

ARIZONA EDITION

TOP AGENT

MAGAZINE

WHY FLEXIBILITY HURTS (NOT HELPS) YOUR ABILITY TO CLOSE SALES DEALS

YES, THERE IS LIFE IN REAL ESTATE ADS AFTER CRAIGSLIST WENT COLD

HOW TO TRAIN CATS AND SALESPEOPLE

16 THINGS INCREDIBLY LIKEABLE PEOPLE DO

TOOLS OF TOUCH: STAYING IN TOUCH IN WAYS THAT MATTER

DON'T FORGET THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF BUSINESS PLANNING

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LORI BLANK

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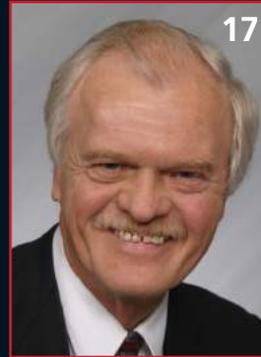
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TOP AGENT MAGAZINE



LORI BLANK



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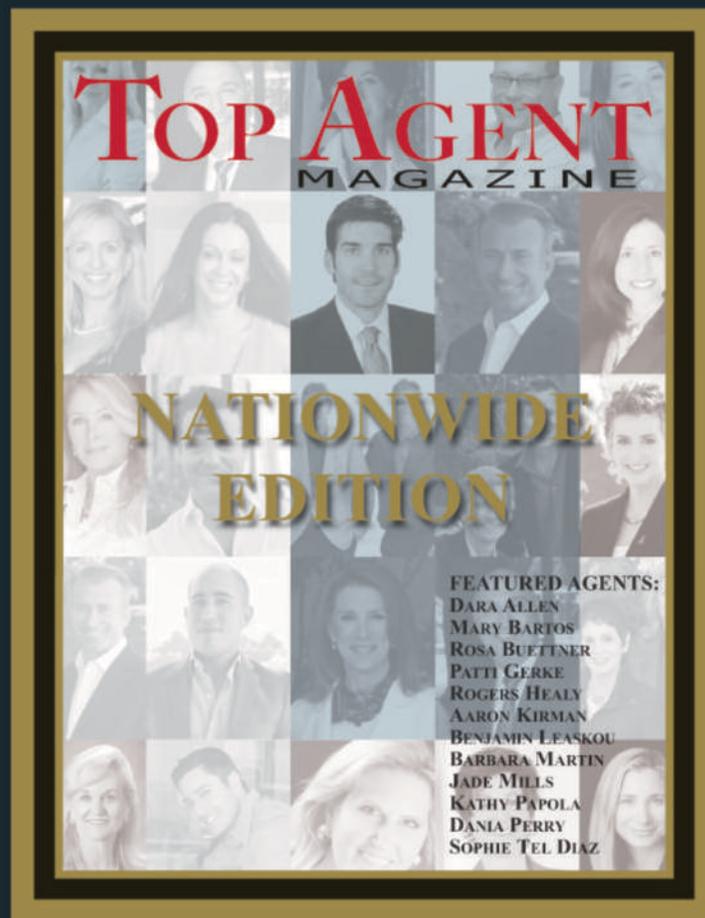
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Tools of Touch: Staying in touch in ways that matter

By Bob Corcoran

“The royal road to others’ heart is to talk to about the things they treasure most.” – Dale Carnegie

I’m going to let you in on a little secret that can make your 2016 a year like no year you’ve ever seen in real estate. Ready? Here it is: It’s all about people.

Okay, Bob, that’s no secret. Everyone knows real estate is a people business.

Yes, but stay with me. It’s all about people and how they remember you. That’s especially true in real estate because if people don’t remember you, you’ll be seeking another line of work. The fact is, you can’t spend all your time getting clients. If you did that, you wouldn’t make any money – in fact,

you'd only be spending it. You have to be memorable so people will return to you for business in the future and also refer you to others.

We know from research that businesses spend roughly five times more to get a new customer than they do to keep a current one. The great business guru Jack Welch once said, "Business is about getting and keeping customers." To do that you have to stay in front of a lot of people – it's a numbers game. So how do you do that?

Here are some tips I hope you think about for the remainder of this year and add to your 2016 business plan:

FOR PROSPECTS:

Get focused. Face it, you can't stay in front of everyone. Even the multi-billion dollar corporations can't do that. They spend billions every year in advertising and they still don't reach everyone. Look at your city as a whole pie and then decide what slice you want and then hit it hard.

Know what they treasure. As Mr. Carnegie says above, if you know what people treasure you'll have something more than their ears – you'll have their hearts. Before you share anything with prospects, always ask if it helpful and useful. If not, wait till you get something of value to share. And when talking with prospects (and especially past clients) remember the "F.O.R.D. Technique." Family, Occupation, Recreation and Dreams. Please visit www.CorcoranCoaching.com/Commitment.php for detailed info on how to use this tool free of charge.

FOR PAST CLIENTS:

Stand out from your competition. Think for a minute how many handwritten notes you got in 2015? Go ahead, count. One, two, more? I bet you can count the number on one hand. But think about the last one you got and just how different it looked and how it made you feel. Take time to write your best past clients a handwritten note of thanks this holiday season. I promise they'll appreciate it. And more importantly, they'll remember it – and you.

Think consistency. Make staying in touch with past clients a consistent



and regular part of your business. Think about all the times during the year where it makes sense to share valuable information with past clients: Think about the seasons -- in the winter what communication would be helpful to your homeowners? For holidays send cards. Keep them posted on news related to their area of town.

Let me close by asking you to visualize what a perfect 2016 would look like for you and your real estate business. Stop now and write down what comes to mind. Think about a goal that excites you when you look at it. Go ahead and get a little crazy -- stretch your mind, it's okay, we're just playing with this idea.

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Bob Corcoran is CEO of Corcoran Consulting and Coaching Inc. (www.corcorancoaching.com/programs, 800-957-8353), an international consulting and coaching company that specializes in performance coaching and the implementation of sound business systems into Real Estate Companies, Mortgage Companies and Small Businesses. Corcoran Consulting is headed by Bob Corcoran – a nationally recognized leader, speaker, author, coach and consultant. To find out more about Corcoran Consulting & Coaching, call 1-800-957-8353 or visit us at www.CorcoranCoaching.com

TOP AGENT

MAGAZINE



LORI BLANK

LORI BLANK



A leader in regional real estate for most of her 18 years in the business, Lori Blank entered residential real estate several years after she and her husband relocated to Arizona from Illinois for her telecommunications career. Fortunately, when she grew weary of telecommunications, Lori pursued her longtime hobbies of spending spare time attending open houses, visiting new

home communities and monitoring market trends. "I became licensed and started in the Mesa subdivision where we lived and did quite well," she says. In 1999, the family moved to Gold Canyon, "which is home to the Superstition Mountains and five golf courses," she explains. Soon, RE/MAX recruited her and Lori spent several years winning Awards in the top-ten for the Region.



Because RE/MAX had no branch in Gold Canyon, however, Lori and her clients frequently needed to drive into Gilbert, AZ, for transactions. Because of that, in 2008, despite those who questioned her eagerness to open a brokerage during unsteady times, Lori founded Lori Blank & Associates, LLC. Growth occurred organically. When a major real estate company decided to exit Gold

Canyon, for instance, Lori hired their top broker. “I renovated a kitchen in the building for her office and she became my brokerage branch manager.” Today, each member of Lori’s team enjoys a private office, now located in a high-profile Gold Canyon building next to the Gold Canyon Golf Resort. “We’ve captured market share for 43 months straight,” Lori says. “I have 13 amazing professionals

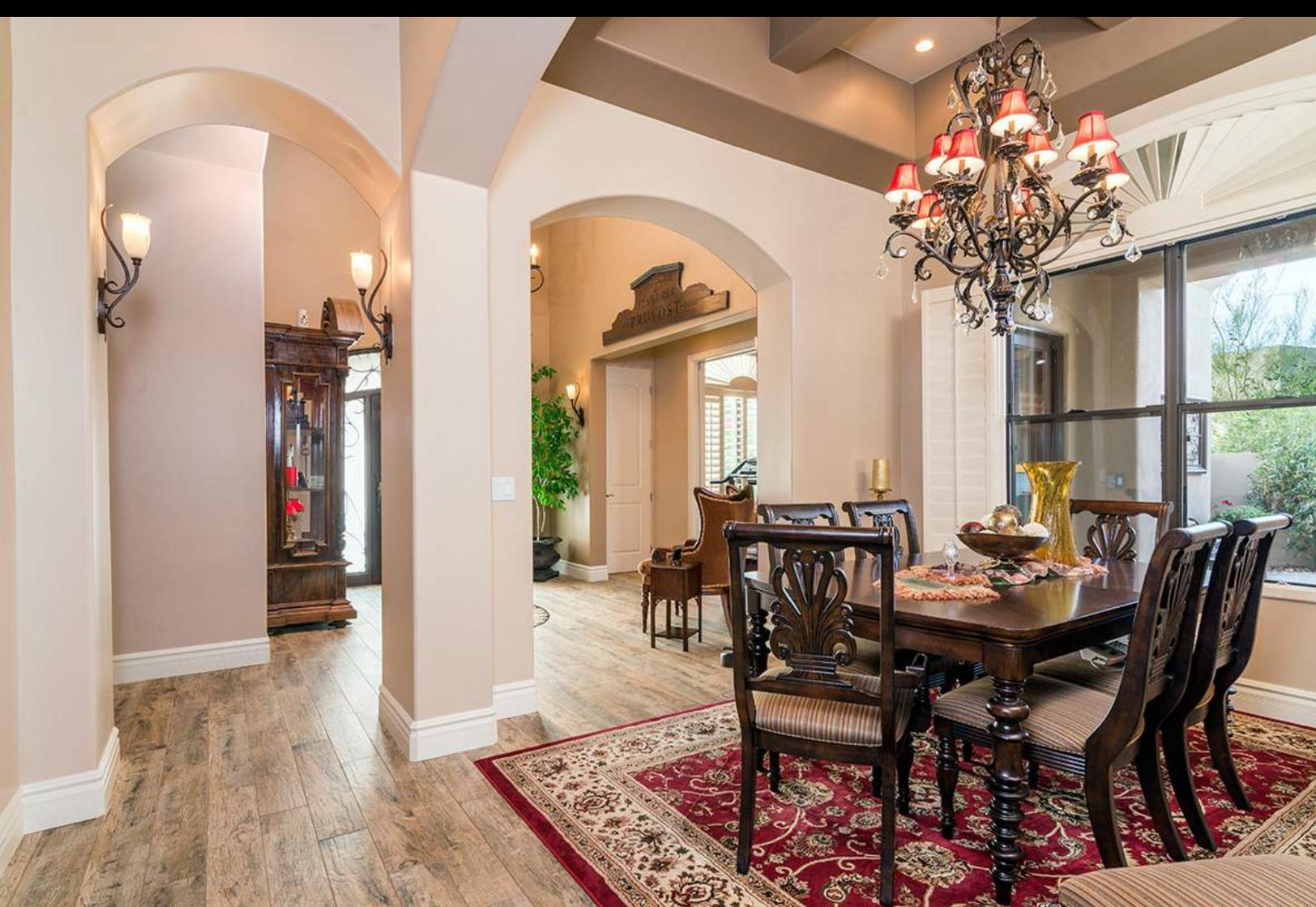


who have really excelled. We list and sell more homes in Gold Canyon than any other Real Estate Company.”

Excellence, to Lori, is defined as cultivating lasting relationships between herself and her clients, her agents and brokers as well as with the community. “You don’t just sell a house and walk away,” she says. “You stay in touch. You know who they are and what’s going on in their lives. I stay in touch not just because I hope they remember me if they ever need Real Estate help in any

way, but because I truly care about them and hearing about what is new in their lives!”

Each member of Lori’s team is dedicated to maintaining client relationships and helping clients however possible. “We’re a resource for clients and we give back as much as we can,” she says, listing various causes the brokerage supports. One such cause, the Apache Junction Food Bank, benefits from her team’s devotion to donating a more and more pounds of food every year.



Lori and her husband also are big supporters of the Gold Canyon Arts Council, which benefits children by developing their interests in music and supported by a Concert Series and Art Fair..

When forming Lori Blank & Associates, Lori created more than a real estate brokerage; she built a family whose members support each other and their community. Her vision for the business leans heavily in the direction of providing and maintaining a high quality of life. “I want



us to keep providing the excellent service and attention we give our buyer and sellers,” she says. “If we grow in any direction it will be to pursue more education, to bring



more experts into our meetings, to make sure we're all as educated and prepared as possible for everything happening in the industry." Lori also plans to continue enjoying the Gold Canyon life. "I love where I live. The beauty of this area and the breathtaking views enchant me every day; I can't imagine living anywhere else!" Lori is married to her soul mate, Don. Together they have four children, two twin grandchildren and two little Maltese pups named Mickey and Molly.

To learn more about Lori Blank, visit <http://www.loriblack.com>, email loriblack@msn.com, or call 480.983.8383

Yes, There is Life in Real Estate Ads After Craigslist Went Cold

by Rob Flitton

We all miss the main staple for buyer leads in our real estate industry—it used to be Craigslist.

Acquiring real estate leads is about two fundamental activities—“hunting” and “farming.” Craigslist real estate ads used to represent the ability to get “right now” business—it was a hunting ground. And while Craigslist still exists, it doesn’t exist is the way we once knew it.

In the old days—up until about mid 2013—ad-placers could use HTML coding that allowed web-links/URLs, embedded images, colors, specialty fonts, and aesthetic design. The biggest advantages of this once-golden era were: (i) web-links/URLs—you could advertise listings, captcha pages, a wide variety of listings (“see all listing in the 12345 zip code”), and (ii) SEO boosters—it boosted Google Juice by the truckload.

When it all suddenly changed and the rug was pulled out, I undertook a series of emails with Craig Newmark

—i.e., “Craig” of Craigslist. I was NOT always terribly polite. I begged him to start charging me a major monthly fee just for the chance to post those beautiful html-made links again. He “personally” responded to every single email telling me his team “is working on it.”

Craigslist indeed still exists, but it’s in very basic form—there is straight typing permitted without html or images. In fact, if you even label an uploaded image with an ad message you will get booted.

As a marketer, I don’t judge this, per se, I just adapt.

Craigslist can still produce great leads, and there are other sites to advertise on—and while those other sites may not be optimal for links, they can boost your SEO if you are patient, purposeful, strategic, and diligent in your efforts to see the SEO rewards.

When sellers conduct searches they



want home values, and when buyers conduct searches they want to engage in an interactive process to find potential homes. Both, though, want to remain anonymous in the beginning.

Buyers begin by searching their own neighborhood or their targeted neighborhoods—if they already own a home, they want to see similar homes that are listed or sold so they can gauge their current equity or buying-power. Interestingly, though, many sellers log-in as buyers on IDX search pages because they are eager to see how their own home's value stacks up against current listings. That's right, many of your online lead-registrants might actually be sellers.

How can you tell? Simple ... call them and ask “by the way, do you have a home to sell before you buy?”

To take advantage of the power of classified ads, you'll need a strategy and plan that addresses the online needs of buyer and sellers.

One of the best ways to dominate the advertising scene is to “get small.”

The big search engines are all about big areas—Zillow, Trulia, Zip, Market Leader, Realtor.com, Tiger Leads, Redfin, etc. The big guys cannot get small—bigness is their Achilles heel. You on the other hand can specialize into little small

spaces—or niches as we marketers like to call them.

Low-competition keywords can lead to incredible domain authority for your real estate business—instead of one bloated website doing a weak job of playing in a big space, it is just as low-cost and easy to do 4 or 5 niched store-front websites and bring in small market traffic—and they don't all even have to be about real estate.

The “get small” niching strategy is the same for Craigslist Ads and other classified ads. Make yourself stand out by being a specialty-provider—there are already far too many “generalists” out there. People don't ever viscerally respond to “generalists.” People want specialty providers.

While some online searchers may begin looking “in general,” they will eagerly be seeing to become “target-rich” and hone in on ONE HOME. While your IDX itself does not limit buyers to a specialty or segment, it allows them to self-limit and zone in and they will need your help going to the final ONE HOME.

This does not mean that your ads should be general, though. Don't

advertise “search the MLS,” instead advertise “see Seattle condos for sale in Belltown.” Not only will they be pleased to have zoned in, but they will regard YOU as the specialist for that area.

With storefront websites, you can specialize in more than one geo-area or demographic or non-real-estate-related topic.

In fact by using Google Trends and keyword strategies, you can discover if people prefer to narrow in on neighborhood names, street names, school districts, retail areas, zip codes, age-restricted, architectural style, golf course related, financing permitted, waterfront, vacation, new homes, resale homes, military financing VA, density (single family v. condos v. high-rises) ... and so on.

Once you know what niche you will be specializing in, determining your audience is next and equally as important. Create messaging that provides the perception of a product or service designed for what is needed. Marketing financing gimmicks or school districts to luxury home buyers misses the mark.

Besides marketing your own listings, and the listings of anyone who will

permit you to, you should be creating classified ads offering your professional negotiating services, and financing, to buyers, and the availability of discovering home values to sellers.

Here is a list of other classified ad sites to consider besides Craigslist—I recommend posting on every single one of them multiple times weekly:

- Merchant Circle
- Backpage.com
- Oodle.com
- ebayclassifieds.com
- classifiedads.com
- OLX.com

And, there are probably plenty of others—just go ask Google, or see what pages pop up when you search Google using specific search terms.

Your primary goal, or at least sub-goal, on any online ad should be SEO, and you ought to follow these guidelines:

- Give each ad a keyword-friendly title (30–40 characters)
- Check for bad or broken links
- Repeating the keyword-friendly ad title in the first paragraph of your content

- Name all images and videos being using keyword-friendly titles rather than xyz.wmv or xyz.jpg, because Google tries to read the names of these files

- Create inbound links to your ad (and out of your ad) where possible—higher ranking websites linking back to your ad are best wherever possible, but may be hard to get—NOTE: Facebook is one of the highest ranked websites in the world

- Keep content local, social and easy to read—share your own ads/posts and ask/encourage others to do so as well

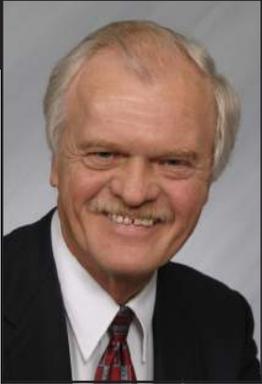
- Be good at grammar, spelling and punctuation—smart clients pay attention, but Google apparently is, too

- Wearing your SEO hat, include Factual Data—wearing your salesman’s hat, include benefits of product ownership

- Never delete ads/posts, but DO update them to be relevant content maintain the balance between “short enough for a client to read,” but “long enough for Google to notice”

Rob Flitton is a Seattle Real Estate Marketing specialist helping independent agents to increase their income. Email Rob robflitton@gmail.com at any time or call/text him at 206-612-2314.

TOP AGENT MAGAZINE



RICHARD HAWORTH

After a 10-year career as an attorney in Washington State, and later as a PR specialist for his church in Florida, Richard Haworth relocated to Sun City, Arizona, where he transitioned to the real estate industry. "I went to real estate school and was happy to discover there are

many parallels between the two industries. So I got my license, stuck with it, and here I am."

Today Richard serves the entire West Valley with Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage and has his own unique set of specialties. Richard's philosophy is simply to be personally involved in every transaction while creating a strong bond with his clients. "I like interacting with people and seeing the joy on their face after I've put together a great transaction," says Richard. "It's a wonderful feeling when your client walks away knowing you did your best for them. Now that philosophy may not have increased my income figures, but it sure has increased my level of personal satisfaction," Richard says with a laugh.

In addition, as an amateur radio operator, Richard is an expert at helping other radio operators find homes that are already equipped, or can be equipped, with special antennas. Richard and his fellow members of the local radio club are able to support area hospitals and fire departments with emergency communication when needed.

So many of Richard's clients continue to work with him and personally refer him to friends and family, thanks to his phenomenal communication skills. "It's important to be a good listener when you're working with so many different types of people who each have different needs or ideas of what they're looking for. I form a friendship with my clients, I listen, and then put together a deal that is going to work best for them. At the end of the day, we can both feel good about the outcome."

Richard has been rewarded many times over the course of his career with Coldwell Banker, however it comes as no surprise that he is especially proud of the Client

Satisfaction awards, which are given based on post-transaction client surveys. "I've been in the Silver Category through this company for my production levels, but honestly, I'm happier to get the kudos from my clients," says Richard.

Aside from the accolades, Richard is most gratified by helping others find the home that will become their sanctuary. "I'm a family guy and I know that a home is important to many people. It's the stable place from which they can do their other activities, or just come home to at the end of the day to get away from it all," Richard explains. "It's not just providing the regular real estate services to a client, it's helping them achieve something that they and their families can benefit from for many years to come."

As a Vietnam veteran, Richard belongs to the Vietnam Vets Association in Phoenix, where he works routinely to educate others about the high rates of suicide believed to be linked to the many anti-psychotic drugs prescribed to former servicemen and women. "There is such a widespread use of these drugs to treat things like PTSD, so I educate my fellow members of the VVA on that aspect of things," Richard says. "I also work with my local congressman to get this recognized on a national level. We've got to find alternatives to these drugs so we can decrease the level of veteran suicide." Richard also volunteers with the Foundation for a Drug-Free World, which provides information to middle school and high school students on the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

Currently, Richard is in the process of putting together a team of like-minded agents he can work with to increase his share in the market, while maintaining the level of customer service he provides. "That's the toughest part - keeping the high level of personal service that I like and at the same time being able to handle an increasing number of clients. I'm working on getting a team in place so we can do that together."

For more information about Richard Haworth of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage, please visit www.phoenixwestvalleyhomes.com, call 602.370.1450 or email cactusrich@gmail.com



How to Train Cats and Salespeople

By John Boe

Which do you think would be harder to train, a cat or a salesperson? Seriously, which one would you pick? While it's true that cats have a well-deserved reputation for being independent, demanding and virtually impossible to train, the same can be said for many salespeople. Surprisingly, the same training and reward techniques required to get Fluffy to jump through a hoop can also be utilized to motivate your sales team to achieve peak performance!

One evening while channel surfing I came across a fascinating animal act that grabbed my attention. The act featured a cat trainer with a half dozen cats of varying size, shape and color. Unlike a circus lion tamer who attempts to intimidate with a chair and whip, this man simply used a combination of treats and verbal praise to motivate his cats to perform difficult tricks. Using only soothing voice tones and a pocket full of cat treats, he would calmly command each cat to do its own specific trick. Amazingly, he got one cat to

walk on his front paws, one balanced on a ball, while yet another pushed a toy baby stroller across the stage.

After the performance, the cat trainer was interviewed and asked how he was able to get his cats to willingly obey his commands. His response surprised me with its simple wisdom. He said that he didn't train the cats at all, he simply figured out what each cat liked to do best and then encouraged that behavior! "People need to realize

that a cat's indifference doesn't mean they can't learn cool tricks," says celebrity animal trainer Joel Silverman. "It simply means you haven't convinced them yet that doing so is in their best interest. A dog naturally wants to please and will work for you, but a cat needs a paycheck to be motivated."

All cats and most salespeople have pretty short attention spans and low boredom thresholds.

Five Tips to Help You Train Cats and Salespeople

1 Check for temperament suitability. Temperament testing allows you to identify those who by nature lack the discipline, desire or self-motivation to consistently achieve peak performance. Sales managers who lack the benefit of temperament understanding are inclined to place too much emphasis on their gut-level feeling during the hiring process. If you hire someone that is not suited for the position, you will experience low morale, high turnover and find yourself constantly in the training mode. On the other hand, when you recruit the right person you will find that they are self-motivated and eager to train.

2 Look for "hot buttons". Traditionally, sales managers have relied primarily on commission to motivate their sales force. Unfortunately, a compensation structure based solely on commission does not address individual motivational factors and therefore, money alone will not motivate your sales force. A successful incentive program is a mixture of awards,

recognition and peer pressure. There is tremendous power behind a timely word of praise or a handwritten note acknowledging achievement. While money is certainly an important ingredient in any incentive program, it should by no means be the only tool in a manager's motivational toolbox. If money by itself were a sufficient motivation, commission-based salespeople would simply sell more without additional enticement.

3 Make the training fun and positive. All cats and most salespeople have pretty short attention spans and low boredom thresholds. Keep lessons short, interesting and always try to end on a positive note.

4 You must be patient when training cats or salespeople. It's important to respect individual abilities and preferences. Make allowances for personality, and don't get frustrated if the training schedule doesn't go exactly as expected. Remember that people have off days and on days just like cats. "When I'm really pushing and the going gets tough," says Silverman, "Sometimes the cat just sits down and says, 'I give up'. Even the brightest cats, if they feel you're pushing them too hard, will, in effect, say, 'Screw you, buddy, I'm going to go over there, sit down, and stare into space.'"

5 Make sure to take time for rest and relaxation. All work and no play will make the cat, the salesperson and the trainer grumpy. Whether it is playing with a ball of yarn or enjoying a round of golf, taking time out to play is critically important. By successfully balancing play and work, you will return recharged, refreshed and ready to accomplish more

By incorporating these five powerful tips into your training program, you will develop an award-winning sales team and achieve unbelievable results!

"I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn." – Albert Einstein

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John Boe presents a wide variety of motivational and sales-oriented keynotes and seminar programs for sales meetings and conventions. John is a nationally recognized sales trainer and business motivational speaker with an impeccable track record in the meeting industry. To have John speak at your next event, visit www.johnboe.com or call 937-299-9001. Free Newsletter available on website.

TOP AGENT MAGAZINE



KAY WOOD

REALTOR® Kay Wood of RE/MAX Solutions in the Mesa/Phoenix, AZ, area bought her first home at the age of 18 with the help of a \$2,000 loan from her Mom. “I have owned more than 13 primary homes in 40 years and have helped more than 1,000 families move into, around and out of Arizona,” she says. She jokes that her ‘Flip This House, Kay-Style’ hobby is one she enjoyed for almost three decades before becoming a REALTOR®. “Real estate is my lifestyle, not my job,” she insists. “I live it and love it, every single day.”

During the initial years she was buying, renovating and selling homes as a hobby, Kay’s professional life included corporate careers in data management, customer service and banking/finance. This experience, combined with her acumen for detail-oriented work, helped hone her expertise in contract management, negotiations and the various legalities of real estate transactions. It’s no surprise, then, that Kay holds several real estate specialty certifications that underscore her expertise areas, including designations as a Certified Residential Specialist (CRS), a Certified Distressed Property Expert (CDPE) and a Master Certified Negotiation Expert (MCNE), to name a few.

“The most important one to me is my designation as Certified Risk Management Specialist (rCRMS) through the Arizona Association of REALTOR® (AAR),” Kay explains, “It’s all about risk management for yourself, your clients, as well as other professionals and their clients. I complete rigorous continuing education for this and it’s a great honor for me to be among the few hundred agents who have acquired this status in Arizona.” Kay believes every situation she encounters is an opportunity either to educate or be educated. “Whether it’s to broaden my horizon or help someone else, including other real estate agents as my job is to be an educator, not a home locator or a sales person.”

She shares this wealth of knowledge with other professionals as well as her broad range of buyers and sellers. “My sellers and buyers are across the board,” Kay says. “This past January I closed eight deals ranging from a \$42,000 trailer from 1971 – one owner to a \$780,000 Trophy Home purchase” The \$780,000 purchase came after working with a couple for six months to find just the right property. “I stay the mile until we have exactly what it is they need. In this case, the couple wanted to upgrade to have more space for their grandchildren to play. I’d go out with that in mind and show them what came on the market.”

Another client, she explains, had five days to find an home to rent or buy in a particular neighborhood in order to prove residence for their child to attend the nearby school. “They came to me on Thursday evening and by Sunday they signed the lease,” she says. “Now they’re purchasing that \$570,000 house!”

Motivated not only by experience and education but by the Midwestern work ethic she gained growing up in Kansas, Kay also shares her generous spirit to benefit the community and the greater good. “I’m actually very private about the ways that I give, but some of the causes I enjoy are the Children’s Miracle Network and helping anyone I can to make their lives easier when a loved one is

experiencing hardship due to medical challenges,” she says. “I’ve lived through many things like that.” In her appreciation for life and health, Kay keeps active. “I like to travel to places in California, Hawaii, Colorado, Kansas and recently went to Turks & Caicos. I also love sightseeing, card games, spending time with close friends/family and helping people as much as possible.”

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Don't Forget the Most Important Part of Business Planning

by Carla Cross

There is still time to put together (or refine) your business plan. But, don't barge ahead and start putting numbers on paper—yet. If you do, you'll miss the most important part of business planning (at least, in my opinion). That part is the Review.

Why? Because, only by looking back can you make a great plan for the next year.

Analysis: From working with thousands of agents on their business plans, I've seen that most leave out the Review—and so don't have much confidence in their future plans.

History Leaves Hints

Looking back will provide you an analysis in very important areas (and give you hints as to what to keep and what to dump). Here are four:

1. Your best sources of leads (you'll do more lead generating from this source next year, won't you?)

2. Your ratio of listings taken to listings sold (you'll put together a training/coaching strategy to learn how to get those listings priced right so you're not spending so much time and money in futility, won't you?)

3. Your marketing strategy pay-offs (where did you spend money last year and what pay-off did you get? You'll spend more marketing money on the areas that gave you best pay-off, won't you?)

4. The systems you have in place (you'll decide which systems you need to get in place and those systems you need to refine so you can run a business, not just sell houses)

A Better Definition of a Business Plan

Why analyze your systems? Because Michael Gerber, the well-known small business guru and author of the famous books, *The E-Myth* and



Only by looking back can you make a great plan for the next year.

The E-Myth Revisited says that:

“The integration of your systems is your business plan.”

Creating a Business Plan
the Easy Way

Now, you’ve already got your plan’s major strategies decided upon, and all you did was to review your business this year. Because you’ve seen what happened, you will have confidence that your future plan will work.

Advice for managers as agents’ business consultants: Sit down with each of your agents to review the important parts of their businesses. You’ll gain loyalty, create retention, and get your own ideas for a better integrated office/agent business plan.

Carla Cross, CRB, MA, is a real estate leadership coach and speaker, and is president of Carla Cross Seminars, Inc. and Carla Cross Coaching.



16 Things Incredibly Likeable People Do*

By Barry Eisen

Whether you're looking for a job, a relationship, a successful negotiation, an elected position, building your business and/or ???, likeability can only enhance your position. If you find yourself nodding your head at an idea or two below, write it/them down and with purpose, demonstrate those ideas until they become automatic (habits). We learn by observation, imitation and repetition.



1 They smile - a lot. Seeing a smile makes other people happy, so if you're smiling when you're interacting with someone, he'll find you easy to like and friendly.

2 They ask people questions. There's nothing people love more than to talk about themselves. They will find the conversation more memorable and positive if they spend time talking about themselves.

3 They pay attention. Listen more to other people than you speak, and people will feel valued. Even if you're asking questions, people won't warm up to that if it seems you're not listening to what they're saying.

4 They remember names. Names are such a core part of people's identity. Bringing their names up in the conversation will not only make them feel good, but they'll also appreciate the fact that you remember their names.

5 They repeat and reinforce. Repeating what someone said to you and reinforcing it will help people feel validated. And that's all people want - validation.



6 They don't give unsolicited advice. Give advice to people when they ask you for it. If you go around telling people your opinion, you can come across as being overbearing and bossy even if you're just trying to help.

7 They don't make everything a competition. Trying to compete with everyone and one-up everything people say can quickly make you less likable in their eyes.

8 They take responsibility. If you make a mistake, take responsibility for it. Acknowledge it, and don't point the blame at someone else.

9 They get off their phones. People appreciate undivided attention, because it makes them feel like you're truly listening to them. It makes them feel that you value their presence and time.

10 They don't make comparisons all the time and make it all about them. Sometimes in an effort to relate to others, you can go overboard with comparisons. When someone tells you about their dog dying, listen with concern, because that's what they are seeking. If you chime in with a story of how your own dog died and how you were devastated so you know how they feel, the other person may feel that you're switching the topic back to you.

11 They don't keep interrupting. You may get over excited and interrupt people while they are talking, which can annoy them. It makes them feel that what they have to say is not that important to you.

12 They make eye contact. Making the right amount of eye contact with someone can help them feel rapport with you. You'll also come across as being more confident and trustworthy.

13 They accept that other people will disagree with them. Everyone has different opinions - learn to be OK with that. Your way may not always be the right way for others, so don't try to convince them that they're wrong. Embrace your differences.

14 They don't constantly seek sympathy and attention. Likeable people don't need to constantly seek sympathy and attention to feel better about themselves.

15 They don't try too hard. Focus on making yourself happy first, and people will gravitate toward you. If you try too hard, people can see through that.

16 They have good hygiene. Wear clean clothes, brush their teeth, and take showers.

*Plagiarism is stealing from one person (a major No! No!) but stealing from many is called research (generally a good thing...go figure!). So in good conscience, I give credit for the article above to Emily Co. She based this list on hundreds of responses from the askreddit blog. The only credit I take is in passing them on and recognizing that she articulated these points better than I could have, so what the heck...Emily, thanks and good on ya!



Barry Eisen teaches personal development seminars and coaches Southern California top producing REALTORS®. "Your business will never grow more than you do" is the theme; self hypnosis and behavior modification are the tools for playing a bigger game. barryeisen.com, barryeisen@LA.twcbc.com 818-769-4300

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Why Flexibility Hurts (Not Helps) Your Ability to Close Sales Deals

By Kendra Lee

For many sales reps, being flexible throughout the sales process seems like the best, consultative approach to establish a strong prospect relationship and win more sales. Rather than suggest what a prospective client should buy, reps opt to empower the client to dictate their needs. In doing so, the thought process is that reps convey patience and a commitment to ensuring the client gets exactly what they want, which will in turn improve their chances of closing the deal.

Here's what that approach accomplishes instead: Slower buy cycles and lower closing ratios.

Truth is, most buyers don't know exactly what they need from you.

Sure, prospects know the outcome they want to achieve. They might even have an idea of which tools or services might help accomplish it. But they don't know which specific products, services, or solutions will get them there. Other prospects know the outcome they want to achieve, but have no idea how to get started, let alone which products, services or solutions to look at.

Either way, to achieve the outcome they're aspiring to, buyers often look to you to guide them toward the right decision.

When you don't provide that guidance, it stalls the sales process and dramatically reduces closing ratios. Here's why:

- 1** Flexibility doesn't empower buyers — it confuses them
- 2** Forcing work on to your buyers typically causes them to look elsewhere for someone who can figure out how exactly to address their problem

In both cases, your performance suffers.

Ultimately, buyers — particularly in the earlier stages of their buy cycle — don't want total flexibility or the freedom to choose any possible solution. They want, and need, guidance from you to navigate toward the right one. When you provide that definitive insight in the early stages of the buying cycle, customers gain confidence that you're the right person to get them to where they need to be.

To put it more bluntly, being “flexible” is a cop out. It might make you feel better, but it's not helping prospects.

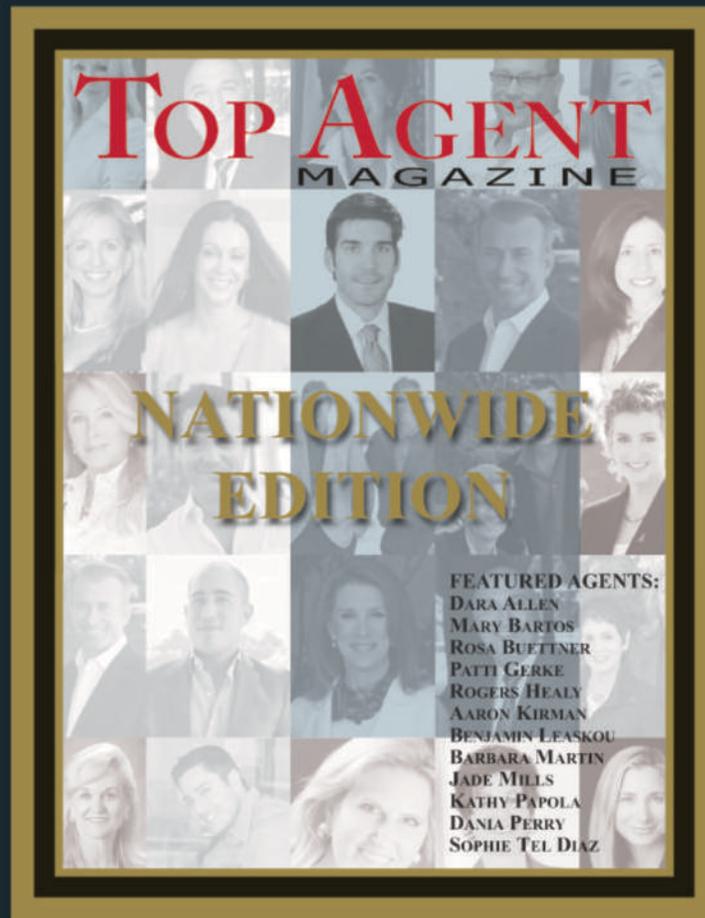
If you really want to empower small and mid-size businesses to make meaningful change, you have to be willing to make a definitive, confident recommendation and show prospects a clear path to addressing their problem. When you do that, you'll close sales faster and your clients will be happier. They'll get what they need (and want), and your closing ratios will trend in the right direction.

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