

Know to Grow Your Income

With over a million Realtors® in the United States, it is getting harder and harder to stand out from the crowd. What can you do so that customers and fellow Realtors® know you, choose you and recommend you? You can make a good living simply by taking floor time and doing open houses. However to make a quantum leap in your income, you need to have satisfied customers, and other Realtors® referring you. Focusing on the following three points will help you become more successful.

Know Yourself

To powerfully communicate the benefits of choosing you over other Realtors®, you really need to know yourself and learn how to communicate what makes you unique in a few succinct phrases.

Begin by taking one of the many personality tests that are readily available, such as: DISC, Keirsey Temperment Sorter, or Myers-Briggs, among others. You can find these easily by doing a search on the internet. These tests can give you great insight into your strengths and weaknesses. They help you understand your core values and personality type. Understanding who you are may help you distinguish yourself from the competition and can be the foundation for communicating your unique value and your personal brand.

Your personal brand or image is a combination of your passions, strengths, skills and traits. Spend some time getting to know your self:

- Write a list of your personal passions. What do you love doing? (Is it interior design, teaching, art, music, golfing, football, reading, travel? Don't worry about whether or not it is work related.)
- What are your skills and talents? (Are you perceptive, spontaneous, theatrical, detail-oriented, organized, do you speak other languages? Again, don't limit these to your work).
- Write a list of your personal traits. (Perhaps you are punctual, or a "people person". Are you optimistic, open minded, curious, determined, spiritual, or team oriented?)

Look at your list from your customer's point of view. Which of these qualities that you have identified would be valuable to your customer? Take those items and use them to help you create a few concise sentences explaining your unique value to your customers.

Use this knowledge to also help you find a niche market -- something you really love. Is it new construction, foreclosures, first time buyers, seniors, ethnicities, locales? Once you find your niche, become an expert in that area. That doesn't mean that you can't sell outside of your niche. However, the more expertise you gain, the more likely you are to become well known in your field. It is not uncommon for other customers even other realtors, to say "Oh, you need Joe. He knows everything about new construction." These personal recommendations can be the most inexpensive and effective marketing tools.

Know Your Customer

To be able to truly meet and exceed a customer's needs and wants you have to know that customer. In your effort to gain this knowledge you need to gather information. The more you know the more you can meet your customer's needs, both stated and unstated.

Start broadly and then get more specific. A good source for information is The 2003 National Association of Realtors® Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers. It has chapters on the characteristics of home buyers and sellers.

Then, start to narrow your research. Learn about the community in which you sell. Become involved in community events. Pitch in, support and help your community grow, while learning about its unique qualities. These activities not only help you learn about the community, they bolster your image as a valuable member. People like to do business with helpful people they know and with whom they can identify.

After you understand the broad information about your customers and their communities, you need to listen to what they say. Sounds easy, doesn't it? Customers often complain about feeling the agent didn't listen carefully to their requests or needs. Listening is an art. It goes beyond the obvious. Customers aren't always great at communicating clearly; they sometimes don't even know what they really want or need. You need to listen with all your senses in order to unearth and translate their true needs and wants. It isn't sufficient to just hear the words your customers say. You need to watch body language, be sensitive to tone of voice and try to interpret their sometimes vague descriptions. By asking carefully constructed questions you can actually help the customer better understand his or her needs.

Know Your Team

Customers are becoming more and more demanding. You need a team that meets these ever increasing demands. Customers expect you to recommend the RIGHT person for their needs. These people must not only match your personal brand/image (they are in effect representing you), they also must have unique qualities that meet the needs of your

customer. I know of one Realtor who has three mortgage brokers he trusts and recommends. He has a “three piece suit guy,” he has a HOG (Harley owners group) and a dynamic woman. He mixes and matches the team member to the specific customer. This is done so that each customer can feel totally comfortable. You should also have a trusted team of insurance providers, painters, plumbers, and stagers to call on. Basically, the more one-stop you can be for your customers the happier they will be. Spend time with each of these people. Ask questions. Get recommendations. Do research and background checks.

Be sure to spend time each day learning more about these three keys to success. They are the most powerful way to be a Realtor® that others want to do business with and refer to their friends and family. Remember you need to Know to Grow Your Income!

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