions without sounding awkward and demanding is a common challenge. To overcome this, choose a prospect listed in Step 1: Reflect and draft a concise script to guide your ask through your client connection. This exercise provides an opportunity to refine your approach, ensuring you sound confident and natural when the time comes to make the actual request. By preparing in advance, you'll be well-equipped to initiate these valuable conversations in the future.

Include these three key points:

- Acknowledge the value you've provided to the client.
- Share that you're open to helping others they know in similar situations.
- Specify who you'd like to be introduced to and why.

**Key tip!** Time your ask after a significant, positive event or WOW moment where you've delighted the client.

Example:

[Significant event] *"I'm so glad to hear that the transition of your parents' estate went smoothly. I hope you found our advice beneficial when it came to preparing for this event.*

[Introduction ask] *Speaking of this, we're always looking for ways to extend our value and support for you and for people you know and care about. You mentioned earlier that your sister-in-law, Jane, recently moved here after her divorce. We have a lot of experience when it comes to financial planning and assets after separation, and I'd be happy to talk to her to see if she needs any advice. If you think she'd be interested, would you be willing to provide an introduction between us?"*

Write down your script and timing of your ask.

### Step 3: Suggest

*Suggest ways to meet the prospect.*

Since you're focused on asking your advocates for introductions, chances are they will likely say yes to introducing you to the person you want to know. Be ready with suggestions for how and where to meet the prospect that feel comfortable, low-pressure and inviting. Emphasize the importance of a direct meeting, rather than just having your name passed along.

Examples:

- Seminar
- Client appreciation event
- Round of golf
- Sporting event
- Couples' lunch/dinner
- Office visit
- Community gathering
- COI event

**Key tip!** Ask about interests and preferences to think of the best setting to connect.

Example:

*"I really appreciate you making this introduction. Since Jane is new to the area, why don't we all plan for a lunch downtown this month? I have some great recommendations I can suggest. Does she have any food sensitivities or preferences I should keep in mind?"*

*"Thanks for confirming. I'll follow up with you this week on Jane's interest and availability to meet before I make a reservation. In the meantime, here's my business card to pass along if she has any questions."*

Write down ideas for introduction settings.

If an in-person introduction isn't possible, prepare a personalized email template your client can use to introduce you. Make it easy for them to forward or customize, while keeping the tone warm, clear and aligned with your value.

Example:

*Dear Jane and Sam,*

*I'm thrilled to connect you both, as I believe you'll find your conversation mutually rewarding and insightful.*

*Sam, meet my sister-in-law, Jane. She's the Vice President of XYZ Technology Solutions and recently moved to the area.*

*Jane, allow me to introduce Sam, a partner at ABC Wealth Management. We've had the pleasure of working with Sam and his team for a decade, greatly benefiting from their unique approach to financial planning.*

*I'll leave it to you both to take it from here, but please don't hesitate to reach out if I can be of any assistance. I trust both of you will benefit from your conversation.*

## Step 4: Execute

*Execute on the opportunity.*

Follow through by connecting with the prospect and thanking your client for the introduction. Referring an advisor is a meaningful gesture — show your reliability and appreciation by acting promptly and expressing genuine thanks.

### A) Connect with the prospect

Reach out to the prospect within two business days to plan a meeting. Prepare by identifying key questions you want to ask in your first meeting. Create a comfortable, open dialogue that encourages the prospect to share their financial situation and goals freely. Focus on listening and understanding the prospect's needs rather than pitching services.

Examples:

- "I'd love to hear a bit about you and your business needs/family. Could you tell me about your current situation and what's important to you?"
- "How would you describe your experience with financial matters so far? Have you worked with a financial advisor before?"
- "When you think about your financial future, what does success look like to you? What are your short-term and long-term aspirations?"

Write down questions or topics of conversation to discuss in your first meeting.

### B) Show appreciation to the client

Whether the introduction leads to a new connection or not, acknowledge the client's effort. A personal note, small gift, or sincere thank-you call goes a long way in reinforcing goodwill and encouraging future referrals.

Brainstorm modest gestures that feel genuine and stay within compliance guidelines.

Write down ideas to show appreciation.

## Track your success

Use your CRM to record introductions and referrals.

- Introduction opportunities
- Who made the referral or introduction, the referral name, and date
- Method of referral (email, event, meeting, etc.)
- What prompted the referral (timing, WOW moment, need, etc.)
- Outcome of introduction and any follow up actions
- Conversion rate
- Referral revenue generated

## Take action

Now that you've completed the worksheet, identify three strategies to improve your success in asking for introductions from your advocates. Build an action plan for each one, assign responsibility to a team member where it makes sense (i.e., CRM tracking, email templates, client appreciation process), and establish clear timelines for completion.

Action	Responsibility	Timing
1.		
2.		
3.		

Congratulations!

You've taken meaningful steps towards strategically asking for introductions with confidence. Through this exercise, you were able to:

1. Reflect on who your advocates are and who you want an introduction to
2. Draft your script to initiate the ask
3. Suggest ways to meet the prospect
4. Prepare to execute on the opportunity

Keep building momentum by using the **RISE** method regularly with your advocates.

