

Well, we've done it. We've ushered in a new year and said goodbye to yet another. I know the market has cooled, but all the same, I hope 2006 kind to you. Regardless, I'm sure you have your sights set high for this year. How are you going to accomplish success in 2007? What planning and budgeting have you done to assure your success? How will you reach your market if growing sales is your aim? Who is your market? What, precisely, are your goals for this year?

While it's quite cliché, the beginning of the year *is* a good time to reflect on where you've been and where you want to go, to make those proverbial resolutions, and to get organized. If you haven't yet invested some time planning and projecting, dive into it now before we slip any further into the year!

Whether you would consider your goals modest or mammoth, they should be:

1. Meaningful to you
2. Detailed and written
3. Measurable and quantifiable

As a real estate agent, you're not only an independent contractor; you are a small business owner. You own, run, and are responsible for your own practice even if you work with a larger brokerage firm. It is essential that you view your work as such, and in so doing, the importance of annual planning, organization, and promotion should be crystal clear—if you don't do it, no one else will! If you want to be—or continue to be—successful (however you define it), you must not skip this process of preparation.

I've seen too many business owners float along year after year without proper planning. These folks are often subject to promotional gimmicks, randomly buying into this marketing package, subscribing to that promotional program, mailing out those clever knickknacks... In today's market, this approach lacks credibility. It does nothing to reinforce the professional image you've no doubt worked hard to establish. Marketing campaigns that aren't consistent in terms of message, timing, theme or style send an unspoken message that you may not be consistent in your professional dealings. Sporadic promotions convey a lack of professional focus.

Over the course of this year, I hope to give you both the tools and some food for thought that will help you organize and grow your business by systematically promoting your practice and effectively utilizing today's technology. So check back here next month as we roll up our sleeves and dive in!

I would appreciate your feedback on this year's series of articles. If any of the topics presented isn't clear, or feels too daunting for you to apply in your own practice, let me know! Please don't shun what I hope is good advice—contact me and we'll work through it. Remember, it's your business at stake!

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

Jo Becker, BA

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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.

**Call or write today for a free monthly eLtr offering helpful marketing hints and computing tips!**

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Services include relationship selling tips and techniques, data entry, software application training, custom marketing campaigns, design of collateral pieces, and website content design. 503/493-6883; JoByEmail@yahoo.com

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