
The following script includes some rationale that will help the person you are asking for referrals to understand why you need his help. The script is designed to take away unspoken objections. It would be helpful to memorize this script.

Script for Field Staff

“Thank you so much, Bob and Judy, for becoming a financial partner. I appreciate your interest in my ministry with XYZ Missions Organization. There is another vital way that you can help. (After you have raised 40 – 50% of your support, include the next line. If you haven’t reached this amount, skip this line and continue on with the next one.) So far the Lord has raised up “X” percent of my monthly support from friends and acquaintances. The challenge that I am facing now is that I don’t know enough people to complete my team of financial partners. As I’ve met with other Christians, not all of them have been able to contribute financially, but they have been encouraged by what God is doing in reaching (your target audience) and even suggested that I talk to some of their friends about my ministry. Who are some of the people in your circle of friends that share our concern for reaching (target audience)?

Script for Office Staff

“Thank you so much, Bob and Judy, for becoming a financial partner. I appreciate your interest in my ministry with XYZ Missions Organization. There is another vital way that you can help. (After you have raised 40 – 50% of your support, include the next line. If you haven’t reached this amount, skip this line and continue on with the next one.) So far the Lord has raised up “X” percent of my monthly support from friends and acquaintances. The challenge that I am facing now is that I don’t know enough people to complete my team of financial partners. As I’ve met with other Christians, not all of them have been able to contribute financially, but they have been encouraged by what God is doing in reaching (your target audience) and even suggested that I talk to some of their friends about my ministry. Who are some of the people in your circle of friends that share our concern for reaching (target audience)?

Begin With a Positive Statement

Make a clear declaration of what you want the person(s) you're speaking with to do for you, avoiding wimpy questions like: "You wouldn't happen to know anybody who'd be interested in our ministry, would you?" Since such a question can be answered "yes" or "no," when using this kind of opening, don't be surprised if you get a response like: "Boy, right off the top of my head, I just can't think of anybody, Vern." Instead, begin by clearly stating what you want. Note how, in each of the scripts following this list of principles, a statement, forcefully sets the tone: "While I'm in town this week, I plan to meet with as many folks as I can ..."

Have an Expectant Attitude

Look like you mean business by having a pen and pad out. Then as you speak write across the top of your pad: "Sally's (their name) Friends." And as you speak, number down the left-hand side of the sheet from one to ten to show that you are expecting them to respond by giving you a list of names – and that you'd like at least ten.

Don't Use "Interested"

To help prevent individuals from making their friends' decisions for them, do not use the phrase "who are interested in my ministry." Such a question asks them to make a value judgment. Furthermore, it calls for a judgment they really can't make, since few people really know the innermost feelings and motivations of their friends. Thus, such a question is not only ineffective, but also unfair. Begin by pointing out the fact that most people are already interested in your outreach to young people because they are excited to hear how responsive students (or those in your target audience) are to the gospel.

Use Action-Oriented Words

Operationalize the buzz words you have grown accustomed to with descriptive words that tell what the end results of your work are. For instance, instead of using the vague nouns "work" or "ministry," use the more action-oriented word "outreach."

Don't Ask People to Qualify Another's Ability to Give

Realize that no matter what you say, when you broach the topic of referrals you raise in the mind of the hearer this qualifying question: "Do I know anyone who has enough money to help Sam and Sally Staffer out?" So deal with this fact by communicating that you plan to talk with individuals regardless of their ability to give. In fact, it will turn out that many of those they would have prematurely disqualified could give and will give if you can help the referrer avoid making up their friends' minds for them.

Emphasize Those Who Care Because They Will Share

Then, whether suggesting categories or getting an individual to look through a directory or qualify a pre-compiled list, preface what you say with a description of the kind of person you want to meet. While this may be asking them to make a value judgment, it is a far less difficult task than that posed by the former question that forced them to make a financial judgment for their friends. For instance, emphasize that you want to meet individuals "who share our mutual concern for those who don't know Christ." Few people would screen out their friends if the criterion you're asking them to apply is concern for youth (or other target audience). But be prepared to use synonymous qualifying phrases so you don't sound like a broken record.

Here are some examples:

“Who are some people in your church who would be burdened about the needs of young people today?”

“Who are some people you work with who would be concerned about the spiritual needs of college and high school kids?”

“What are the names of some of your friends who you think might care, like you and I do, about reaching youth (or other audience) for Jesus?”

Use Words That Put People at Ease

Note that the above listed qualifiers don’t ask for contacts, referrals, or leads. People associate such jargon with high-pressure salespeople. Instead of asking for hot leads, the above questions used words that would set the person at ease, words like “your friends.” The question “Could you introduce me to some of your friends?” is far less intimidating than, “Would you refer me to some people that could give some bucks to my ministry?” Furthermore, the above sample phrases focus on the concerns of those in their circle of friendship. Instead of asking for help for your ministry, such qualifying phrases focus on the convictions their friends might share with you and the referrer. The implication is “I can help your friends take concrete action on their convictions.”

Offer Solutions to Problems About Giving Referrals

Often you will hear individuals say, “Right off the top of my head, I just can’t think of anyone.” You never have to listen to anyone say that again. Just say it for them, and then in the same breath solve the problem. Offer the solution that has worked for others – suggest categories or leaf through a directory or a pre-compiled list with them.

Use Warm Words

Ask the person you are talking with to help you by introducing you to their friends who care about young people (or those in their target audience). Few will draw a blank when asked for names of those they feel share your mutual concern for reaching young people (other audiences) for Christ.

If you work in the high school or campus ministry, be sure to use words and phrases like “youth” and “young people.” Such words and phrases are warmer than the word “students” because those you will be speaking with think of their children more as “young people” than “students.” If you work with young people, realize the legitimate emotional appeal your outreach has. People care very deeply about their children, and about youth in general. So let people know that you’re touching young lives for Christ.

Whatever your target audience, your goal should be to use words that cause them to identify with your work. For instance, they will identify far more with the human warmth inherent in the idea of “reaching executives who may look successful on the outside, but who suffer the same heartache of broken relationships and faded dreams that the down-and-outer does.” Phrases that picture the humanness (as opposed to the conceptual strategy) of your ministry will motivate people more than coldly conceptual buzz words like “winning, building and sending people for Christ.”

Ask “Who” and “What” Questions

Ask your questions with words that imply you are expecting the answer to come back to you in the form of names. Memorize and use these two key phrases:

- “What are the names of ... ?”
- “Who are some ... ?”

These little phrases can be used as a preface to questions like, “What are the names of some of your friends who would share our mutual concern about the pressures that young people today struggle with—pressures to conform to their friends’ lifestyles?”

If your target audience is the adult community, you might ask, “Who in your circle of friends would share our concern about helping young couples who are struggling to keep their marriages together?” Note how these questions cannot be answered “yes” or “no.” The wording of these questions describe the kind of people you’re interested in as being individuals who “would share our mutual concern about reaching young people (other audience) for Christ” as opposed to someone “who has lots of spare money.”

Get Names First, Phone Numbers Next

If a person responds positively to your request for referrals, get their friends’ names first, and get phone numbers later. The last thing you want to do is break the momentum of your “namestorming” time as the person you’re talking with rummages through drawers looking for a church directory. Later you will want them to do just that, and even have them scan through their directories with you—not only for phone numbers, but to also get more names. But right now focus on namestorming. Attempt to keep the one with whom you are speaking ... thinking.

Work Through One Category at a Time

If you are suggesting categories for a person to mull over, do not suggest more than one at a time. Working through one category at a time allows the person time to think.

Involve People in the Process

After compiling a list of names through the process of suggesting categories, by scanning a directory or qualifying a pre-compiled list, prioritize these names, “If you were in my shoes, raising financial support so you could serve full-time with XYZ Missions Organization, who, on this list, would you talk to first?” Note that this question should come last so that you do not inhibit their namestorming by prematurely highlighting the issue of raising financial support. Finally, involve the one referring in the process of contacting their friends. The worst case is when they say, “Don’t use my name.” Here, in ascending order of preference, are the ways you might ask the referrer to be involved:

- Allowing you to use their name
- Signing a note of introduction you draft on their behalf for you to send
- Writing their own note of introduction for you
- Calling their friends to set up an appointment for you
- The best level of involvement is setting up an appointment and accompanying you on it.
- In most cases try to at least get permission to use the name of individuals referring you to people. But as the opportunity presents itself, attempt to increase their involvement.

Proper Use of Directories

One of the most effective ways to build up a list of prospective ministry partners is to go through church, club, or community directories with people. Leafing through a list of names with a person jogs their memory and is one of the best ways to quickly build a list of dozens of names.

Use Pre-Compiled Lists to Get Referrals

Another effective strategy for getting referrals is to compile lists of names within affinity groups (doctors, lawyers, morticians, etc. – just about any group you can think of) and then to ask individuals to qualify them. This tactic basically skips step one of the three steps for getting referrals mentioned above (getting names, qualifying them, and involving the referrer in contacting the people he or she refers to you). Therefore, you can be more direct than when trying to get an individual to think of individuals, in which case you would not want to inhibit their thinking by highlighting the issue of support.

Other sources would be the yellow pages. One Christian worker had a ministry partner in Long Beach, California, who was a chiropractor. By perusing the yellow pages, she was surprised that there were only 100 other chiropractors in the Long Beach area. So she typed a list of those individuals so she could have her ministry partner look through the list with her. A list of 100 names is actually very manageable.

Another way to compile lists is to visit your local Chamber of Commerce or library. Each has published directories of businesses and professional associations. You might even copy down the names on the directory posted in the lobby of the medical group where your doctor's office is located and have your family physician qualify the list of those with whom he works.

Or mentally cruise down "Main Street" in your hometown (if small enough) and jot down the names of the businesses you see in your mind's eye. Then if you have one businessman on your team of ministry partners, he can qualify the list of the other businessmen and women in town (even if your list is only made up of the names of the businesses and you don't know who owns them).

Prepare, Practice, Present

In addition to being careful in your choice of words, you will need to do two things before you can effectively ask for referrals. You will need to prepare and practice, before you can effectively present.

Prepare by writing in order to be heard, not to be read. As you prepare, that means you will need to use contractions like "I'm" instead of "I am."

Then when you practice what you have written, tape record yourself to see if you sound confident and conversational. A well written script is less than half the battle. To use the scripts well you need to learn how to be graciously in control of conversation.

Finally, if you prepare a script written to be heard; and practice diligently so that you sound natural, gracious, yet firmly in control; then you can present your request for referrals effectively.

You'll not need to be focusing on what you'll say next, and will be better able to deliver your lines naturally.

Just as with the evangelistic transitions and phrases you have finely crafted so you can witness more effectively, a few carefully developed words and phrases if used skillfully at the end of a support raising appointment can help you expand your list of support contacts. But, don't depend upon the gift of "winging it." You must prepare and practice before you present.

One Last Word Of Perspective:

Ask For Referrals On An Appointment, Even If You Don't Get A Decision

Not everyone will be able to make a decision on an appointment. But it is best to ask for referrals while you are meeting with the person.

JEFFREY B. LEIGH AND ASSOCIATES
25321 S. Granada Boulevard
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April 29, 200X

Dear Mike and Sue,

For a number of years my wife Riane and I have had the privilege of knowing Steve and Joanne James. They are a committed Christian couple who has recently taken a large step of faith to go into full-time ministry with XYZ Missions Organization.

As you may know, XYZ Missions Organization is an interdenominational Christian outreach to young people and families. Steve and Joanne will be moving to Knoxville, Tennessee, where they will join a team that is building a ministry among young business men and women.

My relationship with Steve and Joanne goes back about 10 years when we began attending the same church. Throughout the years they have had a heart to serve the Lord. It seemed that at least once a month Steve shared about someone with whom he had an opportunity to share the Lord.

Several months ago they told us that God was leading them in a new direction—to go into full-time Christian service. We believe that God will greatly use them to touch the lives of many individuals with His love and forgiveness. Like many other missionary organizations, XYZ Missions Organization staff members have the responsibility to develop a team of financial partners who provide the necessary finances for their outreach, including their salary and business-related expenses. Presently Steve and Joanne are developing their support.

We believe you will enjoy hearing the positive impact of their ministry. I'd love for you to join Riane and me in supporting this committed couple who are doing the Lord's work. I have asked Steve to give you a call to share more specifically about themselves and their outreach with XYZ Missions Organization. He will be calling you in a week or so.

Please feel free to give me a call at 123-4567 if you would like to talk with me more about our experience with Mike and XYZ Missions Organization. Thank you for considering this opportunity to hear about their work.

Warm regards,

Jeff and Riane

Jeff and Riane
(Hand write signature)