

On Becoming an e-Agent— The “e” Behind e-Agents—Part I Part 21

By Jo Becker, BA

As I've said before, today's average client expects a high tech approach to “high touch” service. The most successful marketing campaigns are those “high touch” campaigns built to elicit emotion and instill a sense of familiarity and trust. And, of course, once your marketing has won you a new client, exceptional “high touch” service is required to grow a happy, referral-bearing customer base.

The high tech aspect comes into play in how you organize yourself to consistently provide a high level of service, in the means you use to market yourself efficiently, and in the tools you use to service and communicate with active clients.

- **Organizing yourself**—Client/prospect databases, day timers and/or electronic schedulers, PDAs, etc. keep information, data and dates at your fingertips. They make searching for this information fast and efficient. The system(s) you use should help assure you never lose a prospect's number, double schedule yourself, or miss a client's transaction anniversary.
- **Marketing yourself efficiently**—It's essential that your marketing be efficient because your *real job* is real estate sales. You can't spend 40 hours a week on marketing—now, if you have the money to invest or reach a production level you're comfortable with, you may wisely choose to outsource to an ad agency or hire a marketing specialist. But if it's just you, you're going to have to balance the need for marketing against that of doing the work that pays the bills. Efficiency is key here.
- **Servicing and communicating with clients**—Email, personal websites, mobile phones, laptops and/or desktops, electronic keypads and lockboxes, etc. are all examples of electronic tools—modern tools of the trade.

This month's article suggests a homework assignment for you: to evaluate your current technology.

As with everything else in life, don't compare yourself with your officemate, your broker, or the nearest top producing agent. What someone else does, or how much “So & So” spends on a brand new “Something” isn't important here. Look at the machines and tools you currently have and use. Consider only what you have and what you feel you're getting out of it.

For example:

- Do you have a desktop, laptop, and/or access to a computer at the office? Do you have access to a machine when and where you need it? Does it work well—boot quickly, not throw a lot of error messages, etc.? Do you use it each frequently and do you feel you're getting as much as you could out of it? If not, why and what can you do about it?
- Do you have the kinds of software you feel you need—again, don't compare yourself to others here. For instance, most licensees would have no need for the expensive page layout and image manipulation software I've invested in, so why should you strive to pay for it and waste your time learning them? What do you feel you need and do you already have programs that will fulfill your needs on your computer? If not, or if you don't know, then what can you do about it?
- And so on... Do you have or need additional or upgraded peripherals (scanners, printers, bigger monitor, cordless mouse and keyboard, etc.) Do you need a new digital camera or phone with mobile internet access? What about a PDA, a portable printer or fax machine, etc.

Your assignment, if you choose to accept it, is to inventory your technical tools and access in your own terms how well you're using them currently.

I'll see you back here **next month** for Part II of this discussion.

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 it there!*

Jo Becker has eight years of licensed real estate experience. As a former broker, she knows how important, and sometimes scary, technology and self-promotion can be. Jo has provided personalized one-on-one marketing consultation and computer software training to the industry since 2002. Services include relationship selling tips and techniques, data entry, software application training, custom marketing campaigns, design of collateral pieces, and website content design. *Call or write today!* 503/493-6883; JoByEmail@yahoo.com