

On Becoming an e-Agent—More Online Resources XVI

By Jo Becker, GRI, BA

My last article offered a small sampling of sites you could use to help clients answer of their real estate-related questions. Why not take that a step further—offer the information and resources before they ask!

For those in your sphere for whom you have an e-mail address, why not begin a simple but routine online newsletter? Once a month or once a quarter draft a few words of introduction in an e-mail message to your sphere, then link to websites or offer attachments with valuable information. Doing this will reinforce the image of you as their “real estate expert”—again, defined as the one with all the answers *or* who knows where to *find* the answers.

Consider the following:

- RMLS’s entire Market Action publication is uploaded to the RMLSWEB.com site each month. They are available for you to download as pdfs (portable document files) at Toolkit/Forms & Documents/1500-1699 Market Action and Statistics Menu. What a wealth of relevant information to share with your sphere!
- The Construction Contractors Board (<http://www.ccb.state.or.us>) has several brochures in pdf format that are designed with the consumer in mind. A few include: Tips on choosing a home inspector and having a home inspection done; Tips on how to avoid being the victim of a repair or construction scam; 16 Ways to Avoid Problems With Contractors; Risky Home Improvement Shortcuts
- The State Fire Marshall’s site has several publications at http://www.sfm.state.or.us/Comm_Ed/FireSafety/Smoke%20Alarm/smoke.htm that may be of interest to buyers, sellers, renters and rentees alike such as: Smoke Alarm Q and A; Smoke Alarm Information for Apartment Managers and Owners; What You Need To Know About Smoke Alarms Before You Sell Your Home Brochure
- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) site offers a wealth of information on a wide range of potential household hazards including mold, lead, asbestos, radon, underground storage tanks, and much more. This kind of information may be of interest to those in your sphere whether or not they’re currently in the market to buy or sell. Visit <http://www.epa.gov>.
- If multifamily commercial real estate is your forte, consider reading and passing on The Barry Apartment Report which focuses on the local metro market. (<http://www.barryapartmentreport.com/>)

Two bits of general advice: 1) As always, give credit where credit is due. Most people don’t mind, in fact, would appreciate having their information passed on to those you know, but they deserve proper credit for their work. 2) A newsletter (printed and mailed or an electronic version sent over the internet) is a form of promotion and as such should be reviewed by a managing broker before dissemination in accordance with state law.

A word of technical caution: Again, be careful with attachments. Many recipients may not know what to do with them and others may be fearful that they could contain a virus. Also, if you do begin an online newsletter, be sure to send the message to yourself with BCC’s (blind courtesy copies) to your sphere. This will prevent your recipients from seeing one another’s e-mail addresses.

And, as always, if all of this seems too overwhelming, ask for help, but keep trying! Before long you will get the hang of it. In the meantime, *hang in there!*



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