

The Daily Communicator™

Weekend Sales Tips Take the Work Out of Networking

Stop trying to impress prospects....the key these days is connecting! You've heard it said, "It's not what you know, but who you know." The successful agents in the 21st century have shifted their business from the numbers to the relationships.

Building your network consistently and nurturing that network is the foundation for a flourishing business. The cool thing is that it is easier and much more fun than cold calling. Another facet of this point of view is "It's not who you know, but who knows you!" Start by being obvious and expanding your connections naturally. Quit beating yourself up about your avoidance of old-style prospecting and let go of the "shoulds" you may be telling yourself about being more self-disciplined. It doesn't have to be hard work to grow your business. Lighten up and have fun and more people will be attracted to you. Here are some few things you can do to take the work out of networking.

Leverage the connections you already have. Potential clients are hiding in the mix of people you see every day – people who wait on you at the gas pump, convenience stores, the dry cleaners, as well as your neighbors, family, friends, parents from school, and other acquaintances. The average person has 200 others in their sphere of influence. They may not have a need for your services, but they may know someone who does – so spread the word.

Expand your network. Join trade associations and attend meetings, luncheons and other events related to your niches. You'll build your expertise as well as your network. Sponsor a newsletter for a club you belong to. Take out a business listing in association membership directories or other publications that are NOT real estate related. Chances are you'll be the only real estate agent or at least one of few. Choose niches that fit with what you love. One trend is for consumers to contact lenders BEFORE they contact an agent these days, they will increasingly be a source of more referrals.

Renew old contacts. Approach this like a treasure hunt. Even if you don't create a new client, you may find an old friend!

Look up old friends in your college alumni directory or online alumni business yellow pages. Attend high school and college reunions. What groups did you belong to previously? And don't forget about your previous business contacts, colleagues, former bosses and co-workers, chances are they haven't forgotten about you or your skills.

Give before you expect to receive. The business model of the '80s and '90s that required the client to come to us to get information is passé. These days, prospects are attracted to agents who make it easy for them to do business with them. Free reports, links from your website (opening in a new window, instead of leaving your site!), lots of good content and information on your site all create an atmosphere to encourage reciprocity. Let go of a scarcity mentality and make people feel comfortable with you first. Then they'll be ready to trust you.

Network on the Net. Discover the online communities where you can "work the room" from the comfort of your own desk or in your jammies. Target those related to your business niches (if you specialize in beachfront property, perhaps a group about yachting). Participate in discussions, make good, informative posts and establish yourself as an expert in your field. Use a signature file to establish your credentials without "selling" anything. A link to your Web page and/or newsletter would be appropriate.

Practice fabulous follow-up. Just as you probably let clients know that you want to be their Realtor for life and working with you is not a one time event, networking doesn't stop with the initial meeting. New business takes cultivation and attention, and the relationship is mutually beneficial. Use gentle persistence and permission marketing savvy to make sure they don't forget you.

Be creative and look at everything as an opportunity to connect. You'll be amazed how much fun you have and how easily and naturally it comes to you – taking the "work" out of networking!

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