

How to Create a Network of Endless Referrals

**An Interview With Bob Burg,
by Art Sobczak**

**TelesalesSuccess.com Inner Circle
Platinum Managers Members**

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"How to Create a Network of Endless Referrals" An Interview with Bob Burg, by Art Sobczak.

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Art: Hi and welcome to the Telesales Success Elite Inner Circle of Sales Professionals Platinum Audio Seminar. I'm Art Sobczak. Today we have a topic that can and should be a gold mine of sales and profits for anyone who prospects and sells by phone. But, I've found it's a vastly untapped gold mine.

That will change today because we have with us Bob Burg who is the leading expert on getting referrals. Today Bob is going to share with us how to cultivate a network of endless referrals. Bob has spoken for corporations and associations internationally including Fortune 500 companies, franchises and numerous direct sales organizations.

He has shared the platform with the legends, now listen to these names, such as Zig Ziglar, Brian Tracy, Dennis Waitley, CNN's Larry King, radio legend Paul Harvey, Tom Hopkins, Mary Lou Rettin, the late former U.S. President Gerald Ford and many others.

His book, Endless Referrals: Network Your Everyday Contacts into Sales has sold well over 175,000 copies and is in its third edition. I can't encourage you enough to go out and grab that book right away.

We're going to give you Bob's complete contact information later, but let me give it to you right up front here. I do suggest that you go to his website, which is www.burg.com, that's B-U-R-G. You can get a special report right there called "Referrals Fun and Simple," as well as a number of other goodies on getting referrals.

Bob welcome.

Bob: Thank you Art. It's a pleasure to be here.

Art: Absolutely. I'm so glad that you're here to share with our listeners something that I feel is a vastly under utilized tool, and that is getting referrals.

Bob: Yeah it really is, in a sense, sort of the life blood because there's so many advantages to getting referrals. There's many advantages, but just even taking it on a very elementary basis referred prospects are easier to set the appointment with because you're going in on borrowed influence. It's easier to close the sale or complete a transaction because of borrowed trust. Price becomes less of an issue.

So instead of your being a commodity, you can focus on value and what I think Art is one of the really main benefits, perhaps this trumps all these little ones, and that is referred prospects are already trained if you will. They're already of the mindset that that's how you do business, because that's how they met you.

So their paradigm, their model is simply, okay he or she gets referrals, gets referred, they come in, they close the sale and then the next step of the process is well I'm supposed to refer them to others. It's because that's how they met you. So when you've got that happening, you're going in nine steps ahead of the game in a 10-step game.

Art: So the process snowballs and what always struck me as fascinating with your book, and I've had your books for years, and it's in it's third printing now, is that you've really developed a system here. A lot of people think that going out and getting referrals is just simply saying, "Hey do you have any friends I can call?"

Let's start with this, what is the purpose of the Endless Referral System as you call it?

Bob: Sure. Well first, and by the way you've been in the last two editions of my book, and in this last one we actually were able to feature you a lot more, which really makes sense. And so in systems, you are the person when it comes to telecommunications, and I love your information and everybody knows I'm a big fan of yours. I talk about you from the stage, and I have several three ring binders of Art Sobczak information. So I really appreciate your adding to the book.

One of the biggest challenges Art for anyone in sales, and really why we put the book together, is simply running out of new highly qualified prospects with whom they can share their terrific products or services.

Now many people go through times when so many people are telling them no. They begin to feel as though they might eventually run out of prospects. The implication is once that happens I'm effectively out of business. So eventually they ask themselves, "Who do I talk to next now that my original list of names has run out?" Now when it gets to that point, desperation sits in and now when speaking to any new prospect you've totally lost your posture if you will, and I define posture as when you care, but not that much.

In other words, while you prefer the person to be interested, you're not emotionally attached to the results. In fact we could really legitimately define posture as the lack of emotional attachment to a desired result.

And so as you know, people tend to not want to do business with people who need them too much. On the other hand, when you have posture, polite, humble posture, never arrogant posture, when you do have this posture, people are much more attracted to you.

Now the key, or I should say the way to have true posture, is to have a huge list of high quality and qualified prospects and referrals, and with many of them

eagerly spreading the word about you and your product or service. That's really the entire purpose of the Endless Referral System.

Art: That's interesting because you have, of course, the negative sale in a sense coming into play, and of course there you are also touching on rejection. I think so many people don't like to ask for referrals or even ask for the sale because they're afraid of the no, and with your system you're taking that out of it so it becomes easier for them to do this.

Bob: Exactly, you hit it right on the head. One of the big reasons Art why people will not ask for referrals is it's fear of rejection. Now there are other fears as well, but one of them is fear of rejection. And we all hear Art, because you and I read the same books and listen to the same people and probably many of your listeners do too, and we always hear, "Well they're not rejecting you. They're rejecting the idea."

That's true, but it doesn't matter. It still feels lousy. As human beings most of us we like to be liked. We don't like to be rejected. We want to be accepted so it can be hard to get through that and that's one reason why I want people to have so many 'A' list, highly qualified prospects that they never have to...when somebody says, "No," they can very easily say, "Next."

And of course again you do it nicely. You don't say, "Next." Some other guy. But you have that in your mind, and when that happens you actually become a lot more attractive to that person because they can tell well you just don't need it that much. What is it that this person has their hands on that's so good that they don't seem to care that I'm not interested? And that's a great way to run your business. It makes it a lot more fun, a lot less stressful and certainly a lot more profitable.

Art: It is. It's a fascinating concept, and I'm going to dive into your book here and pull out a couple things that I would like you to expand on. You say that your system is built around the concept of networking, but isn't networking a word which can be interpreted in many different ways and not all of them good?

Bob: I think that is such a great point because there's no question about it that people have a preconceived notion about what networking is. It's an antiquated notion. It's that stereotypical, slick, fast totting sales person who sticks their business card into the hand of every person they meet, blabbing on and on about themselves. Just like you talk about when you call out a value statement and talk about how great your product or service is...and really, they say clever things, "Hey let's do lunch. Have your people call my people." That's what people think of as networking.

Well obviously that's not networking. Well actually I'm not sure what it is but it's not networking. My definition of networking is simply this, it's the cultivating of

mutually beneficial give and take win/win relationships, and the emphasis is on the give part.

Now when done with genuine caring about the other person, their wants, their needs, their desires, just like when you talk about telephone skills and when following a specific system, a proven method of operation, it will result in a very huge and dramatic increase in your referral based business.

Art: So it's really a microcosm of the sales process itself. You could be going to a sales call thinking, "I've got to make a sale." You're not going to do well. If you go into a networking situation thinking "I want to get a name so I can sell to them," your not going to do well.

Bob: You're exactly right.

Art: I pulled this term out of your book as well, the "Golden Rule of Networking." Share with us what that is.

Bob: Sure. And Art I certainly didn't make this up. It's been around for a long time, and I think most people either know it, they've heard it or they know it intuitively, but it's this and it's so important, and that is all things being equal, all things being equal people will do business with and refer business to those people they know, like and trust. Of course that saying's been around for a long time, but I encourage people to study that one sentence and consider all the implications involved.

Go over it again and again until the principle involved is totally internalized. I mean think about it. As sales people our goal should be to develop and cultivate relationships with new people to the point that they feel so good about us they know us, they like us, they trust us, they want to see us succeed, they want to help us find new business and they want, they desire to be a part of our lives.

Now my opinion is that anyone who approaches every new potential networking relationship, keeping in mind the Golden Rule of Networking, will again be just so far ahead of the game it won't even be funny, or actually it will be funny.

Art: Well it kind of goes down to the Dale Carnegie theory. How do I get people to like me?

Bob: Right.

Art: It's not by trying to get them to like me.

Bob: Exactly.

Art: Let's get into the nuts and bolts here. You talk about following a very specific system for networking in "Endless Referrals." So what do you mean by that?

Bob: Yes well let's start off with my definition of the word 'system'. I define a system as the process of predictably achieving a goal based on a logical and specific set of how-to principles. The key word is 'predictable.'

In other words if it's been proven and documented that by doing 'A', the system, you can accomplish 'B', the results you want. Then all one need to be willing to do is 'A' and they know that they can have the desired results. Predictability is the key, just like a McDonald's restaurant. You don't go in there and try and change their system. You follow it and you succeed.

Now that doesn't mean you become brain dead and stop innovating. It simply means that you base your actions on proven fundamentals that work. I love how Michael Gerber, author of the classic best-seller The E-Myth, describes the benefits of using a system. He says, "Systems permit ordinary people to achieve extraordinary results predictably." I love that.

Now we can also reverse that too Art. We can say, "Without a system, even extraordinary people find it difficult to predictably achieve even ordinary results."

Art: I agree with you 100% and my audiences will tell you the same thing, because I hate it when sales rep say, "You know, I get on the phone and I just wing it. I don't need to have something prepared. I just like to wing it." Oh that pains me.

Bob: Well you think of, and I think I may have read this in one of your newsletters, but it's sort of like a person who's in a Broadway play or something. I mean certainly none of them are going up there and winging it.

And if you look at anyone who's doing anything there's no way they're winging it. They had so engrained it becomes, not only in their head, it's in their heart. It becomes part of them, and if you want to wing something I would suggest first being so well rehearsed that you know it so well that it's such part of you that you can then somewhat veer off at times to maybe test something. But then, it's see if you know it so well because you have rehearsed it, as Tom Hopkins says, "You've practiced and rehearsed." Now you can come back to where you are and where you're supposed to be. You don't have to worry about it.

I'm like you. To me the best ad-lib lines are very well rehearsed.

Art: Well that's the real paradox. People don't prepare because they're afraid of sounding goofy because they don't want to sound what they call scripted, but the fact is if they get out there and just wing it then they get what they fear the most,

they sound goofy. You've got a lot of success stories over the years. What would you say are the major benefits of people who follow your system and have a referral based business?

Bob: Oh their business actually just sort of changes dramatically in the amount of fun they have because there's such a lack of stress now in their job, and I love the stories. I get just great e-mails from people who go out there and say, "Wow. Since taking the focus off myself and putting it on the other person, I'm amazed at how attracted people become to me and how much they want to get to know me." And some of the things we talk about that perhaps we'll discuss later, some of the feel good questions and some of the things we do, actually just totally draw people into you. So again we go back to when you're talking about a paradox. That's the thing that seemed almost counter intuitive, taking our mind off of us and our terrific product and/or service, and focusing it on the other person, actually just has the opposite affect.

Now they become more interested in us, what we do, and of course as you point out, how it can help them.

Art: If that's the case, and the benefits are so obvious, and I believe they are, the real question becomes why don't more people ask for referrals, and just as importantly, even when they do, why do they usually not get them?

Bob: That's a great question, and there are several reasons why people don't ask for referrals, but I believe Art that it eventually comes down to one thing - fear. There are certain fears in the process, and I could tell you about the times that I've been brought into good companies with a great product and service and they've just said, "Bob our people are just utilizing the company leads and the generated leads and so forth, and we want them to have a referral mindset, but we just cannot get them to ask for referrals." And I can think of a couple of companies, which I can't name of course, but I went in there to try to bring a referral mindset to them, and I could teach them the referral gathering part. That's just not that hard.

But the big thing was; of course, only 20% of the people used it. And meeting with the management, the people who brought me in, well why didn't they? Well because they don't have to. They haven't had to and there's a fear, and we'll talk about the fears in just a moment, but what happened was eventually, and I'm thinking of one company in particular, the company generated leads, began to dry up because of a change in the marketplace and with mail and so forth. The responses were not as many and the quality was not there. So now people who had this sort of welfare mentality of company generated leads, never actually did have to go out and drive referrals.

Now when I came in the next time, what I did was for the first hour of the program I didn't even talk about how to get referrals. I just talked about the referral

mindset in order to do that. And of course the results were much better. And what it really taught me was it's not just about how to get referrals. It's about understanding the value of referrals and going the opposite way, the danger of not developing a referral based business, because when you don't develop a referral based business you're at the whim of the marketplace.

When you have a referral based business your not. You're in control of your business. So what are some of the fears? Well we touched on the earlier fear of rejection. There's also fear of talking past the sale, fear of staying too long, fear of appearing to be desperate. Fear of not being worthy of referrals, either your product itself or yourself, or the fear that you don't know how.

Let's talk about that really briefly if we may. Fear of talking past the sale. Well that's a legitimate fear to have of course. You don't want to talk past the sale but that has nothing to do with asking for referrals. Talking past the sale of course is when they've already basically bought and you still keep trying to sell. And when that happens, of course, sometimes you have the opposite affect and they change their mind. And so while that's legitimate, that's more a skill set.

Art: Let me just interject here; I wish more sales people had the fear of talking past the sale. They would probably sell more.

Bob: Exactly.

Art: Sorry to interrupt you.

Bob: No that's okay. You're absolutely right. Now there's the fear of staying too long. Depending upon what kind of sales you're in, "Well I've been in there an hour, they've been in my office an hour, I've been in their home an hour and a half. I don't want to stay too long." Again that's legitimate. You don't want to stay too long, but that has nothing to do with you. Set it up right during the presentation. It's not a legitimate fear to have. In fact, it makes a great post-close to ask for referrals.

And then there's the fear of appearing to be desperate by asking for referrals. No not now. If you say something, and Art the things that we've both heard people say; when someone says, "Well I make money through..." Yeah of course, the person doesn't care and you do sound desperate. But no, if you do it with the correct posture that's nothing to worry about and then there's...

Art: Can I stop you? Could you expand on what you are just about to say there because there might not be people out there that have heard that or maybe they've been told to say that, and I just want to make sure that you adequately make fun of that.

Bob: Yeah when they say something like, "Well Mr. or Miss Prospector, Mr. New Client [now who you're asking for referrals] the way I make my money is through getting referrals. So yeah I'd really appreciate if you would..." And so what's that? That's basically saying I'm needy. I need for this to happen. There's absolutely, first of all, no benefit in it to the person giving you the referral such as the fact that you are helping them to help people they care about.

It just totally is counter productive by asking in that sort of way. And I'm amazed that it's ever taught, but it is.

Art: Well just like in referrals, which of course, is the microcosm of sales. In general, there's so many mistruths that have been shared over the years that I think people have adopted them or at least they've heard them and I think that contributes to some of the fears.

Just a quick story here; I remember when I was interviewing for jobs right out of college and I went through a number of them. That was a great experience but I remember one and it was with a major insurance company that is still out there. As part of the interview they pulled out a list with 250 empty lines on it and they said, "As part of the interview process we'd like you to fill in this list of people that you know." And then I took it home and I realized that's going to be your customer list, and what they told me to do was to go out there and simply ask people that I knew who else they knew that I could contact. Sad.

Bob: Yeah well here's the point that they really missed. That just sticking somebody with a list of names that are a bunch of blank lines they're not easily going to be able to even come up with the 250 people in the first place. Generally just by the way our mind works were probably going to come up with 20, 25, 30 people. But there's a way actually, and I'm surprised they wouldn't have known how to do this, there's a way to help people actually be able to come up with names of people and that's a lot more affective, which we can talk about later on when it comes to when you do ask for referrals.

But the thing is it sounds almost like that mud against the wall thing, that they bring in a new person and they're just hoping that they're going to be able to sell some of their friends or family.

Art: Well I'm assuming their sales model was that, out of that list, yeah you could probably sell 10 contracts and then you move on. I'm sure that's what happens in that business. It sounds to me like they should be using your system.

Bob: Yeah and so another fear Art is what I call not being worthy of referrals. And there's actually two parts to this, one is not understanding your product, not having that sense that your product is just so incredibly valuable that really that person your doing them a favor by getting referrals to their...whether it's their

friends, family, loved ones, associates or other people. Now that may sound kind of, well Bob I've never heard of something like that before.

There are people who really think that in sales you're selling to someone as opposed to for someone. But the best case scenario is when you feel so good about your product or service that you know that, and I remember Zig Ziglar talking about this in one of his great books. I think it was Secrets of Closing the Sale, when he talked about the fact that if your product or service is that great, every time you make a sale you the other person is actually getting the better part of the deal than you are.

Art: That's such a great mindset to have and if you think about this fear it really doesn't make sense because in order to sell successfully you have to believe totally that it is absolutely the greatest product or service in the world and why in the world wouldn't everyone want it.

Bob: Exactly.

Art: And if that is true then it should just snowball into, of course, helping other people.

Bob: Exactly right. So my suggestion is if anybody feels that way, as though the product or service is not that great, then they need to do more research and discover why what they have their hands on is so incredibly great and if they can't justify that then they need to probably find something else.

Now the other fear of not being worthy is within ourselves. Are we worthy of getting referrals? Are we worthy...it comes down to, Art, are we worthy of success or is something inside us sabotaging. There's the old story you've probably heard, I remember hearing this years ago, I assume this is true and that it's probably happened many, many, many times although I don't know if this particular one was true. I tend to think it probably was but that there was a sales person who made a certain income every year, commissions every year. Let's take the number \$40,000 dollars and that's what he did year in and year out. Had a lot of great potential but that's basically all he sold.

So one year in the very first quarter he was just hot as could be and he made \$30,000 dollars in commission in the first three months. So the sales management team was thinking, "Wow, great he's finally going to do it. This is the year he's going to bust through. He's going to do incredible." Well guess what he did for the rest of the year? \$10,000 dollars more in commissions. So it came out to that same \$40,000. Well they were beside themselves and just decided they were going to find out, get to the root of this, what was the problem.

Well it turned out that his father as a sales person never made more than \$40,000 dollars a year. Now in most families, of course, the greatest compliment

to a parent is when their son exceeds them but it wasn't the case in that particular family. It was more of an insult, a disrespect to exceed the father and so he basically sabotaged himself and felt that he was only worthy of \$40,000 dollars a year in commissions.

Now if anybody listening to this relates on any type of level to this, and I think in a certain sense we've all been there in some way, not with our parents necessarily. My parents were always supportive, the best thing that could ever happen for them was for me to exceed.

But there are books on the topic. There are books like Psycho-Cybernetics by Doctor Maxwell Maltz that will get you past that limiting mindset. Books like David Schwartz's The Magic of Thinking Big or James Allen, As a Man Thinketh. These are all books I would suggest for people who's fear is just simply not being worthy.

Art: I agree and I can't remember who said this first, but I repeat it all the time. And it's this, in sales as well as in getting referrals, much of what we talk about in seminars is the process and the system, but really what is most important is what your talking about here, and that is the attitude, and the fears and the limiting beliefs. And because it's not only the fear of not being worthy, but you talked about the plateauing factor where somebody's reached a certain level. They might just get comfortable.

Bob: All very true.

Art: Which is sad as well.

Bob: Very true, and then there's one more fear, and this is one in which the skill sets, so this is the one that's the easiest to deal with, and that is the fear that you just don't know how to ask correctly. And so the person's going to say, "I can't think of anybody right now but when I do I'll let you know." And this happens more than anything else. Now the good news is there's such a simple, easy way to be able to get past that, and once a person knows how to frame this correctly they'll never have that problem again.

Art: That's the easy one. That's the one were covering today right?

Bob: Exactly. Yeah, we'll definitely get to that.

Art: Okay. What is your Law of 250? I mentioned the insurance company that I interviewed with years and years, ago but I believe yours is a little bit different. How does that apply to building a referral network?

Bob: Sure and this was the Law of 250. Basically it's been documented many times. Most notably probably by Joe Girard, author of the best-selling classic

How to Sell Anything to Anybody, and by the way Art I've never been in love with that title, How to Sell Anything to Anybody but, and I'm not saying that was Mr. Girard's title. It just sounds like something the publisher probably came up with but the book is excellent. It really is. He was a record setting sales person, 14 years in a row. Set the Guinness Book of World Records for, set the world record for individual new cars sold. I mean he had something to teach obviously.

But his Law of 250 basically comes down to the fact that everyone naturally knows about 250 people. Now this includes everyone from immediate family, distant relatives, close friends, sometimes acquaintances, your accountant, postal carrier, hair stylist, people belonging to your church or synagogue, social groups, what have you.

Now here's the thing, it's not important necessarily that I know, or you know, or that anyone on the phone, knows 250 people. When we put our list together, that's a great list to begin with, but it's not always appropriate for everyone but here's the thing. Everyone we meet also knows about 250 people. So we take it a step further, and we say every time you cultivate a they know you, like you, trust your relationship with just one new person, you've actually just increased your personal sphere of influence by up to a potential 250 people every single time.

Now do this consistently and in virtually no time at all you'll be working with an absolutely enormous, humongous personal sphere of influence yourself. And then you get a few personal walking ambassadors out of that, and it is just, it's over.

Art: It's weighing that term, that's one that I believe where the payoff really is, "Personal Walking Ambassador."

Bob: Sure. Art, these are people who not only know you, like you and trust you, not only want to see you succeed and help you find new business, but they're willing to champion you and your cause to the point that they will tell everyone about you whenever they learn about someone needing your product or service.

Now just a few of these people can help increase your business significantly. Your goal, and one of the things I think we just kind of harp on a bit in "Endless Referrals", is to develop what I call an "Army of Personal Walking Ambassadors." And you might say that's your ultimate in leverage.

Now there's one thing about these personal walking ambassadors too. Not everyone in a sense qualifies as one, because some people would like to be your personal walking ambassador but they don't really have that credibility with others. But you know what I'm talking about when I say there are those people out there Art who just have such enormous credibility that all they have to do is basically mention your name and say, "This is the person to talk to." And the

sale and the referral is there. Those are the people boy, a few of those and your career's just made.

Art: It's like having your own sales staff.

Bob: It is. Exactly. It's really the ultimate in leverage. It's like having a sales staff out there making life really easy for you.

Art: Let's run this just a little bit more. So I would say for sales people these are the people out there that volunteer to you that, "Hey I passed your name onto somebody else. They're raving fans," to borrow another term. How do we cultivate and reward these people and get them to continue doing what they do?

Bob: Well the nice thing is that these people truly want to be a part of your life and truly want to do for you and when they refer to you, I would always, always, always send a personal note of thanks. Whenever getting a referral there's always a note of thanks, "Thank you for your kind referral of Joy Jones or James Smith. You can be assured that anyone that you refer to me will be treated with the utmost professionalism." As a matter of fact I think that is sort of verbatim from Tom Hopkins in this great book How to Master the Art of Selling.

Typically, people say, "Well should you pay for referrals?" Well first of all I never want to say, "Never or always," because those two terms usually get you in trouble. Notice I didn't say, "Always or never." And so there's a time and place for everything, but by and large that's not an issue.

Now there are times, don't get me wrong, somebody's a great referral source or they land you a referral or they get you a referral that lands a huge commission. After the fact, of course, you want to send them something really nice. I'm a big believer in gift certificates for a dinner. I'll find out what that person's favorite restaurant is and surprise that person with a couple of hundred dollar gift certificates to that restaurant. But I think that's more after the fact.

But here's the thing, and I heard this years ago from Michael Abbah. Behavior that gets rewarded gets repeated. So a thank you note is something that everybody, just about everybody appreciates. A gift certificate is something that every one appreciates. So there are ways to really take care of your personal walking ambassadors to let them know that they're special.

And of course different strokes for different folks and different people appreciate different things.

Art: I think the key here is recognition of any type and your right there are some people that might feel appreciated with just a simple little thank you note, other people depending on the size of the sale, going above and beyond the call of duty certainly is going to be appreciated.

One thing I found is that I've rewarded some of my big referrals with a gift of the month. For example, I've given wine before and what's great about that is that it shows up every month and the person I gave it to says, "Boy I'm still getting that wine." And I said, "Well that's great. I really appreciate what you did for me." Of course he's thinking about it every month.

Bob: Yeah that's a great idea. That really is.

Art: One thing I pulled out of your book, among many others, and I really love this, is just the whole topic of feel good questions. Could you share with us what some of those are?

Bob: Sure. Feel good questions are questions designed to put the person with whom your speaking at ease and begin the rapport building process. Now in this example Art we're talking about in person, although this can be used on the telephone, but right now were talking about in person prospecting. and you need somebody, whether it's the Chamber of Commerce, business card exchange function or any kind of business, social event or a charity event or the kids ballgame, what have you. And these are questions are just designed to make the person feel good. They put them at ease. They're not prospecting questions. They're not personal. They're not intrusive. They're simply questions that by their very nature will make the other person feel good about themselves, about the conversation, and about you.

Now feel good questions are the very first step toward accomplishing the all important know you, like you, trust you feelings towards you in the other person. Now I have 10 feel good questions but please know you'll never ask all 10 in any one conversation. In fact, typically no more than two or three is best. They're all good to know depending upon the person or situation, but let's look at just two if we may.

Art: Actually let me just set the stage here now. What we're doing is we're at an event; we're simply networking. Granted we might be there for the purpose of trying to develop some business relationships but right now at this point we're not trying to ask for a referral. All were trying to do at this point is to make this other person feel good, that's the name of the questions.

Bob: Exactly. I'll tell you I've been teaching these questions for years and I'll just tell anybody listening on the phone if you ask only these two questions you'll find a remarkable difference in the response you get from this person as opposed to others. In conversations where you spoke mostly about yourself and your business. And again this just relates right back to your teaching Art.

Question number one is simply, "How did you get started in the widget business?" "You know Dave, how did you get started in the office products

business? Andy, how did you get started as a marine biologist? Steve, how did you get started?" Now I call this the movie of the week question because most people love the opportunity to tell their story to someone; this in a world where most people just don't care enough to want to know their story. And then of course, be sure and actively listen and be interested.

Question number two is, "What do you enjoy most about what you do?" Now it might sound more like after that in the first question, "Wow Gary, you must've had some great experiences in the business over the years. Tell me what do you enjoy most about what you do?" Again this is something very positive for them to associate with you in the conversation.

Now here's the thing – this so often flies right in the face of most traditional sales teaching where we're taught to immediately find this person's pain - reach into their heart and just tear it out so that you can come to the rescue with your terrific products and/or services. Yet that's so counterproductive by and large because first of all this person might not even be a direct prospect; might be a good eventual referral source but they're not a direct prospect. So it would make no sense to do that, but secondly this person, the relationship hasn't yet been established. So this person is going to feel defensive instead of feeling good about you.

You might as well imagine saying to this person, "Gary tell me what do you just hate most about what you do? And while were at it how about this retched excuse for a life you live?" And again it's just is not setting up a situation where it's going to develop that feel good feeling in him toward you.

Art: Okay. Yeah I agree, especially I'm thinking about these networking, these canned or set up networking events where it's almost like speed dating where people are asking the first couple of questions and then they move on.

Bob: Right.

Art: Obviously they don't care about the other person. It's just pretty much, "Do you have anything for me? And if not I'm moving on to the next person."

Bob: Exactly, exactly. And when we look at a person like that, first of all it comes across like that, but secondly, on a realistic sense we don't know what we're overlooking because we don't know who this person is. We don't know if this person could be a wonderful friend, a wonderful connection, a wonderful contact, someone who's life you can add value to, and/or someone who can add a lot of value to your life and business. So really Art, it's so funny too because again it's just an old bromide, but we've all heard the people we find most interesting are the people who seem most interested in us. And I've said to people - and I usually ask my audiences, "Have you ever been in a conversation with somebody who let you do practically all the talking? Didn't you kind of come

away from that conversation saying to yourself, 'Wow what a fascinating conversationalist that person is'."

Art: And smart too.

Bob: Yeah, oh exactly, brilliant. Yeah. And we can be that fascinating conversationalist, and we can do it by asking those couple of feel good questions.

Art: And the thing is too, people may be a great prospect for us, or maybe a great referral source, but they may not share that until they feel a little bit more comfortable.

Bob: Oh absolutely; until they have a feeling where they know you, like you and trust you. Absolutely. And of course that know you, like you, trust you relationship can be developed fairly quickly doing this. But I agree with you 100% until they feel that way about you first of all, as far as most people are concerned, why should they do something for you? But also why would they take a chance on setting up someone they don't know, like or trust with someone who they do care about? So absolutely, there's a lot of dynamics at work there.

Art: I agree. You have plenty more feel good questions in the book, and again I would suggest that everybody get a copy of that. Fantastic investment. How about the one key question? What is that?

Bob: The one key question is, in my opinion, asked only after the initial rapport has begun to be established. After you've asked a couple of the feel good questions, and you feel as though there's really a rapport, and here's the question Art – "Gary or Anne how can I know if someone I'm speaking with would be a good prospect for you? How can I know that someone I'm speaking with would be a good prospect for you?"

Now it might come across more as, "Gary that sounds fascinating what you do. I don't know a lot about your product line. I'm sure it's excellent. Tell me how can I know if someone I'm speaking with would be a good prospect for you?" Now why is this question so powerful?

First just by asking it you've separated yourself from practically everyone else. It's the first indication that you're someone special because you are probably the only person he/she has ever met who asks that question during the first conversation, or maybe during any conversation. But you've also just implied that you're concerned with their welfare and wish to contribute to their success. Most people would already be trying to sell their own product or service, but not you. And you can be sure your new prospect or future referral source will have an answer.

Lets give an example if I may. You ask the question to Gary. Gary sells copying machines to businesses, high end copying machines to businesses and you say, "Gary how can I know if somebody I'm speaking with would be a good prospect for you?" After thinking about it for a moment he suggest that, "Well the next time your in an office and you notice a copying machine and next to that copying machine is wastepaper basket which is filled to the rim and just totally overflowing with tons of crumbled up pieces of paper. That's a good sign that tells you that the copying machine has been breaking down a lot lately and that would be a great prospect for me."

Now he's going to be delighted to answer that question and so will everybody else you speak to. They will appreciate your sincere interest because it is sincere. Again that question is the first indication that you're somebody special and different, a person potentially worthy of doing business with directly, or by way of referrals because what you've really done is you've given that person the knowledge that just by associating with you, their success is going to increase. That of course right there makes you more attractive to that person who then feels Art, a vested personal interest in cultivating an association with you, which of course includes, eventually, giving back to you.

Secondly, and I think more importantly, is that it causes you to think of ways you can help others, thus taking that focus off yourself. Stuart Wild wrote in his book, "The Trick to Money is Having Some," the secret to success is to subjugate your ego and serve others. Now remember, in a free enterprise based economy, the amount of money you make is directly proportional to the number of people you serve.

Often before you serve them, or serve their referrals directly through your product or service, you serve them through other sources such as the referrals you give them or other ways, the many other ways that you can add increase to their life.

Now, by the way, if that person's not in a job classification in which they have prospects per say, the one key question might be, "Well how can I know if someone I'm speaking with is someone you'd like to meet? Or how can I know if someone I speaking with would be a good connection for you?" I once got an incredible piece of business from someone eventually, and great referrals because I found out during our conversation that the person's daughter had just graduated college and was looking for a job in a certain field. I asked how could I know if somebody I'm talking to would be a good a help for Beth and what she's looking for, and I already kind of had the idea, and he answered - you could see his eyes light up - that I was the first salesperson he'd spoken with who actually got it. That it wasn't a matter of selling him my product or service, but adding value to his life, and I eventually set this person up with a person who gave Beth an internship.

And so you know this person really appreciated it. So it's really a matter of how that question really shows this person that you're wanting to add value to their life, to their business.

Art: Great question. Two things – two observations here; one is that it's disarming in a way. If somebody's in a networking situation and they're expecting you to be like every other sales person, this, as you mentioned, sets you apart. And it is disarming in a sense, because now all of a sudden they're going to be opening up. They didn't expect that question.

And the other is - and you touched on this but I'll give the title to it - it's the "Theory of Reciprocation" from Robert Chaldini, where now of course if somebody's doing something for me, I feel a little bit more obligated to do something for them. Fabulous question.

Bob: Yeah and the neat thing is that they want to do...you know what I'm saying? And it's great, and I love Doctor Chaldini's book. I think I suggest it at every live program I do, Influence Science and Practice. What a great book.

One of the great things about this reciprocation is that the person feels so good about you they want to feel obligated. They want to do for you, and so it's really just a great start, and I've gotten more...I'll tell you I've received more letters from people just telling me how that one question has made such a big difference in their career, because as you said, it totally disarms the other person. It causes that relationship to be turbo charged in a sense, and it does almost force us to ask ourselves how we can add more value to that person's life.

Art: And here's a quick point for sales people. Not only ask that question but be prepared with how you're going to answer it. You don't want to be stammering and stuttering when somebody says, "How will I know if somebody's a good prospect for you?" And the answer you gave about the copying machine sales person, what a great answer.

Bob: Right. I call it the 'how to know question'. Because there's going to be that point where when we get to where we're training our walking ambassadors or referral sources, they need to know exactly how to spot a prospect for us. They don't need to know about our bells and whistles anymore than we need to know about Gary's copying machine's bells and whistles. They just need to know how to spot someone for us. How to identify someone for us.

Art: Okay Bob, let's fast forward a little bit. We have met these people. We've made them feel good. We've got them talking. We now leave the scene. Obviously follow-up has to play a part in this, but to most people follow-up's a great big pain. It's not always worth the results. So what are your thoughts on that?

Bob: Well I think it's a great point. Like anything else, follow-up can be both a royal pain and not worth the effort if the person's doing it incorrectly. In the "Endless Referral" system we teach a follow-up method that time after time predictably positions you as the one person in your field that your prospect or a potential referral source will think of whenever your product or service is needed. Again either by them or someone they learn about.

Now once you have it in place, it'll be like clockwork, and for just really, moments a day, and it will pay off in huge dividends.

Art: So what are some simple and easy to apply and profitable follow-up methods?

Bob: Okay, let's look at just one idea that will get anyone started in the positioning process. It's sending a personalized handwritten note card. Now I know it's simple right? But I'll ask people to follow along for a second because if they do it this way it's going to make a huge difference in their business. First it's handwritten and on an eight and a half by three inches - which fits nicely inside a regular number 10 - note card, eight and a half by three inches, this note card has some very brief contact information as well as a small professional picture of yourself and a very brief benefit statement across the bottom.

By the way, a benefit statement - we haven't really talked about it - but a benefit statement is just a very short succinct statement of a benefit somebody would get by doing business with you. In other words, when I speak with stock brokers and financial planners I say, "Well don't say "I'm a stock broker." There's no benefit to that. That's just a feature. Even saying, "I'm a financial advisor." It's better, but it's still a feature, not a benefit." Instead something simple benefits laden in such as, "I help people create and manage wealth." That's a benefit. People want to do business with somebody who can help and create and manage wealth. They just don't want to do business with a stockbroker or a financial planner.

So those words can just crawl across the bottom of the note card. So it's important to know this is not a direct response piece. It's simply a thank you note. Now I have a picture of this in my book, exactly how it's set up, but for a downloadable sample, a person can just send a blank e-mail to NoteCard@Burg.com, N-O-T-E-C-A-R-D at B-U-R-G dot com and one will automatically be sent right back through an auto responder that they can use as a model.

Now written in blue ink - because blue ink's been proven to be more affective than black ink both business wise and personally - the note reads something like, "Hi Mary [or] Dear Mary, [or] Dear Mr. Jones, [however the relationship's been established]. Thank you. It was a pleasure meeting you. If I can ever refer

business your way I certainly will. Best wishes." And then sign your name. Do not include your business card or make any reference to what you do.

Now of course you might say, "Well do I really need to include my picture?" Well first remember the saying, "Out of sight, out of mind." And let's face it, regardless of how quickly you'll listen to their good feelings towards you, the minute the event's over they leave to their own challenges. They meet other people, handle different situations." So you want to give them every opportunity to remember you, and picture you as the one who made them feel good about themselves. Both by the questions you ask them, as well as later on in the event you introduce them to others and so forth, and you show that you are going to be a person who was going to add increase to their life.

As such, a small classy professional picture goes a long way toward this end. Now in most communities you mail this letter before the end of the day or before the midnight, whatever, it's going to arrive at the intended location the very next day. A letter that shows up, or a personalized handwritten note card that shows up at the person's desk or home just the day after you meet - what a nice touch. It says to that person; this person's a pro.

Now somebody might say, "Well can I just send e-mail?" And of course you can do anything you want. But if you really truly desire to separate yourself from the masses, make the first note that you send of the paper and ink variety, and have it set up exactly as were talking about. It really just sets you apart from everyone else.

Art: What a powerful suggestion. Not only did we make them feel good while we were there in person, which of course sets us apart from the crowd, but now if you do this in this way - and I see why you call this the system - if you do it in this way, the very next day you're building on this, and the picture is so important. I can tell every single little suggestion you gave there is very well thought out and tested.

Bob: Yeah, oh absolutely. And now what do you do to follow-up after that? Well there are many ways to add increase, and to add value to people's lives. We've all heard, "Well if you see somebody's picture in the newspaper cut it out and send it." Well yeah, but how often does that really happen? But we can create our own situations like that. Let's say that you know that Gary, the copying machine sales guy, collects antiques. Well if you see something in the newspaper about an antique shop that just opened up, that would be great to send it to him with your personalized note card where you write in blue ink.

You paperclip it to the note card and you write, "Hi Gary. I know you love antiques. I thought you might find this helpful." Now you put it in a number 10 envelope, of course, hand address the envelope in blue ink, put a regular stamp on there, not a meter machine stamp, a regular hand stamp or an oversized

commemorative stamp. You send that to him. He's going to really appreciate you. You're still not mentioning your business.

What about Anne who sells telephone equipment to start-up businesses? They need to modernize their telecommunication systems. You hear through the grapevine about a new office building going up in which there are three person suites on every floor. Well that's what she told you was her perfect prospect. So you do some reconnaissance work. Find out who owns the building. You send her a handwritten note, blue ink: *Hi Anne. Heard through the grapevine a new office building going up on Highway 3. Found out they're perfect prospects for you. Did some leg work for you. Found out the landlady's name was Miss Garrett. Her number's 555-1212. Best of success.* Sign your name, hand address it, hand stamp it. Send it out to her. Do you think she's going to appreciate it? All those things that you do are adding value to that person's life.

When you can refer people to each other, when you can set up good people with other good people, your positioning yourself as a center of influence. You're positioning yourself as a person of value. You're adding increase to that person's life and all these things are setting up the know you, like you, trust you feelings.

Art: Well here's another reason Bob that more people don't do this - it takes work.

Bob: It does.

Art: More than just asking the question. It's more than asking the question. It's walking the talk and following through, which is delivering some true value. So you mentioned the best way to position yourself as a true center of influence, which is delivering value to them. Let's kind of cut to the chase here. So we've gotten them to know us, to like us, to trust us. So what's the pay off for us? How do we actually get referrals?

Bob: Okay Art. Let's say were talking to somebody who, for whatever reason, is not a direct prospect for us. They have no need, or want, or what have you at this time for our product, but the relationship's been established and you know this person would like to refer you to others and so forth. So let's assume they haven't called us up with a referral. That's going to happen by they way, but were not going to take that chance of just waiting necessarily either.

So let's be a little more proactive. Once we know the know you, like you, trust you feelings toward us have been established, it's time to take the next step. Let's ask this person for a referral. But the first thing we're going to do is we're going to use what I call the "Referral Bridge." See, some people have a challenge because now they're having to go from this point where they've been

giving, giving, giving to now asking for something. So sometimes there's a little bit of a hang up with that. So we use the "Referral Bridge."

Now a bridge in the physical world is a structure, a medium or structure that transports us from one safe piece of land to another. In the referral world the bridge just transports us from one safe piece of land - the relationship - to another safe piece of land. You're asking for the referral in such a way that you and the referral source will feel comfortable.

So let me give you the language that I use and, of course, I recommend people putting it into their own style and words, but you'll see where the principles definitely apply. Then we'll go back and talk about why it does work. The "Referral Bridge" is basically, "So Gary, I'm in the process of expanding my referral business, and I find it's helpful to partner with my friends such as you. Can we take a few quick minutes and run past the names of some people I might be able to help?"

Now let's go back and discuss why each phrase is so helpful and so necessary. "Gary, I'm in the process of expanding my referral business." So just with the prospect, you've let them know exactly what it is. You've signaled to him what's going to come up. "I'm in the process of expanding my referral business. I found it's helpful." Okay, not necessary but, "Helpful to partner." Now partner's a great word because people want to feel a part of your success. They want to take some ownership.

Most people, and I'll ask this of my audiences; whenever you've mentored someone and you've have a protégé, and by the way the correct word's protégé not mente. There is not such word as mente.

Art: It's a candy isn't it?

Bob: Huh?

Art: It's a candy isn't it?

Bob: Right, exactly. So when you've got a protégé, you've done something great and you love the fact that you felt a part of that success. And so we give this person buy-in, we give this person ownership. "I found it's helpful to partner with my friends such as you." Now here's some key language here, "Can we take a few quick minutes to run past..." now this is what I call fast language. You don't say it fast but when you say thiis you're implying that you're not going to take up a lot of their time. As much as they like you, they've got their own agenda.

So when you say, "Can we take a [now listen to these words] a few quick minutes to run past the names of some people that I might be able to help." I

love putting the word 'might' in there because it gives the person an out, a back door. In other words, you're not coming across as so dogmatic that you can help everyone. You know what I'm saying? And so it takes the pressure off them to feel that if they refer you they might be putting somebody in a situation that's uncomfortable.

So, "I'm in the process of expanding my referral business. I find it's helpful to partner with my friends such as you. Can we take a few quick minutes to run past the names of some people I might be able to help?"

Now by the way Art, if you were asking this of somebody who's already your customer or client, you'd simply say, "Dave [or] Mary, I'm in the process of expanding my referral business and find it's helpful to partner with my clients such as you. Can we take a few quick minutes to run past the names of some other people I might be able to help?" Boom.

Art: Wow, fabulous question, and I hope people will hit the rewind here on their CD, or if they're listening to this online, to go back and make sure they write this out word-for-word, and adapt it, of course, to their own situation. Fabulous.

Bob we just have a few minutes left here, do you have a couple of final points that you'd like to leave everybody with? Obviously everybody needs to get your book because there are tons of ideas in there, but just a couple of final thoughts.

Bob: Sure. Well make sure when you ask for referrals you don't just say, "Do you know anybody who... or who do you know...?" Because that's when people say, "Well I can't think of anybody right now, but when I do I'll let you know." And then of course they never do, because out of sight out of mind. So take Tom Hopkins' advice from his great book, How to Master the Art of Selling, and give people small groups of people that they can see, that they can picture in their mind.

So in other words, with Gary you might say - as a golfer - you might say, "Gary do you golf with different people or the same people?" It's, "Oh I golf with the same foursome every time. There's myself, there's Harry Brown, Doctor Mary Ruart and Michael Cloud." Boom, well now he's just come up with three names. So now we can ask him if any of those three would be a prospect. Say we know he's a Rotarian, he's been in the same Rotary for 20-years, never missed a meeting. We don't say, "Is there anybody in Rotary who...?" Could be too big. But we say, "Is there anybody in Rotary with whom you serve on a committee with whom your particularly good friends with?"

And so what we do is we give them small groups of people they can see because then they can name people, and as they think of one or two names all of a sudden more and more names come out, and then of course we use some of the other methods that we talk about in "Endless Referrals" to totally get them being

able to identify people and keep giving you referrals. So the referrals trickle out, and then stream out, and then gush out. And then, of course, how to then call and contact those people so you have the best opportunity to actually get in the door.

So it's a lot of fun Art, and I certainly thank you for having me on the call, but also for what you do, because I just love your materials. I'm one of your biggest fans, and I just love what you do.

Art: Well the feeling's mutual, and I can say today that even though we just scratched the surface, you've already put some money in my pocket here because I have been taking notes like crazy. I'm going to dive back into the book again. It's already all marked up, but I need to go back in there one more time.

Hey, tell everybody again how they can get in contact with you, how they can get the book, and how they can get that special report.

Bob: Sure. The book is at the bookstores and online at Amazon.com, and make sure you get the third edition because there's one that says, "Updated and revised," but it's only the second edition. So make sure it's the third edition.

And they can go to my website, www.burg.com, which is B-U-R-G, dot com and they can get a free special report called "Referrals Fun and Simple," and while they're there, they can also check out some of the other goodies on the site, and I welcome them to do so.

Art: Fantastic. Bob, I can't thank you enough. You shared a tremendous amount of solid content and meat here with us today, and if people don't run out and start using all these things it's their own fault.