

REFERENCE MARKETING FOCUSED BUSINESS STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: THEORETICAL REVIEW AND THEMATIC EVOLUTION

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Abstract

Referral marketing is a tool whose goal is to have a customer act as a promoter of a product by recommending it to others. The objective of this text is to provide a theoretical framework or bibliometric analysis of referral marketing to increase the number of customers and sales, so that these recommendations can be shared with other companies, enabling them to use this tool and benefit from it. For this purpose, qualitative research with a descriptive scope was conducted, gathering documentary information from January to August 2023. As a result of this compilation exercise, a framework or state of the art was established, which allowed for an understanding of the research and studies carried out on networking and referral marketing, revealing current trends and developments in this area.

Key words: marketing, referral marketing, networking, bibliometrics.

INTRODUCTION

This research represents the effort to explore the alternatives that companies may have, to have the opportunity to grow and also to develop in an increasingly competitive economic

environment, and immersed in an increasingly digital environment and with a framework that allows other companies to understand and apply it.

Marketing or referral marketing is a tool whose objective is to get a customer, specifically a satisfied customer, to act as a promoter of a product by giving a recommendation of it to the people they know (Equipo Vértice, 1991). This type of strategy eliminates the distrust generated by traditional marketing media since the recommendation comes from someone they know, this, according to Misner & Morris (2017) is the key to the effectiveness of referral or recommendation marketing.

In this context, referral marketing, also known as referral marketing, is a powerful strategy in which companies leverage the satisfaction of their current customers to generate new business. At its core, it's based on positive word-of-mouth theory, where satisfied customers share their experiences with friends, family, or colleagues, recommending a company's products or services.

This form of marketing is highly effective because of the inherent trust that is established between the existing customer and the new prospect. People tend to trust their peers' recommendations more than companies' direct marketing messages. Therefore, referral marketing can generate new leads.

In this sense, the objective of the research and of this text is to provide a strategic framework of best practices in the use of marketing or marketing of references or recommendations to increase the number of customers and sales in such a way that these recommendations can be shared with other companies so that they can also use it and obtain the benefits of this tool.

The scope of the research in the documentary theoretical part is descriptive, where the existing topics and research on the subject of marketing or marketing of references or recommendations were reviewed from 2013 to 2023 in the most prominent bibliographic databases (Scopus and Web of Science), where the text includes a documentary theoretical analysis of the previously described topics.

Research is limited to the use of marketing or referral or referral marketing as a tool, technique, or strategy to increase customer perception and increase sales, to the exclusion of other tools, techniques, or strategies, as well as other types of results or impact for companies. As far as time is concerned, the research was conducted by analyzing existing and available research and information from 2013 to 2023.

The text provides a theoretical, conceptual and reference framework based on a documentary bibliographic study that extends to the state of the art in which a critical stance is assumed in the face of a strategic business framework focused on reference marketing, since by building relationships they become connectors of future businesses, therefore, it has been structured in five (5) parts, namely: introduction, methodology, results, conclusions and references.

1. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research is of a qualitative approach with a descriptive scope, where the objective is to design a strategic framework of best practices and recommendations in the use of marketing or referral or recommendation marketing to improve customer attraction and increase sales from the analysis of cases of companies that currently successfully employ this strategy. taking into account the collection of documentary information for the period between January and August 2023.

The searches were carried out in reference sources such as Ebsco, Emerald, Google Scholar, OECD, Scopus, Springer and Web of Science, among other important journals; The research was carried out using Boolean operators of the research keywords, in different arrangements, which yielded studies of which few attend to the focus of the research. Just to mention an example in Web of Science, using the Booleanian operators and keywords presented in the previous chapter, 7,282 studies were registered, of these 31 were related to the topic, focus and objective of the research.

2. RESULTS FRAME OF REFERENCE OR THEORETICAL

Conceptual Framework

As a result of the theoretical, conceptual and reference framework, the main key elements to achieve the objectives of the research are analyzed in depth. The specific objectives of the research include the following core elements: business networking, networking, and referral or referral marketing. The main objective of the research is to analyze a success story to observe the best practices that this case presents and from this to be able to generate a set of recommendations included in the form of a model to serve as a basis for sharing and replicating in other organizations or groups.

The theoretical framework is complemented by a frame of reference, state of the art or knowledge which has the objective of being able to know the research and studies that have been carried out in recent years on the subject of networking and marketing of references or recommendations, this with the intention of observing the trends and advances existing in these topics, as well as the possible absences in science. The above with the aim of laying the foundations of what exists in the subject and from there to be able to analyze and continue with the development of the topic observing the best practices and building on them.

Therefore, this research examines the main concepts and key terms, as well as what has been done in the field of business networks and relationships, networking and relationship marketing or references. The study was carried out through an exhaustive search and analysis of the topics based on the keywords, elements and variables of these topics.

Thus, the research was carried out by searching for keywords, Boolean operators and their combinations, in the most important or recognized sources of information: Google Scholar, Scopus and Web of Science. Table 1 shows the aforementioned keywords used in the search.

Board 1

List of keywords and Boolean operators used in search

Spanish		English	
Keywords	Operator	Keywords	Operator
Business Network	AND/OR	Networking	AND / OR
Marketing		Marketing	
Networking		Referral Marketing	
Referral networks		Advocacy marketing	
Referral Marketing		Relationship Marketing	

Relations	Collaboration
Construction competition	Business collaboration
Social collaboration	Cooperation model
Contact Spheres	Collaboration network
Collaboration teams	Collaborative networking
Collaborative marketing	Customer referral program

Source: own elaboration

Social or Contact Networks

A social network of contact or network is defined by Muñoz & Llamas (2009) as an Anglo-Saxon term that means to work with networks, it is a space where a group of individuals interact, coexist and exchange information and which must have in its essence three elements, give, ask and thank, thus achieving an important and powerful professional tool, business and marketing. According to Muñoz & Llamas (2009) themselves, networking can have different uses, with establishing business relationships being one of the main uses of this activity.

For its part, Equipo Vértice (1991) explains that referral marketing aims to get a satisfied customer to act as a prescriber and promote the product, either by spontaneous recommendation or through incentive programs. This is confirmed by Ros (2008) who adds that by acting as a prescriber and starting a new buying cycle, virality can be generated. In this regard, being referred by a known person eliminates much of the mistrust that marketing usually entails (Rodero, 2020).

Labor social networks are and function as a key structure for economic life, they allow the connection of different agents and sectors that can have an effect or affect economic results, labor social networks are often considered as important resources that can significantly increase the income of a company, when they are used effectively, companies have the potential to generate new customers or achieve new connections between customers (Li, Luo & Pin, 2021).

In the words of Misner & Morris (2017) "The key to the effectiveness of Networking is to form relationships based on trust, in an atmosphere of generosity and selflessness" (p.2), for the aforementioned authors trust is one of the key aspects in a good networking relationship, it is to make friends and get contacts or business references. As Nancy Giacomuzzi, Executive Director of BNI in Minnesota describes it, quoted by Misner and Morris, "Networking is simple: help others succeed and you will succeed too" (p.33). Misner & Morris add that

Networking is one of the best ways to build a business and yet it is not taught in universities around the world. People are given business degrees, but they are taught almost nothing about the one subject that virtually everyone mentions as decisive for their business: networking. (p.118)

Contacts obtained through work or contact social networks allow what is known as communication, promotion or word-of-mouth marketing. Companies that achieve this

communication or marketing are not only getting more customers, but they are also getting customers with a higher probability of purchase, that is, more profitable customers, which makes contact networks and their potential a very attractive topic for companies.

Social networks or Networking and the interactions that are generated by their participants give rise to a large number of possibilities within which are business connections, which companies have been studying for many years. Initially through information collection systems and including such data in customer relationship management (CRM) databases and later through the analysis of effective negotiation and sales techniques. Regardless of the strategy, Dewnarain, Ramkissoon, and Mavondo (2019) comment that one thing is certain, a very important element is to develop means of communication to reach customers and that these media develop trust with customers, which allows companies to achieve differentiation or competitive advantages.

On the other hand, Dewnarain et al. (2019) explain that properly managed or targeted social interactions can generate important insights that contribute to better business processes and value creation for customers. Additionally, digital business social networks take these interactions to a new level. Digital social networks are software-based and internet-based applications that build on the idea of traditional business social networks and allow the exchange or communication of users allowing people and companies of all types and sizes, different opportunities for participation and interaction.

A variant of social or contact networks are brand communities, which are explained by Marín Rives & Ruiz de Maya (2007) as a network of informal relationships that occurs between consumers of a brand, who come together in groups, chats, conventions to share their preferences and tastes for the brand or product and share their experiences.

In summary, business social networks or Networking are a situation that has been occurring for many years and that companies have been studying and trying to take advantage of since the same time, to the extent that companies have been able to obtain more information from these networks, their interactions and possibilities, they have been able to take advantage of them in a better way for their benefit.

Networking Oaxaca Case

BNI Oaxaca is a local network of Business Network International (BNI) in Oaxaca City, Mexico. Being part of BNI's global network, this network brings together professionals and entrepreneurs from various sectors with the aim of generating business opportunities through the exchange of references and the establishment of strong relationships among its members.

BNI groups often meet regularly to share information about their respective businesses and support each other in growing their businesses. These meetings allow for meaningful connections and new business opportunities.

BNI is known for its structured approach to generating quality referrals and its emphasis on the philosophy of "winning by giving", following the organization's fundamental principles, which include a commitment to business ethics, professional development and a spirit of collaboration. Its objective is to contribute to the business success of its members and strengthen the local business community in Oaxaca, based on values of integrity, trust, commitment and mutual growth.

This network was introduced to Mexico in 2006 by former deputy Carlos Medina Plascencia who in his own words expressed:

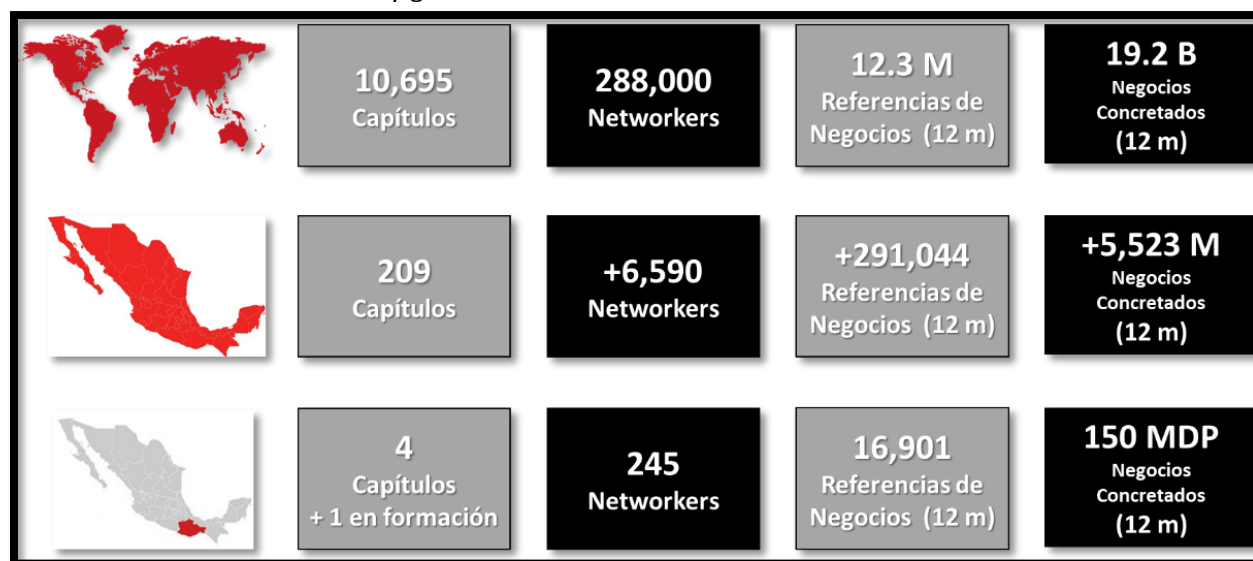
Talk to a consultant to make a business plan. I explained that I wanted to take advantage of the relationships I had developed over so many years, to link the supply of services and products with the demand for these, to promote professionals and companies, small and medium-sized. The result was that I wanted to network. (Misner, 2017, p vii)

That was the reason why he decided to acquire the rights to the franchise and launch the first Chapter in Mexico in the city of León, Guanajuato, Mexico.

Over the years, in 2018 the introduction of BNI in Oaxaca began with the formation of an initial group of entrepreneurs interested in business networking and the exchange of references, it expanded to the Oaxaca region as there was interest and demand from local entrepreneurs. These businessmen worked together with BNI representatives at the national level, which led to the appointment of a regional director to found the first chapter of BNI in July 2018 called BNI Guelaguetza Chapter.

Figure 1 shows how this business network has grown worldwide, in Mexico and Oaxaca in terms of the number of current chapters, active network members that make them up and the number of business references and business deals.

Figure 1
BNI figures in the world, Mexico and Oaxaca



Source: own elaboration with BNI data Oaxaca Regional Office (2023). In original Spanish language

To date, there are four chapters, BNI Guelaguetza Chapter, BNI Tequio Chapter, BNI Antequera Chapter, BNI Valles Centrales Chapter and one more in formation named BNI Monte Albán Chapter.

The data obtained from the BNI Oaxaca regional office indicate that the Guelaguetza Chapter was launched on July 18, 2018 with great expectations on the part of the founding Oaxacan entrepreneurs as an alternative to grow their businesses, grow as people and positively impact their environment and society. It is the largest chapter in the region in terms of active

members, business references and amount of deals completed since its foundation. It has been visited by 1,474 entrepreneurs interested in belonging to the network.

Figure 2
BNI Guelaguetza Chapter in Numbers



Source: own elaboration with BNI data Oaxaca Regional Office at the end of 2023. In original Spanish language

With regard to the Tequio Chapter, its launch took place on March 1, 2019 and has been visited by 844 interested entrepreneurs from the date of its formation until the end of 2023.

Figure 3
BNI Tequio Chapter in Numbers



Source: own elaboration with BNI data Oaxaca Regional Office at the end of 2023. In original Spanish language

As a result of the good acceptance in the regional business environment, on October 19 of that same year, 2019, the Antequera Chapter emerged, which to date has 622 businessmen visiting it eager to belong to the network to do their business.

Figure 4
BNI Antequera Chapter in Numbers



Source: own elaboration with BNI data Oaxaca Regional Office at the end of 2023. In original Spanish language

As for the Valles Central Chapter, it emerged in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, its launch was held virtually on October 13, 2020, since due to all the restrictions existing at that time the franchise had to innovate the way of continuing to do business and the founding Oaxacan entrepreneurs accepted the challenge.

Figure 5
BNI Central Valleys Chapter in Numbers



Source: own elaboration with BNI data Oaxaca Regional Office at the end of 2023. In original Spanish language

Referral marketing

Referral marketing or recommendation marketing is, in the words of Moro & Fernández (2020), making customers speak well of brands to their environment, family and friends, which has become a basic tool for attracting new customers. On the other hand, Robles (2011) explains that this is

... The set of promotional techniques that are implemented in order to promote the creation of a community that, passionate about the products and/or services offered by a brand, become its ambassadors in front of the public, being moved in established scenarios and moments to generate recommendations or positive reviews on the web that favor the image of the company. (p.6).

Another definition of referral marketing is that of Shimul & Phau (2018) who explain that it differs from other types of marketing by the fact that consumers help others to have a positive brand experience. Business social networks or networking in a way have evolved into what is currently known as marketing or marketing of referrals, contacts or relationships. This is "the marketing strategy that provides incentives to customers who manage to get new customers for the company is known as a referral strategy" (Putra & Rudhito, 2021, p.2).

A different way of referring to marketing or referral marketing is marketing or relationship marketing, this type of marketing is defined by Steinhoff, Arli & Weaven (2019) as "any marketing activity aimed at establishing, developing and maintaining successful relationships and exchanges" (p.370). This type of marketing includes interactions and communications, both direct or face-to-face, as well as through digital or social media media.

For Putra & Rudhito (2021), this type of strategy is similar to the spread of a disease in epidemiology. The contagion or transmission of the disease is made by contact and is transmitted from person to person, in the same way that reference marketing communicates and transmits in a similar way. While in epidemiology what is sought is to eliminate or reduce at all costs the contagion or transmission of the disease, in marketing what is sought is to maximize and expand the amount of communication, contacts or transmissions as much as possible. In the same way as in epidemiology, the greater the social interaction of customers, the possible dissemination of information and possible references tends to increase. This should be accompanied by a good advertising or marketing strategy to support the information provided through referrals.

Referral marketing is a business strategy that has proven its value in different companies in recent years. According to Li, Luo & Pin (2021), some examples of companies that have been able to capitalize on this strategy are Dropbox, which encouraged its users to make referral invitations to their friends or contacts for additional storage, the case of Pinduoduo, a Chinese online shopping company, or WeChat, a social platform that gives discounts in exchange for referrals. Some other examples of success stories of referral marketing strategies according to Berman (2016) are Roku, PayPal, Digitalis and Omaha Steaks. Berman also commented that the referral marketing strategy has been used by companies such as American Express, Marriott, DirecTV, Time Warner, Netflix, AT&T Wireless, AAA, Virgin Mobile, Verizon Wireless, Vonage, Scottrade, and 24 Hour Fitness gyms. The above examples are just a sample of how referral networks or referral marketing can increase a company's sales and profits.

This coincides with what was expressed by Kumar, Petersen & Leone (2010) who state that "many companies are now using referral marketing campaigns to take advantage of the power of word of mouth and increase referrals to acquire new customers" (p.1). Word-of-mouth transmission is one of the most widely used methods of transmitting information in recent decades. This method can occur unintentionally derived from a purchase or service experience, however, companies seek to make such communication more frequent through strategies and incentives (Putra & Rudhito, 2021).

For Berman (2016), the difference between pure word-of-mouth versus referral marketing strategy lies in the intention and motivation or incentive of current customers to provide new customers. Referral marketing is based on having a satisfied customer base who will be motivated and incentivized to provide referrals from new customers. Some of the advantages of this type of marketing compared to other strategies is that the transmission through an acquaintance provides greater credibility, as well as the possibility of reaching customers that would traditionally be impossible or very difficult to reach.

Guo (2012) explains that the referral marketing strategy has great potential in large markets with a strong word-of-mouth effect, particularly for products with a short life cycle, even more so when the initial market is not developed. Currently, giants such as Google and Amazon use this type of referral strategies by incentivizing their customers to refer products or services to potential customers. These types of social media strategies are very effective as they provide credibility in the recommendations, which has much more impact than traditional marketing campaigns.

In addition to Google and Amazon, this strategy is used by a large number of companies, which is also reflected in the search for keywords marketing references on the internet. According to Berman (2016), recent searches on Bing and Google browsers have yielded 19 million and 357 million results, respectively. For the aforementioned author, some of the advantages and disadvantages of employing such a strategy is that, as an advantage, companies that use them obtain large numbers of new customers, their customers are more likely to acquire the products or services and there is also a greater possibility that customers have a preference or loyalty towards the brand or product. On the other hand, when there are incentives, it is possible that just by getting the reward, customers who are not looking to buy are proposed, as well as that potential customers doubt the veracity of the information if they come to know that there are rewards for obtaining new customers.

It is for this reason that it is not so simple or transparent that this strategy works, for a network or marketing of references to work, that is, to be profitable, different issues must be analyzed and considered such as the existing relationship between people since reference networks and their effectiveness can vary depending on the relationship, it is also important to analyze the form or place of interaction or business social network where the connection was formed, as well as the possible incentive that can be given to those who provide such referrals, since all of the above can have an impact on the growth and performance of the referral marketing (Li, Luo & Pin, 2021).

In this sense, companies that change the focus of their strategies and think of their customers not only as buyers but also as possible promoters, contributors and even influencers of their products or services are those that successfully carry out this strategy and thus achieve significant increases in sales and the growth of their commercial operations (Berman, 2016).

In this regard, Van Den Bulte, Bayer, Skiera & Schmitt (2018) comment that there are two important issues to consider to improve the impact of the relationship marketing strategy, the first is the quality of the relationship between the referee and the recommended, whether the referee does so actively or passively, and social enrichment. that is, "the social bond between a customer and the company is strengthened by the presence of a third party who is connected to both and, therefore, integrates the dyad into a closed triad" (p.4). This is similar to what was found by Marín Rives & Ruiz de Maya (2007) who talk about the identification of customers and their references, as well as business-consumer relationships.

For Kumar, Petersen & Leone (2010), one way to know if referral marketing works is to calculate the customer reference value (CRV) and from this calculation to be able to analyze the different ways of communicating, connecting or referring customers, as well as to incentivize those who provide them. "In order to predict the value of customer referrals, we must first understand how information flows from current customers to prospects" (Kumar, Petersen & Leone, 2010, p.5).

On the other hand, Moro & Fernández (2020) say that one of the most widely used indicators to measure the effect of recommendation marketing is the NPS index, or net promoter score, which is calculated by asking customers how much they would recommend a certain brand or product to their family or friends on a scale of 0 to 10. being zero I would surely not recommend it and 10 I would surely recommend it. People who score between 0 and 6 are considered detractors, those who answer between 7 and 8 are considered passive are neutral and people who score 9 or 10 are considered promoters. The index is determined by subtracting the percentage of detractors against the percentage of promoters.

Reference marketing was originally done personally or directly, however, as new technological tools have been included in business activities, today this strategy can also be done through the media and/or social networks, which has positively increased this strategy by serving as a force multiplier of this type of strategy. Automation on the internet and in software (electronic references or e-referral) also makes these strategies work or have effects much faster, easier and more efficient, also allowing much more information to be obtained through data analysis, data mining and big data.

To recap, referral marketing occurs when current customers of a brand or product speak well or promote these products to their family, acquaintances or friends, either organically, that is, by themselves and without an incentive or with the incentive. Referral marketing has found an important space in business social networks or networking since within these spaces these recommendations can be given.

Framework (State of the Art)

Garnefeld, Eggert, Helm & Tax (2013) conducted a laboratory experiment to demonstrate that reward referral marketing programs strengthen customer loyalty and reinforce the effectiveness of such programs. The study was a combination of theoretical bases and field study where product recommendations were given to groups in exchange for rewards, observing as a result that there is an influence and affectation on new customers when making recommendations or referrals, including in their behavior to the form and amount of money spent, and brand loyalty.

A study carried out, but with a different approach, was carried out by Kumar, Petersen & Leone (2010) who found that knowing what moves the reference value of customers significantly helped to target referral marketing campaigns to the right customers having increases of between 10 and 30% in sales profits generated from the purchases of referrals. In their work they propose a four-step approach: 1. Determine if the customer would have purchased anyway without being referred, 2. Predict the value of each referred customer, 3. Predict the number of referrals each customer is likely to make, and 4. Predict the timing of referrals.

On the other hand, Berman (2016) presents two studies carried out by Schmitt, Skiera, and Van den Bulte (2011), and Trusov, Bucklin, and Pauwels (2009), in the first Schmitt et al. (2011) examined the impact of a benchmark marketing program carried out by a German bank that acquired 5,181 customers with this strategy between 2006 and 2008 and compared them with customers acquired by the bank without the referral program. finding that in comparison the customers obtained through the referral program cost the bank less, stayed longer and generate more profits for the company. The second study, that of Trusov et al. (2009) compared a traditional word-of-mouth dynamic against a formal referral program applied in a major social network over a period of 36 weeks, finding that both techniques are very effective, although often the word-of-mouth strategy, whether it occurs organically or naturally, it can become even better.

In another research on the subject, Shimul & Phau (2018) analyzed how referral marketing impacts luxury brands compared to brand satisfaction, for which they collected information from 393 customers and applied structural modeling equations. The aforementioned authors found that referral marketing, when it comes to positive experiences, has a more important effect on brand preference than on brand loyalty, identifying three key elements, brand satisfaction, brand attachment or preference, and how much customers recommend them.

An additional study on the subject is the one carried out by Demir (2018), who analyzes referral marketing with a focus on environmental protection, specifically the formation of customer organizations of recommendation in favor of the environment (CEA). Demir uses the social identity model and theory to map the relationship in organizations of recommendation customers, finding that referral marketing is a very powerful and useful tool to reach people or customers and that they also become spokespersons in favor of the care and protection of the environment.

Now let's look at the case of Ghosh, S., Gaurav, K., Bhattacharya, S. et al. (2020) who conducted a systematic study with the aim of achieving a methodology that takes advantage of the large amount of existing information on customer behavior as part of reference marketing. Ghosh et al. were able to determine some key customer motivations and their impact from a baseline marketing campaign looking for the efficiency of marketing campaigns.

A case analysis on the subject is the study carried out by Kumar, V., Cohen, G. S., & Rajan, B. (2015) where they sought to obtain brand value from referral marketing of specialty medical practices, where they qualitatively analyzed how doctors and medical specialists managed to build value in a brand through referrals, observing that effectively the more references and recommendations they can obtain, the value of the brand and procedures are more recognized and employed.

In summary, it is noteworthy that a topic with such good results as marketing or referral marketing has so little current research on the subject, although it is true that there are many books and theories that talk about what referral marketing is, in practice and in current research this topic is very little analyzed, with very few case studies of this situation in recent years. years, in the sources and bases mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

This absence in science gives greater relevance to the intention of this research work to investigate this topic and put it into practice seeking, in addition to the initial objectives of the research, to contribute to this relevant and somewhat neglected topic.

Board 2
State of the Art.

Title, article or book	Country and year	Authors	Description or Objective	Results and/or Conclusions
"The Loyalty Revolution: Turning Customers into Partners"	2003, Harvard Business Review Press	Fred Reichheld	Reichheld introduces the concept of the Net Promoter Score (NPS) as a metric to measure customer loyalty through recommendation. Explore how businesses can turn satisfied customers into enthusiastic brand advocates.	Reichheld demonstrates how positive word-of-mouth can drive long-term business growth and customer loyalty. It provides case studies and practical strategies for implementing loyalty programs focused on customer satisfaction and referral generation.

"BNI: The Art of Reference Network"	2007, McGraw-Hill	Ivan Misner	In this book, Misner introduces the idea that referrals are the cornerstone of successful business networks. Explore how to build strong, trusted relationships that generate organic leads and business opportunities.	Misner presents practical strategies for developing an effective referral network, based on trust and reciprocity. He argues that word of mouth is one of the most powerful forms of marketing and offers advice on how to cultivate and maintain long-lasting business relationships.
Identifying the consumer with the company: beyond relationship marketing	Spain, 2007	Longinos Marín Rives; Salvador Ruiz de Maya	"Identifying the Consumer with the Company: Beyond Relationship Marketing" is to explore how the emotional connection between consumers and businesses goes beyond traditional marketing strategies, impacting both consumer behavior and business success.	In today's marketing, companies seek not only customer loyalty, but also brand identification. This involves building deep and meaningful relationships that turn customers into enthusiastic promoters and part of the company's identity, leading them to act not only as consumers, but as members of a social group. This approach not only strengthens customer loyalty, but also benefits the company by making it less vulnerable to changes in the environment and competition.

Optimal decision making for online referral marketing. Optimal decision-making for online referral marketing.	United States of America, 2011	Zhiling Guo	It researches and proposes optimal decision-making strategies for online referral marketing, in order to maximize the impact and effectiveness of referral campaigns in digital environments.	This article theoretically analyzes price and optimal referral strategies under different demand-side dynamics in the context of online referral marketing. The implications of pricing and referral strategies for seller profitability are examined, highlighting how these strategies can vary according to market dynamics and offering guidance for the practical implementation of online referral programs.
Referral marketing: Harnessing the power of your customers. Referral marketing: Harnessing the power of your customers.	United States of America, 2016	Barry Berman	Explore how to harness the power of customers through referral marketing, in order to drive growth and customer loyalty in business strategies.	This article explores the significant differences between traditional and referral marketing programs. It highlights how referral programs focus on motivating satisfied customers and leveraging their network of contacts to reach new customers, as opposed to traditional programs that focus on other aspects of marketing. In addition, it provides an eight-step process for developing, implementing, and evaluating the success of a referral program, along with examples of successful strategies implemented by various

				companies. Despite its proven effectiveness, many companies still underutilize this strategy due to common fallacies about its effectiveness and implementation difficulties.
Book. Winning by Giving, The BNI Story	Mexico, 2017	Ivan Misner, Graham Weihmiller, Robert Skrob	To publicize the history and fundamental principles behind the success of BNI (Business Network International), highlighting how the approach of giving and collaborating has contributed to the growth and development of this business networking organization.	It tells the story of BNI, from its humble beginnings to its global success as the world's most successful referral networking organization. It explores how collaboration, generosity, and the "Win by Giving" philosophy have been instrumental in developing a unique organizational culture and growing the network. It highlights the importance of decision-making, the quality of the members and the personal and professional transformation experienced by BNI members. In addition, it emphasizes how effective networking and practicing the organization's core values are key to making the most of BNI membership and turning it into an investment in future success.

Consumer advocacy for luxury brands Consumer advocacy for luxury brands.	Australia, 2018	Anwar Sadat Shimul, Ian Phau	It investigates how consumers become advocates for luxury brands, exploring how and why some customers are actively engaged in promoting and endorsing these exclusive brands.	This article discusses the role of attachment to luxury brands in consumer advocacy, highlighting its importance over satisfaction and brand loyalty. In addition, it presents contributions to the literature by incorporating the positive consumer experience and exploring the interaction between different key constructs. Luxury brand professionals can benefit from understanding that satisfaction alone is not enough to generate consumer advocacy, and by implementing strategies to strengthen the brand bond and encourage consumer advocacy.
Social customer relationship management: An integrated conceptual framework Social customer relationship management: an integrated conceptual framework	England, 2019	Senika Dewnarain, Haywantee Ramkissoon, Felix Mavondo	It develops an integrated conceptual framework for the social management of customer relationships, addressing how organizations can effectively use social media tools and platforms to interact, engage, and maintain strong relationships with their customers.	This article explores the evolution of CRM towards social customer relationship management, highlighting the importance of co-creating value through social media. It focuses on the hospitality industry, where social media technologies have a significant impact on customer retention, engagement generation, and positive word-of-mouth. It proposes an integrated conceptual framework that merges CRM effectiveness dimensions with social

				media technologies to build engagement and brand loyalty, which can reduce marketing costs and increase revenue for hotel businesses.
Link value, market scenario and referral networks. Link value, market scenario and reference networks.	United States of America , 2020	Yongli Li, Peng Luo, Paolo Pin	It analyzes the relationship between link value, market conditions, and referral networks, in order to understand how these factors affect value exchange and business relationships in a business context.	This article addresses the importance of the value of social media link for businesses, especially in terms of marketing and referral. It focuses on measuring how adding new links affects a company's revenue and proposes cost-effective referral strategies based on these measured values. In addition, it studies the relationship between link value and Bonacich centrality in different market scenarios, providing a new approach to design effective reference mechanisms in the real world.
Title, article or book	Country and year	Authors	Description Objective or	Results and/or Conclusions

The connecting effect. The Proven Method to Grow Your Business Immediately	United States of America , 2020	Ivan Misner, Ph.D.Graham Weihmiller, MBA,CFERobert Skrob	Present a method to increase business growth immediately, focusing on effective network and connection expansion strategies.	"The Connector Effect" addresses the relevance of connections in the business world and presents a proven methodology for developing a strong network of contacts. Through practical examples and specific tips, the author demonstrates how well-cultivated relationships can drive professional and business success. Explore how to build strong relationships that generate a steady stream of referrals through active participation in networking groups like BNI. The importance of one-on-one meetings, the implementation of the GAINS method, and effective follow-up to convert contacts into meaningful connections that drive long-term business success is highlighted.
Ensuring the spread of referral marketing campaigns: a quantitative treatment	United States of America , 2021	Sayantari Ghosh, Kumar Gaurav, Soumik Bhattacharya, Yatindra Nath Singh	It investigates quantitative methods to ensure the effective dissemination of referral marketing campaigns, seeking to identify strategies that maximize the reach and effectiveness of such campaigns.	This study addresses the crucial role social media plays in marketing, focusing on referral marketing. It proposes a methodology to understand customer behavior from a mathematical and quantitative perspective, using hierarchical clustering analysis and natural language processing. In addition, the key determinants that regulate the dissemination of a marketing campaign are investigated, and an experiment is carried out to generate a referral network

				in realistic scenarios. The results obtained provide valuable insights into the spread of the message and the structure of the network, which can be crucial to ensure effective dissemination of a designed marketing campaign.
Brand awe: A key concept for understanding consumer response to luxury and premium brands. Brand amazement: a key concept to understand the consumer response to premium and luxury brands.	England, 2021	Jooyoung Kim, Hyejin Bang, W. Keith Campbella	Investigate how the concept of "brand awe" influences consumer response to luxury and premium brands.	In this study, the concept of "brand amazement" is introduced, a mixture of emotions that consumers experience when encountering luxury or premium brands that they perceive as vast and that require schematic adaptation. This amazement is made up of euphoria, fascination and immensity. Brand amazement is shown to act as an important mediator between the triggers of consumer responses, such as prestige and innovation, and actual consumer responses. This highlights the importance of creating experiences that elicit amazement for brands, as these experiences not only increase attraction to the brand, but can also influence consumer behavior, such as the desire to share and save positive experiences associated with the brand.

CONCLUSIONS

Relationship marketing is a strategy that aims to build and disseminate the brand, build customer loyalty, and create authority in the market (Blanco, 2020). This strategy focuses on establishing, maintaining, and consolidating customer relationships through different strategies (Molina, 2021). One of the main goals of relationship marketing is to generate value for the customer, offering them a unique experience that manages to create a bond (Rodríguez, 2022).

The large amount of competition in the markets, globalization, scientific and technological development generates great pressure for companies which makes them have to look for more and different ways to acquire more customers and sales. This strong competition involves seeking to evolve the way in which companies get new customers and improve their sales, which requires a constant search and updating of marketing and sales techniques or strategies to achieve this.

In this review, both in the theoretical, conceptual and reference framework, the foundations of what marketing or referral or recommendation marketing is, some research that analyzes this strategy and the way to use it were presented.

Although the current research is considered by the authors of the same as very important and valuable, it is considered that it could be very worthwhile to complement it in future research by making use of reference marketing in digital media, the internet and social networks. This research could be enriched with additional research on the use and implementation of referral marketing in digital media, internet and social networks against its traditional use. Finally, it is also suggested to complement this research with some kind of quantitative analysis on the identification of fictitious or non-real references by bots or automated systems and their impact on the credibility of the references and how this can influence consumer purchasing behavior.

Recognition

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