

FOR PHOENIX + TUCSON AGENTS

The Referral Engine Playbook

Your happiest clients want to refer you. This is the system that lets them: exact ask moments, word-for-word scripts, a Google profile that survives the lookup, and a 90-day cadence built for Arizona.

Four fill-in scripts

A 90-day engine

Google profile checklist

Every stat sourced



WHY THIS MATTERS

Referrals are engineered, not inherited

Relationship business is carrying agents through this market: 43% of buyers found their agent through a referral from a friend, neighbor, or relative, and another 18% rehired an agent they had used before, 61% of all buyer-side hires (NAR 2025 Profile). Treating that pipeline like weather, something that happens to you, is the most expensive habit in real estate.

NAR 2025 Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers

61%

of buyer-side hires came through a referral or a past relationship

NAR 2025 Profile

28%

of the typical Realtor's business now comes from past clients, up from 20% a year earlier

NAR 2026 Member Profile

Half

of the pipeline is repeat business for agents with 16+ years in

NAR 2026 Member Profile

THE GAP IS THE WHOLE GUIDE

More than 9 out of 10 buyers say they would use their agent again or recommend them (NAR 2025 Profile). Only 18% actually did. That gap is not disloyalty, it is silence: no ask, no visibility, and a Google presence that did not survive the lookup. Your past clients are shopping, too: repeat buyers made up 55% of all purchasers, and nearly half of them interviewed two or more agents (Zillow 2025 Consumer Housing Trends). Every point of that gap is unclaimed business, and closing it is a system, not a personality trait.

- 1 Moments.** Ask when emotion peaks, not when paperwork does. Page 2 maps the windows.
- 2 Words.** Scripts beat vibes. Page 3 hands you four asks word for word.
- 3 Proof.** A referred name still gets Googled. Pages 4 and 5 build the profile and the review pipeline behind it.
- 4 Cadence.** A 90-day rhythm that runs all year, sized for a snowbird market. Page 6.

TIMING

Ask at the peaks, not at the paperwork

Referrals and reviews are yes-or-no questions, and the answer depends less on your words than on your timing. Map every ask to an emotional high and it stops feeling like a favor.

OFFER**Offer accepted**

Pure adrenaline. Plant the seed with no task attached: you love working with the people they send you.

CTC**Clear to close**

Relief plus excitement, and nothing to sign today. This is the peak window for the referral ask.

KEYS**Keys at recording**

Take their photo at the front door. It becomes tonight's thank-you text and next year's anniversary note.

WK 2**The two-week call**

Ask how the house is treating them, then make the review ask. The first monsoon dust storm on the patio furniture counts as a reason to call.

MO 6**The no-agenda text**

One text, zero selling. You are training them to hear from you without a pitch attached.

YR 1**Home anniversary**

Send the door photo back with one line and an offer to run their updated number. Easiest re-ask you will ever send.

WHAT MOST AGENTS GET WRONG

No published research ranks ask moments, so here is the craft answer: the famous advice says ask at closing, and in Arizona that means the title-office signing appointment, a stack of disclosures and wire double-checks. It is the emotional low of the whole escrow. The highs sit on either side: clear to close a few days before, keys at recording, and the two-week call after the boxes are gone. Ask there, and you will notice closing day is the one moment this timeline skips on purpose.

STEAL THESE SCRIPTS

Word for word: the four asks

Fill in the brackets, then say each one out loud until it sounds like you. Delivery rule for all four: make the ask eye to eye or by phone, then put the link or the intro in writing within the hour.

THE PEAK ASK · AT CLEAR TO CLOSE

Congrats, you are officially clear to close! Can I ask a small favor while the good news is fresh? When [friends, coworkers, family] mention moving, I would love an intro. Just text us both together and I will take it from there.

THE REVIEW ASK · AT KEYS OR THE TWO-WEEK CALL

Would you be open to sharing a couple of sentences on Google about how [the sale, the search] went? It is genuinely how people in [your neighborhood, your office] decide who to trust. I will text you the link, it takes about two minutes.

THE INTRO HANDOFF · WHEN THEY MENTION A FRIEND

Amazing. Easiest next step: text us both together so I am not a cold call to [name]. I will take it from there and treat them exactly the way I treated you.

THE REACTIVATION TEXT · FOR THE QUIET PAST CLIENT

Was just thinking about [the Gilbert house]. Homes near you have been [selling fast, closing above list, taking longer], want me to run your updated number? Zero strings.

A QUICK ARIZONA NOTE

Thank-you gifts are gratitude, never a payment. Arizona law does not allow real estate compensation to flow to unlicensed people (A.R.S. 32-2155), so a cash referral fee to a past client is off the table. The handwritten note, the pie, the coffee card: send them unconditionally, never per deal, and confirm your broker's gift policy first. Agent-to-agent referral fees are a separate lane: normal, negotiable, and paid broker to broker.

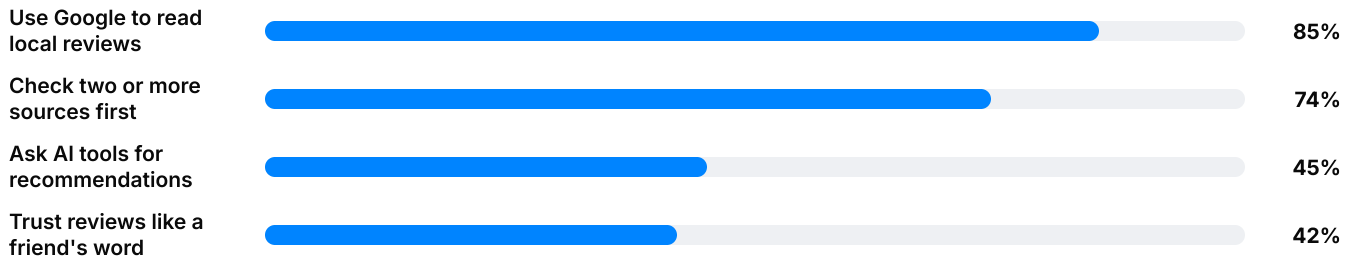
THE LOOKUP TEST

Your Google profile is your referral landing page

A warm intro does not skip the vetting. 33% of buyers say online research played a key role in choosing their agent (Zillow 2025 Consumer Housing Trends), and now that written buyer agreements get signed before touring (NAR practice changes, August 2024), the hiring decision often lands before the first meeting. The referral opens the door; your search results decide who walks through it.

Zillow 2025 Consumer Housing Trends Report for Agents

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A REFERRED NAME GETS SEARCHED



BrightLocal 2025; AI figure from BrightLocal AI + Trust, 2026

READ THE 42% HONESTLY

Reviews rarely win the deal on their own. Trust in online reviews has slid to 42%, down from 79% in 2020, and 63% of consumers lose trust after seeing mostly negative reviews (BrightLocal, 2025). So the profile will not close a referral by itself, but a thin or rough one ends it before the phone rings. Meanwhile the fastest riser: 45% of consumers now ask AI tools like ChatGPT for local recommendations, up from 6% a year earlier, and 97% of those users double-check the AI against real reviews (BrightLocal AI + Trust, 2026). One pipeline of real, detailed reviews now feeds both machines.

- ☐ Profile claimed as you, the agent, not just your brokerage
- ☐ Category: Real Estate Agent, service areas set to your metro
- ☐ The phone listed rings a phone you actually answer
- ☐ Headshot recent and recognizably you
- ☐ Weekly post: a new listing, a sold story, or a community shot (free galleries at listerpros.com/community-photos)
- ☐ Google review short link saved to your phone favorites
- ☐ Every review answered within 7 days
- ☐ Replies free of addresses, prices, and deal details
- ☐ Q&A seeded with your five most-asked questions
- ☐ Photos current: your last three listings, not 2019's

THE REVIEW PIPELINE

Turn the yes into a posted review

96% of consumers say they are open to writing a review, but only 29% wrote one in the past year (BrightLocal, 2025). That gap is not unwillingness, it is friction. Ask at the emotional moment, then deliver one tappable link: an email request is the top trigger at 40%, ahead of an in-person ask at 27% (BrightLocal, 2025).

BrightLocal Local Consumer Review Survey, 2025

MOMENT	THE ASK	THE DELIVERY
Clear to close	In person or by phone, at the high	Text the Google link within the hour
Keys at recording	Ask while you take the door photo	Email that evening: three lines, one link
Two-week call	Re-ask only if no review has posted	Text the link again in the same thread
Home anniversary	Soft re-ask for repeat clients	Same thread, same link, zero pressure
A review posts	Reply within 7 days, every time	Short thanks, zero transaction details

From: You · To: Your client · 47 minutes after the yes

That link I promised

1.

Thank you again for trusting me with [the sale, the search]. Working with you was a highlight of my year.

2.

Here is that Google link: [your review short link]. A couple of honest sentences is perfect, takes about two minutes.

3.

No rush and no pressure either way. It just helps [neighbors, friends] find me the way you did.

Send it within the hour, while the yes is warm. Unconditional wording only: no incentives, no sentiment screening, no asking twice in one week.

THE COMPLIANCE LINE

Never pay, never gate, never screen. The FTC's Consumer Reviews and Testimonials Rule (effective October 2024) bans buying, incentivizing, or suppressing reviews, with civil penalties up to \$51,744 per violation (FTC, 2024). Google removed 292 million policy-violating reviews in 2025, roughly 1 in 5 submissions (Google, April 2026). So ask every client the same way, happy or not, and let the answer be theirs. Then hold up your end: 63% of consumers expect a business to respond to reviews within a few days to a week, and only 7% expect no response at all (BrightLocal, 2025).

THE 90-DAY ENGINE

Ninety days to a referral system that runs

Cadence beats blast. The failure mode is treating all 400 contacts identically; the fix is three tiers, one weekly rhythm, and a calendar that respects an Arizona summer.

TIER	WHO	THE TOUCH
A-list	Past clients and vocal fans, your top 25 to 50	Personal: a call, a handwritten note, or a pop-by, monthly-ish
B-list	Warm sphere: friends, neighbors, office, gym	A personal text or comment quarterly, plus the monthly lane
C-list	Everyone else in the database	Automated: market update or home-anniversary email, monthly

WK 1

Sort the database

Every contact gets a letter: A, B, or C. Two evenings, done. Imperfect tiers beat a perfect someday.

WK 3

Reactivate ten

Send the page 3 reactivation text to your ten best quiet A-list clients. Expect replies; that is the point.

MO 2

Set the weekly rhythm

Five A or B calls and two handwritten notes per week. Fifteen minutes a day, protected like a showing.

MO 3

Plan the season

Book one client event inside the November to March window, when the Valley and Tucson refill. Nobody attends a July patio party at 112 degrees.

DAY 90

Install the Moment Map

Tape the page 2 timeline and page 3 scripts to every active file. From here the engine runs on transactions, not willpower.

THE SNOWBIRD MULTIPLIER

Arizona referrals are a national game. Every happy winter-visitor client carries a full network in another state, and the out-of-state agents sending buyers into Phoenix and Tucson vet a referral partner exactly the way consumers do: Google first. Those agent-to-agent fees are normal, negotiable, and flow broker to broker, so loop your broker in early. Through summer, while half your sphere is in Flagstaff or San Diego, keep the engine on calls, texts, and anniversary notes; save the party for season.

PRINT IT, PIN IT, RUN IT

The referral engine checklist

- ☐ Sort every contact into A, B, or C this week
- ☐ Make the peak ask at clear to close, not at the signing table
- ☐ Answer every review within 7 days, with zero deal details
- ☐ Send the reactivation text to ten quiet past clients
- ☐ Book the client event inside the November to March window
- ☐ Tape the Moment Map scripts to every active transaction file
- ☐ Text the Google review link within an hour of every yes
- ☐ Never pay, gate, or screen for reviews; ask everyone the same way
- ☐ Make five calls and write two handwritten notes every week
- ☐ Calendar every home anniversary with the front-door photo attached



ListerPros

ListerPros has photographed Arizona real estate since 2013, for thousands of agents across Phoenix and Tucson. One visit captures photos, vertical video, aerials, 3D tour and floor plan, and everything is back within 5 hours of the end of the shoot. Guaranteed.

Every stat in this guide is sourced: the research named where it appears, 2019 to 2026. Sources on request. © 2026 ListerPros · Mesa, AZ

Book your next shoot
listerpros.com

(480) 582-7767

@listerpros on Instagram, Facebook and TikTok