

**FOR: Bank Sales Teams**

## **4 Guidelines for Developing Centers of Influence**

1. **Don't try to "bank" the firm and "get referrals" at the same time**
  - a. The research shows no correlation between number of referrals and banking the firm
  - b. Too many "messages" on a call dilutes your "primary" message
2. **Be sure you have followed the outlined steps for the first 5 calls on a prospective COI**
  - a. Do you understand his or her client base
  - b. As an example, a client base that is primarily contractors may create a high number of referral declines
  - c. Do you understand the value proposition that the COI uses with his or her clients? Does your value proposition match?
    - As an example, if she uses a "low cost provider" value proposition and you don't, there will be constant problems in the relationship
3. **Consider the Center of Influence (COI) as a source of deposits**
  - a. Bankers have typically focused on loans with COIs
  - b. COIs may have clients that are in the mature stage and have excess cash in their businesses
  - c. How do they advise their mature clients to manage excess cash?
    - Into business investments or securities
    - Into personal accounts
4. **The key to success is communicating**
  - a. Remember that referral relationships are triangles. The needs on all points on the triangle must be understood
    - The COI
    - The COI's client
    - The banker
  - b. When being "tested" in the first few referrals, how you say no is critical
    - Go into the communication with the COI prepared
    - Say no quickly and with no excuses
    - Show specific reasons why you are declining
    - Discuss what the COI's client would have to do differently to improve the chances of approval

- Consider going over a written target profile to improve understanding of the clients you can best serve
- c. After 3 or more referrals that get declined, consider the possibility that this may not be a test. The businesses referred may be typical of the clients the COI serves. Are they a good match for you and the bank?

