

On Becoming an e-Agent—e-Marketing Part X

By Jo Becker, GRI, BA

Hopefully all of you are on the road to a more streamlined and productive database system after last month's article. While many would argue—and I would have to agree—you can't beat a long-term direct marketing via the postal mail system, a mailing campaign can be very expensive.

Today's technology allows the savvy e-Agent to supplement their marketing campaign in a cost-effective manner. If you have a good portion of your sphere's e-mail addresses you can market to them online for free, saving the cost of postage and letterhead.

e-Marketing may take the form of a text letter you draft and send via e-mail to your friends, family and clients. Perhaps you get fancy and send your newsletter as an attachment to an e-mail message. (Be careful with this option as many fear viruses when they see attachments, and many of your recipients may not have the software necessary to open your attachment properly.)

Another idea is to utilize free e-cards available at Hallmark.com, e-greetings.com, etc. You can handpick e-cards from an array of available options at various sites and send them to your sphere free of charge any time day or night. You may choose to send seasonal e-cards ushering in each new season with well wishes, or perhaps you would prefer to send holiday e-cards. Whatever scheme you choose, set a schedule and be consistent, just as you would with a postal mailing campaign.

As you preview sites that offer free e-cards look for those that don't inundate users with ads and junk mail—your e-card will be representing you and your business so go with a service that has a professional image. Also look for a site that allows you to pre-schedule your cards for delivery in the future, this will prevent you from having to sit down and send all your cards at once and in a hurry the day of.

Note that a few of the sites that offer free e-cards will even allow you to upload a photo or graphic to your e-card. You might want to have a picture of yourself or a copy of your logo to provide that professional touch. Believe it or not, the best site I've found that allows for free uploads is CentralPets.com's e-card page.

When it comes to marketing, one needs to be creative. While thinking outside the box with e-Marketing ideas such as these shouldn't necessarily constitute your entire marketing campaign, they can provide a quick, easy, and cost-effective supplement to help keep your name in front of those you know.

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, GRI, BA, is an Associate Broker with Oregon Realty Company's Portland West Branch. As a fellow agent, she knows how important, and sometimes scary, technology can be. After being approached by fellow agents for assistance, Jo has begun to offer technical and marketing assistance to interested agents. Jo can be reached at: 503/493-6918 Ext. 3 (voicemail/pager); or Letters@TheBeckersOnline.com