

Dear Friends and Readers,

With this article, I'm retiring from my Principal Broker (PB) Magazine career. I've been writing voluntarily for the publication since '03 and have really enjoyed the experience. I love to write, love marketing, and love technology so it's been a great fit for me; however, I have found that spare time is more and more scarce these days.

As many of you know, after retiring my broker's license I went to work for a non-profit in the housing industry – the Fair Housing Council of Oregon. The work I do for the Council involves speaking engagements, classes, networking, and a great deal of writing! Since I'm getting my "writing fix," I've decided to simplify life and remove a few deadlines. I'm also taking a hiatus from the complimentary eLtr I offered in the byline of earlier articles

The good news is that you can still access past eLtrs and past PB articles. What's more, I'm still very much involved with the local housing industry and you're welcome to contact me any time.

To view past PB articles, visit the PB site or go to:

<http://jobecker.weebly.com/published-articles.html>

To view past eLtrs, go to:

<http://jobecker.weebly.com/eltrs.html>

The eLtrs offer both marketing and technology-related tips and are organized both by date and with a brief description of what's found in each one.

I set this site up very quickly with the simple aim of assuring that the tips and resources I'd gathered over time would remain available to you. (By-the-way, the site weebly.com is a free hosting service and I found it quite easy to use. If any of you are looking for a simple, quick, free service check it out!)

As I sign off one last time here, I'd like to offer a few resources:

- FHCO.org – The Fair Housing Council deals with federal, state, and local fair housing laws – something every licensee (and builder and developer, lender and title rep, every home insurer, every landlord...) needs to know about. If you have questions or we can be of help, please visit us at FHCO.org where you'll find more information about fair housing and our organization, as well as our free Fair Housing Hotline #. We take a very proactive approach to fair housing work and wish very much to be a resource for you – let us know when you have fair housing questions or if you're interested in core continuing education classes for your office or company!
- Your Managing Broker -- For those of you who work under a managing broker, s/he is (or at least *should be!*) an incredible resource for you. S/he should offer technical guidance, motivation and accountability, and a myriad of services or assistance to help you succeed in the business. Don't overlook one of the closest and most important resources you have.
- Your Realtor® association is another powerful tool for you. My years of volunteering with my local association – first as a committee chair and then a board member – were very rewarding. The value of the professional networking with your colleagues can't be overstated. If you're not yet involved with your association, consider doing so!

I have to say that of the two, marketing is probably my greater love than technology. I'd like to close this final article with a recap of some points from earlier articles that are, I think, absolutely essential to success in the real estate industry. I hope you'll find these helpful, even if review:

- In our industry, success involves promoting yourself as the manifestation of the service you provide. I content that as a member of the great American service industry, you don't have inventory to tout. You—and every other agent out there—are the personification of the product (real estate representation) that you sell.

Full article at http://www.principalbrokernorthwest.com/pdfs/PB_04_07.pdf or jobecker.weebly.com

- 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 planning, organization, and promotion should be crystal clear—if you don't do it, no one else will!

Full article at http://www.principalbrokernorthwest.com/pdfs/PB_1-07.pdf or jobecker.weebly.com

- Business plans are nothing new but some of you might wonder about a marketing plan. Why do you need one? Well, there are several reasons: to budget for the growth of your business; to create and maintain consistent messaging; to identify and optimally reach your target market... Just like <riding a bike>, when you "fall off your plan" it hurts. Oh, it won't hurt right away, in fact, it may make several months but trust me, it'll catch up with you and when it does it'll hurt as bad as that five inch raspberry your banana bike earned you years ago.

Full article at http://www.principalbrokernorthwest.com/pdfs/PB_02_07.pdf or jobecker.weebly.com

- "Secret Agents," at best, send out a holiday card or a calendar and do nothing else the rest of the year. They allow eleven months of silence in which their friends, past clients, and prospects haven't heard from them. How do those folks know you're still in the industry and looking for new business? Sure, sure, that calendar is right there on their fridge day in and day out; but if you haven't talked with them in ten months and their neighbor, Robby Realtor, has been chatting with them over the fence every weekend, who do you think has built the better connection? Who's top-of-mind and easily accessible? Who are they likely to call when they have a little real estate question that might have turned into your next big sale?

At worst, Secret Agents do nothing at all. They don't have time to create and manage a marketing campaign, they don't have the money to run ads, they're not 'creative' and don't know where to start.

Does this sound familiar? Folks, if you want to sustain and grow your business, you can't afford not to do these things... Whatever your plan, whatever your style, whatever your budget, write it down and work that plan!

Full article at http://www.principalbrokernorthwest.com/pdfs/PB_02_07.pdf or jobecker.weebly.com

- The play on emotions <in marketing materials needs to be> very strong. Consider your own marketing campaign and your own materials. If all you offer as a means to sell yourself and for others to get to know you is a sales resume and a list of memberships or awards, where's the emotion? What would compel them to call you?

Full article at http://www.principalbrokernorthwest.com/pdfs/PB_May07.pdf or jobecker.weebly.com

- I beseech you... 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.

Full article at http://www.principalbrokernorthwest.com/pdfs/PB_06_07.pdf or jobecker.weebly.com

- If you need a boost to get your marketing plan on track, consider your mission, market, message, media, method, and management.
Full article at http://www.principalbrokernorthwest.com/pdfs/PB_1-07.pdf or jobecker.weebly.com

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!*

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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 and continues to provide personalized one-on-one marketing consultation and computer software training to the industry since 2002.

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