

Remarkable Referrals

You can ask clients for referrals, or you can give them something to talk about. BOWA Builders, in McLean, Va., did both this spring, and the result was 25 referrals in 25 days.

The impetus was a "Spring Fling Giveaway," a contest announced in BOWA's March 22 e-newsletter that invited clients to refer "someone who is considering a residential remodeling project." Those making referrals were entered in a drawing for a five-day, four-night vacation to Exclusive Resorts, a luxury "residence club" with destinations around the world.

"We do very high-end work, and our best leads come through referrals," says Kathy Kelly, director of marketing. The gamble undoubtedly cost even more than the \$1,200 getaways the company usually gives to clients whose referrals lead to two signed construction contracts. But the incentive should match the client, and a \$50 gift certificate isn't likely to do much for the typical high-end homeowner.

"We do things that are remarkable, and that get people talking," Kelly says. That's a goal that any remodeler can aspire to, regardless of target audience or marketing budget. —L.T.