

Bring a Friend a Week

Lawrence Neal here and welcome back to highintensitybusiness.com. This is Episode 316 and in today's episode we're going to be talking about Bring a Friend a Week.

What is Bring a Friend a Week?

This is a fantastic marketing tactic that was shared with me [Discover Strength](#)'s CEO and Founder [Luke Carlson](#) way back in 2018 actually. Now, I know many of you have reopened your studio maybe been reopened for a while, maybe you've just reopened depending on where you are in the world, and maybe some of you are unfortunately still closed. But regardless of where you are in your business journey right now you can utilize this tactic to acquire new customers immediately.

Luke shared this tactic with me on [Episode 145](#) back in 2018 which was called how to generate more revenue in your high intensity training business which is a fantastic episode by the way. Thanks to Luke, and I've had just tremendous feedback on that specific episode and it has really helped business owners craft their strategy and helped them grow their business so I highly recommend you go check that out anyway.

This specific tactic, Bring a Friend a Week, has been the most successful marketing tactic for Discover Strength over the last 12 years attracting new clients. Now, Luke told me that back in 2018 so maybe they've utilized, well, I'm sure they've utilized other marketing tactics since then obviously. But I'm confident that this still ranks well up there in their most effective marketing tactics, if not, the most effective tactic they've used to attract new clients to their business.

Bring a Friend a Week

Again, as of the time we recorded this specific episode Bring a Friend a Week was responsible for generating 60-90 free introductory workouts for [Discover Strength](#) when a typical week was 13.5 free introductory workouts, again, as of June 2018. That is a good number of free workouts typically without any promo – 13.5. But 60-90 is obviously phenomenal and they were able to acquire 33 new clients in Q2 in 2018 using this tactic which is just exceptional. Now, obviously we have to factor in the fact that [Discover Strength](#) got a larger high intensity training business. I believe at the particular time we recorded this episode they had around 4 to 5 studios, and so obviously that is going to contribute to this number as they have more studios and more staff to run the free workouts.

However, because this tactic has been so effective I've actually been helping members inside [HIT Business Membership](#) and clients in [HIT Business Intensive](#) to execute on this particular campaign and has been really, really successful for a number of these clients. What I typically see for a single studio is at least 10 new clients so long as you're executing on the campaign correctly and ticking all the boxes you should see 10 new clients. Obviously that number can vary significantly depending on the size of your existing client base and the size of things like your email list and your current network. As the more you have, the more you can leverage to generate as many free workouts as possible.

So what is Bring a Friend a Week?

Well, I guess it is fairly self-explanatory but essentially the way it works is you schedule this promotion for a single week and you give your clients the opportunity to bring friends in during that week in return for some kind of incentive. Actually on a recent podcast episode with [Sherri McMillan](#) which was [Episode 296](#) where we talked about marketing tactics. We talked about

Bring a Friend a Week

some research that Sherri did in trying to understand the kinds of incentives that clients would find interesting or valuable, and that would drive some kind of action. I think she did some kind of survey or some kind of focused group to understand the types of things people wanted. And so she asked questions like do they want supplements, or gift cards, and various other things. Quite interestingly, or maybe not, surprisingly what she found they wanted was just more workouts so free workouts. I mean that's ultimately what they are paying money for so the obvious incentive to offer a client is some kind of free session or discount of their workouts.

That is why I think probably the most logical incentive to use for Bring a Friend a Week is to offer your clients free sessions. That is certainly what Discover Strength do, and that seems to work very, very well indeed.

Why should you do Bring a Friend a Week?

Well, I've obviously talked about the types of return that you might be able to expect from doing this particular tactic. But the other reason why I think it is so fantastic is it's probably one of the simplest promotions that you can possibly think of. It's very, very low investment and you're just utilizing your existing client base to drive the promotion. The actions that we're going to talk about in terms of how you can make this as effective as possible a really, really low cost and relatively low effort and should, again, provide a high return on investment. Again, this is a proven tactic. [Discover Strength](#) have used this for at least 12 years and I've got experienced working with lots of other high intensity training business who've also utilized this tactic with success as well.

Bring a Friend a Week

One thing to factor into this is even if your referrals that come in do not sign up for your services. Obviously, you've got to factor in the fact that conversion rate is going to be lower than a typical free introductory workout just because they are coming via a friend so the friend in being incentivized to drive that person in for a workout. They might even know in the back of their mind that they are referring someone who might not be a good fit for your business. Maybe they don't fit your target market but they know they are going to get a free workout anyway, and that's okay, and so we should expect a lower conversion. The reason why that's okay is as long as you deliver a world class experience workout experience and great customer service when the prospects comes in with their friend or separately. Even if they don't join they will generate word of mouth. They will talk about the experience with other people who might be a good fit and what you'll find is this will help you generate referrals. That's why it's really important to take every single free introductory workout so seriously so that you can optimize conversions and optimize referrals as well.

Moving on to the next section of this podcast. **Let's discuss how you actually run Bring a Friend a Week.**

The first thing to think about is you need to pick specific weeks in a year when you'll be running this campaign. Now, [Discover Strength](#) runs this campaign twice per year and I believe the reason they do that is for scarcity purposes. Because if you run this campaign too often it might actually dilute the effectiveness of the campaign because if your client knows that you are running this regularly then less likely to be motivated to take action to actually arrange for a friend to visit. Whereas if they know it's only happening a couple of times a year then they are far more likely to take advantage of that and actually drive you more free introductory workouts. So you need

Bring a Friend a Week

to pick specific weeks in the year when you feel this is the going to make the most sense. Obviously you want to avoid scheduling it during some kind of public holiday, or half term, or times during the year where your target market are likely to be busy or perhaps off on vacation with their family for example. But there is no hard-and-fast rule on when you actually schedule these weeks. I've seen them being scheduled at random times during the year and still be very effective. But it obviously make sense to potentially test scheduling these during popular times to run campaigns such as a New Year campaign so leveraging New Year's resolutions and also a pre-summer campaign to get summer body ready.

Now, this is being published on April 21st 2021 and so if you're listening to this and thinking I want to execute this campaign immediately then obviously you can perhaps leverage the pre-summer body ready messaging for this campaign since you could probably look to kick this off around May 10th. That gives you a little bit of time to prepare and then about two weeks' notice for clients as well, so actually it might be good timing to leverage that kind of messaging. But don't worry if you're listening to this way off into the future then this is a campaign you can really use at any time. But you just need to be mindful of, as I said before, things colliding with this such as public holidays or half terms or other sort of cultural events that happen in your country or state which you just need to be aware of when planning these kinds of campaigns.

Let's talk about the **promotion plan**.

The first thing to think about is your messaging. A few high level things to think about when you're doing all of your messaging, firstly, you want to be very succinct about the author and the rhythm. What's in it for your client? For example, you want to be specific with the author which



Bring a Friend a Week

might be a free introductory personal training session and you want to be very clear that the referrer, your client, gets a free workout even if their friend doesn't join. That really makes it a no brainer. And you want to be explicit about the fact that there is no limit to the number of introductions and free sessions. For example, if your client refers 5 free introductory workouts and they receive 5 free sessions even if someone does not join.

Now, needless to say you want to promote this across all of the places where you are present so if you have a website, and a blog, you want to post it on your blog. You want to send it as an email campaign to all of your list. Email will definitely my preference. And obviously if you're on social media you want to share it on social media as well. You can use similar messaging across all of those platforms and I'm going to give you a template right now.

In terms of the messaging, you firstly want to think of your title. This would be the title, could be the subject line for your email, but also a title at the top of your blog post, or email, or social media post. And that will make sense for that title to be Bring a Friend a Week. And then, right unto that you want a date. You want a start date and the end date for the campaign, and then some kind of a tagline. Some kind of hook. Something that grabs the attention of the reader to pull them in to the content. That could be, *"Introduce a friend to your company with a free introductory session and you'll receive a free session."* By the way, when I said your company that's insert name of your company. Right unto that you want to be explicit about the fact that there is no limit to the number of free workouts they can refer and free sessions they will receive.

And then you want a very clear 3-point plan so they know exactly what to do and how to actually take advantage of this offer. So that might be #1, if it's on email for example, *"Forward this email*

Bring a Friend a Week

for a friend” or if it’s on social media, #1 could be *“Tag your friend on social media”*. And then #2, you want to have you want to have let’s say, *“Your friend schedules with the button below”*, so if it’s one email for example it will be a nice clear call to action button at the bottom of the email. So you want to say, *“Your friend schedules the session by clicking the button below”*, and that will take them to a scheduler on your website or perhaps a portal on [MINDBODY](#) or something like that. And then #3, they simply schedule a free introductory workout online. What I said just now that would be directed to a scheduler where they can put that session. You want that 3-point plan clearly stated on wherever you post this campaign so your blogpost, your email, and your social media.

Now, the next part of the promotional strategy is probably in my mind the most important part. Although all of these different actions work in unison to make this campaign very effective. And that is to make sure your promoting Bring a Friend a Week to every single client who comes in for a workout in the days and weeks leading up to the campaign. When someone comes in for a workout you should always have some kind of promotional focus that you talk about. That could be any promo you’re running around that time. In this case, before you start the workout, you just want to be very sure and succinct with running Bring a Friend a Week on x day. It is a great opportunity for you to bring a friend and receive a free session. You want to tell them at the start of the workout. It’s not ideal to promote this kind of thing after the workout as people are just exhausted and they can’t think. I don’t know about you but when I’m training people the conversation after the training are generally very short and not complex. You want to tell them about the promotion before the workout when they are a little bit more compos mentis. And then what you want to do is when the workout is finished you want to have some kind of physical handouts so a flyer. This is the probably the most time consuming part of this whole campaign.

Bring a Friend a Week

It's not particularly time consuming to create a good flyer again with the details of the campaign so using the same messaging I talked about before. Maybe some graphics and image showing you training a client. Something like that. And with your branding on obviously as well so you want your logo. You want to have everything consistent across all your branding so your logo should be the same. Your color scheme, your fonts should really be the same across your physical flyers, your social media posts, your Facebook page, etc, your emails. It should all be consistent because consistency in branding creates trust. As soon as there is a little bit of inconsistency it doesn't look as professional and it will decrease trust and ultimately reduce sales and conversions.

The point of doing all of these things because it can be quite a lot and obviously people are going to be, they should be hearing about it or getting a flyer when they are coming for their workout. They'll be receiving an email or maybe a text message. They'll be getting tag on social media or seeing it on social media. You might think, "That's a lot of touch points. I don't want to bombard people." But what you got to remember is we're living in a very, very distracted world right now. People are bombarded by messaging all over the place and you really need to be persistent and have multiple touch points to maximize conversions. Do not underestimate the importance of this. Make sure you are being very farer because someone might say... They might get told for instance during a workout about this, "Ah, that's great idea. I have a bunch of friends who I would love to come in for a free workout." But then they forget, and so by sending them email it's actually going to be helpful to them in reminding to actually take action and get that friend scheduled.

Now, in terms of the mechanics of this you want to make sure that the scheduling is very seamless and low friction. I mean, this should be built in your business already when you are just

Bring a Friend a Week

doing a free workouts normally. You want always want scheduling to be really, really low friction to maximize conversions. So just make sure that your online funnel where someone clicks the link to schedule it's just really straightforward and really clear. Maybe it takes something like [MINDBODY](#) which is what we use in our studio which is probably the market leader for fitness business management and scheduling. You want to take them to something like that where it's a very clean, simple, easy to use portal, or maybe a scheduler that's embedded on the website where they can use as well.

Next thing you need to think about is scheduling arrangements. You want to set it up so that the friends can arrive together or separately and there's a few reasons for this. Firstly, if you're working with very busy people, if your target market is busy professionals for example, then obviously some of these people are very time starved and won't always be able to schedule together, or maybe they've got family commitments. You need to be able to cater for that. But there is an added benefit when they do arrive together and that is the friend really helps to sell the session. There is no better salesperson than your client. They are always going to be way more effective at selling than you are. If you are sitting there doing a consultation with the client's friend and the client is sat next to them, they are going to be reinforcing what you're saying. They are probably going to add their own experience which is actually just going to have an even more powerful effect on the prospect and going to increase the probability of conversion.

Now, the next thing to touch on is you need to have a really solid sales process for your free introductory workout. I covered our sales process on [Episode 310 – The Ultimate High Intensity Training Sales Process](#) which was largely inspired from what I have learned from Luke and

Bring a Friend a Week

Hannah at [Discover Strength](#), and also my 10-year career in technology sales in London where I had a fair amount of success and learned a lot about sales, and also what I've learned talking to hundreds of guests on the podcast and learning about their sales process in their high intensity training business. I think that gives you a really nice template to actually start with in your business. Effectively this is a 45-minute free introductory workout that kicks off with a consultation where you sit down with a client and ask a few questions to understand their needs, their goals, their medical history, their experience. Then you go into a brief on what the workout looks like and how it's going to go and tailor that back to the client's interests and needs. You then run through the workout with the friend first. Train the friend first. You don't want them spectating. I think the problem with them spectating is they might actually be put off. If they see your long-time client really suffering they are going to be quite fearful of the workout themselves. Whereas, if we put them through first they are less likely to have that trepidation and the friend may actually help in terms of motivation as well. And then what I would have is I will arrange for the friend so that the client to train after the friend and have the friend watch. That seems to work quite well. Again, there is no hard-and-fast rule here so if you want to be more efficient we'll have the friend train separately with a different trainer. That's fine as well.

Then after the workouts are finished you want to go to your proven process. This is your how to plan. This is your plan for your client how you're going to help them achieve their goals and get great results. How exactly that works with that processes so that can give the client confidence and that you have a plan for them to help them achieve their goal. And then after that it should be a very natural close to the free introductory workout where they will probably ask you to how they can schedule their next session or how they can get setup to pay. But obviously you do assume that you always want to ask for the sale you want to use the wording like, "*How would*

Bring a Friend a Week

you like to get started?” “Do you like to train once a week or twice a week?” Again, this is covered in much more detail on [Episode 310](#) called The Ultimate High Intensity Training Sales Process where I go into this in much more depth. If you want to develop a really, really strong sales process then please go and listen to the episode as that will plug-in nicely into the Bring a Friend a Week campaign.

Now if you want to be more efficient you can obviously abbreviate that process so when you listen to it there also be a PDF download where you can actually see the entire checklist for the entire process and you might want to abbreviate that for Bring a Friend a Week to be more efficient. And that might mean for instance reducing some of the questions that you can make it a little bit more efficient and be respectful of your client’s and their friend’s time.

That’s it in terms of the mechanics so let’s just go into a couple of what ifs. I’m just thinking of questions that you might have in the top of your mind, things that you might be concerned about regarding Bring a Friend a Week. I’ve tried to predict this but obviously if you have more I’d love to hear them in the comments to the post on this episode over on Episode 316 on highintensitybusiness.com.

I think the first thing I wanted to address is if you’re not open so even if you’re still closed and delivering virtual personal training then you can still use this campaign. It works in almost exactly the same way. The process is the same but the benefit is there is now no travel issue. There is no restriction to who someone can refer. If you’re a client and they have a friend somewhere across the world, or across the state, or across the country, so long as the time zone works for you, then they can actually refer that person. That actually increase the net, increases the

Bring a Friend a Week

number of potential referrals that could be scheduled for a free workout. That could actually work very, very well. Obviously, HIT is probably not going to make a lot of sense for them to train together so they'll probably have to schedule that separately.

Now, if you are listening to this thinking, "Well, this is wonderful, Lawrence, but I don't actually have any clients. I just started my high intensity training business. I don't have even one client." Well, obviously, if that's the case then you're going to have to utilize some other tactics first to actually get a few clients through the door. The first two tactics that I pretty much always recommend for HIT startups to utilize, super straightforward and very, very effective. The first one which surprises me just how much this goes overlooked but it really is the most useful and probably the most effective tactic at getting your first couple of clients is just to invite your entire network for a free workout. Connect with everyone in your network. Text all your friends, your family. Send emails to everyone in your network in your local area and invite everyone for a free workout and then just do your absolute best to deliver a world class workout and word class customer service. If you do that, you're going to acquire clients and you're going to start generating referrals. If you bring people in and you give crap workouts and crap customer experience then obviously you're not going to have as much success, but you do need to practice. You're not going to be perfect straight away but you just want to have a plan in place so that you can run someone through a great workout. I just talked about the ultimate sales process which is a proven method to actually deliver a great experience. You can use that to increase your chance of delivering a great workouts from the get go and start acquiring clients straightaway. I think maybe people shy away from approaching their network because they don't like to sell to friends and family. But I think we all need to get over that because the reality is if your friends and family don't trust you to come in for a free workout then how do you expect to gain the trust

Bring a Friend a Week

of someone cold through some kind of advert or web lead for example. This is probably your hottest leads. These are your best bet of acquiring customers in the beginning is utilize your network.

The second thing is networking events. Now, I know this is a little our favorites at the moment due to COVID and a lot of them are online. But that is still okay, you can still do them online. A networking event is just an event where you meet up once or twice where you've got a group of people, group of professionals and you talk about what you do and you help generate business for each other. You find referrals for each other. However, what I've noticed is that in some of these networking events where the group are typically busy professionals like in [BNI](#) for example which stands for [Business Network International](#). They are a great fit for your business. They are time starved. They typically don't have some kind of consistent exercise regime because they don't have the time or energy so they are a great fit for your business. And what I've found with clients is that it's been a great way for them to acquire customers in the beginning. For example, [Live Oak Strength](#) which is owned by [Owen Dockham](#). When they first started Owen acquired 70% of his client revenue through [BNI](#). He was completely reliant on that at the beginning and it was very, very effective for him. It doesn't have to be [BNI](#) but you want to probably look at some kind of business networking meetup even in person or virtually where you can actually start practicing your pitch. Practice your one liner for your business as you start acquiring customers that way.

Those would be my two tips to get started – network, go out to your existing network, Invite everyone for a free workout, and look out for and research networking events in your area. I think those tactics are so powerful. Obviously there are more but those are two I would start



Bring a Friend a Week

with. And once you start having clients coming in, maybe you've been acquiring customers over a short time then you can start thinking about arranging a campaign like Bring a Friend a Week.

That brings us to the end of this podcast. If you would like personal coaching from me to help you actually execute this campaign and tailor it to your business then please consider joining [HIT Business Membership](#) where I provide based forum coaching to actually help you execute these types of campaigns in your business to help you grow your high intensity training business. We also have a high intensity training forum community and monthly virtual happy hours so you can stay connected with your colleagues in high intensity training business. And then lastly, we have tons of content modularized and tailored to growing your high intensity training business from helping you build a better website, helping you improve marketing, sales, trainer recruitment, operations, productivity, finance management, personal training programming, etc. All the content is tailored specifically to helping you grow your high intensity training business. It's all tailored for this specific niche market that we're all in. If you're interested in having access to all of that, please go to highintensitybusiness.com/join.

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