

Small But Mighty Agency Podcast

Episode 102: How to know if a referral network is right for you?

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How do you know if a referral network is right for you?

Imagine having a network that's not just another mastermind or course but a community focused on helping you grow through strategic collaborations and consistent referrals.

Picture this: curated connections, referral pods, and collaboration events tailored to extend your reach and grow your business.

At Agency Together, we've created a purposeful community where the intent is crystal clear: generating strategic collaborations and referrals to grow your agency.

If you're an agency with a niche, tune in.

We'll dive into:

- Why a niche is your best friend for making memorable referral ask
- The untapped potential of strategic collaborations for agencies,
- And how to know if a referral network like Agency Together is your perfect match.

Don't miss this episode. Stay with us to learn how to stand out, get more clients in a referral network and leverage a referral community for maximum impact.

Audrey Joy Kwan

Welcome to the Small But Mighty Agency Podcast. If you're a marketer or consultant, or a creative on a journey of growth from solopreneur to agency owner, follow along because I pull back the curtains on the realities of growing and running a scalable, service-based business and building lean team. I'm your host, Audrey Joy Kwan, I know

what it takes to build an agency, whether it's from solo to three, five or twenty. I've done it, including supporting an agency owner to sell and exit. I've coached and consulted over 120 marketers, creatives, and consultants. And I've been behind the scenes of seven figure businesses. I also have a master's degree in communications specializing in organizational development. All this to say, I know what it takes to grow lead and operate a multiple six, and seven figure small but mighty agency. And here on this podcast is where we'll dive right in.

Audrey Joy Kwan

Hi Friends, now that we're exactly at the halfway point of the year, maybe you're like me; you've been working on something exciting and are ready to share it.

This month, I've been sharing the value of having more strategic collaborations to get consistent referrals.

Our series has looked at why referrals and strategic collaborations are channels you can't ignore in a service-based business, the benefits of having a referral network, the different referral channels you can tap into to attract more clients and how to get more consistent referrals.

In previous episodes, I shared that a strategic way to get more consistent referrals is to have a referral network. This is not another mastermind, program, or course for agency owners where everyone intends to grow from learning course material.

Don't get me wrong—I love to learn, and our community has learning components, but the intent is different. The intent is to generate strategic collaborations and referrals to grow your agency, so the community's setup is for that purpose.

Referrals are a business development channel; if you want consistent referrals, you find a community where people share the same intent and values.

But how do you know if a referral network is right for you?

For starters, look for a network that is structured to help you generate strategic collaborations and referrals. This is what sets the network apart.

At Agency Together, a referral and collaboration network for agency owners, we curate connections, facilitate pods and leverage collaboration events to help you find the right collaborators and extend your reach.

If that sounds like something you want to be part of, and you answer yes to these questions below, our referral and collaboration community might be an excellent fit for you:

The first question - Do you have an industry or service niche?

I'm a broken record on this point. As a small agency, you are much more effective with a niche. It makes the productization of your offer easier. In other words, it is easier to streamline your client delivery processes and make it scalable with a lean team. Plus, a niche agency has the marketing advantage of doing less marketing to get more clients.

To illustrate why getting consistent referrals is easier with a niche, consider this: when you have a niche, you have a crystal clear idea of your ideal client. Who they are, what pains them at work, and what solutions they can and can not find. When you take that into a referral network, you have the advantage of knowing exactly who to ask for, and being specific makes it easier for others to connect you with the right people or channels.

For example, a client of mine is a marketing agency serving private and international schools. She may have more than one ideal client persona, but the personas are specific. Such as a marketing director at a private school, a parent in the parent association of a private school who can make introductions or a person who has been on a podcast that private school administrators listen to.

My point – you will thrive in a referral community if you have a niche and can be concise about who you want to meet.

At Agency Together, I help you identify the highest-impact ask because a generic ask that sounds something like this: "I help businesses get more customers with digital marketing, so if you know someone who needs a marketing agency, let us know." This ask is forgettable.

Contrast that to, "We help marketing directors at private international schools attract more students. Do you know someone who works for a private school or has children

who attend a private school? I'd love to connect with them so that I can understand the school's needs." It's specific.

Metaphorically, the first ask is you swimming in a red ocean and the second ask is a blue ocean.

If you haven't read the book Red Ocean, Blue Ocean, the red ocean is full of sharks trying to take the same bite out of competing resources. In the Blue Ocean, you have real differentiation.

If you have an industry or service niche, the best way to maximize a referral network is to be concise in your ask. This will make it memorable and help others help you.

The second question – Do you believe in the power of strategic collaborations to grow your business?

The heart of strategic collaborations is win-win outcomes. By collaborating, you believe all parties gain value, and win-win is achieved by sharing resources.

Yes, sharing resources means giving and getting referrals to get more clients. It also means sharing audiences through collaborations.

Limited thinking sees strategic collaboration in a referral network as only receiving new clients through referrals or giving referrals for a fee. Often missed opportunities are collaborations to reach wider audiences.

Last year, I facilitated a private audio event in which I featured agency owners to discuss a topic, and it drew hundreds of ears.

If you don't know what a private audio event is – it's a private podcast channel hosted through an app like Hello Audio. To get the audio event, you provide your email and then access the podcast feed with a unique URL in your podcast app.

By bringing a panel together for the audio event and giving each person an episode of the private podcast, we marketed the event as a whole but also leveraged each other's audience to get a wider reach.

The multiplying effect of coming together is powerful, and that's what I do in our referral community.

It's not just about believing in the power of strategic collaborations but also about creating opportunities for you in the membership to increase your visibility. We facilitate panel opportunities, like an audio event that helps agency owners attract more clients and increase your visibility with the community and the wider shared network.

Why am I so passionate about strategic collaborations in a community?

After numerous conversations with various agency owners, one thing has become clear: niche agencies miss out on the potential of strategic collaborations to first generate consistent referrals *and second to leverage collaboration opportunities that* increase visibility and attract more clients.

So, if you believe in the power of strategic collaborations and want meaningful connections with like-minded agency owners who share your values and business goals, Agency Together is for you.

We're more than a network; we provide structured opportunities and a variety of collaboration avenues, from referral exchanges to content partnerships and joint events, all designed to maximize your reach and impact.

Question number three: Are referrals part of your sales strategy?

A common thought I hear agency owners express is that referrals are not consistent enough to be a sales strategy. My response – well, it won't be consistent unless you get strategic.

If referrals are part of your sales strategy and you know it is a valuable form of marketing, then a referral network is a good fit.

When you don't underestimate referrals and collaborations for lead generation, reaching new markets, and generating warmer leads, you unlock a powerful channel for sustainable growth.

A referral network is not a group program, course, or mastermind where members are solely focused on personal development and learning.

Instead, it is a network with a common vision and goal to facilitate strategic collaborations and generate consistent, high-quality referrals, ensuring mutual growth and success.

While you will grow and learn in Agency Together, it differs in purpose from a group program, course, or mastermind because Agency Together is a community focused on mutual growth and success through consistent referrals and strategic collaborations.

Whether referrals play a small or big part in your agency right now, if you know it's worth your attention, a referral network can help you leverage your time and reach.

And question number four, Are you aligned with the key pillars of the network and community?

Last but not least, are you aligned with the key pillars of the community that you want to join?

I believe in helping each other grow, and as a community, a core value is that you will thrive when you collaborate and nurture genuine connections.

These pillars make Agency Together a unique and powerful network for agency owners.

1. Curated meaningful connections

Get handpicked matches connecting you with other agency owners who share your business goals.

Result: Increase the potential to meet more key collaborators and build strong, trust-based relationships for mutual growth.

2. Strategic ecosystem for referrals

You will have access to referral pods that are carefully selected based on industry, services, and business goals to ensure a strategic fit.

Result: Enhances your pod's collective strength for strategic collaborations and referring power so you all get more clients.

3. Is to broaden the opportunities to enhance your visibility

We generate strategic collaboration events, such as audio events and panel discussions, to boost your visibility to a broader audience.

With members from diverse niches and geographical locations, your reach extends beyond your existing network.

The Result is to open doors to new markets and growth opportunities.

4. Time Well Spent:

We facilitate interaction to ensure it is purposeful and productive.

It is purposefully designed to help you minimize time waste and maximize outcomes.

Now If you answered yes to the four questions:

- Do you have an industry or service niche?
- Do you believe in the power of strategic collaborations to grow your business?
- Is referrals part of your sales strategy?
- Are you aligned with the key pillars of the network and community?

If you answered yes to these questions, I invite you to connect with me to learn how Agency Together can help you grow your business.

Go to [audreyjoykwan.com/agency together](https://audreyjoykwan.com/agency-together). The link is in the show notes

Agency Together is not just another networking community. You gain a curated referral network for agency owners who value getting more clients with strategic connections and collaborations.

I believe in helping each other grow; we are stronger together. Agency Together is not a program, course, or mastermind. We're a community focused on collaboration to get more referrals, collaborate and grow your agency.

To find out more and secure your spot, go to [audreyjoykwan.com forward slash agency together](https://audreyjoykwan.com/agency-together).

Audrey Joy Kwan

Hey, there. Thanks for hanging out with me at the Small But Mighty Agency Podcast. If you enjoyed this episode, it would mean the world to me if you hit the follow or subscribe button in your podcast app and share it with a friend and I'll see you in the next one.