

Ideally, you've already long ago established who your target market is, or perhaps you have more than one. Perhaps you're actively marketing to former coworkers or members of a group you belong to, as well as farming a geographic area, for example. But let me just interject a thought—in case you haven't heard it before, or need a healthy reminder—repeat business is key!

I've known agents who worked their fannies off farming, FSBO'ing, and advertising. They had their transaction procedures down to hairline precision just like an assembly line. However, the word was their clients weren't happy. They did so much volume these agents didn't seem to care if some percent of clients went away unfulfilled. I don't suppose those unhappy buyers and sellers ever referred business or called to work with those agents again! They gained a bit of a reputation; the kind of reputation I wouldn't want to have.

Now, don't get me wrong; farming, FSBO'ing, ads, and efficient work habits are all fabulous and not to be scorned but, I'm guessing most of us know that a healthy heaping of customer service is also important in every transaction. It's that care and concern—the frequent 'extra mile'—that communicates to clients you're in it for the long haul. You're consciously growing your business and you have a reputation you want to grow and maintain. You're not in it for a quick buck. Instead, you're concerned that each client is so happy they walk away from the closing table telling their friends how smooth the transaction was (or, if it wasn't, how wonderfully you handled the situations that arose) and looking for someone to refer to you.

According to John Townson & Associates, repeat clients take 25% less marketing effort (read: *less cost, less effort, less rejection*) to get as each new client. Read another way, you'll have to invest an average of 75% more to earn the name recognition and trust of a cold prospect than you will a previous client who is already very familiar with your incredible service and high standards. Those agents mentioned above were never able to capitalize on this statistical phenomenon. They continued indefinitely to pour money into cold marketing campaigns, endlessly in search of a client de jour.

I beseech you, as you're contemplating your marketing campaign, to not overlook or take for granted those closest to you. Find a way to actively solicit your past clients and current prospects, as well as friends and family. This may be uncomfortable for some, but I'm telling you it works. My parents / partners and I marketed to those we knew almost exclusively and saw a 102% increase in sales volume with a 74% increase in dollar volume in our first year of "warm target marketing." The second year we saw another jump of 75% and 100%, respectively. Marketing to friends and past clients has tremendous potential. Unfortunately, one cannot take such business for granted, so be sure to include this group in your overall marketing plan.

If you're unsure how to get started, what to say, or perhaps how to introduce a marketing campaign to friends and past clients after a long absence, **email me at JoByEmail@yahoo.com and I'll send you a sample piece my parents and I used in our practice with great success.**

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, *former*GRI

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 for a free monthly eLtr full of helpful marketing hints and computing tips!

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

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