

Becoming an e-Agent: Getting Organized—Planning & Promotion

Article 17

Well, we've done it. We've ushered in a new year and said goodbye to yet another. I hope 2004 was a banner year for each of you. Whether it was or not, you likely have your sights set on doing as well or better this year. How are you going to accomplish that? What planning and budgeting have you done to assure your success? How will you reach your market if growing sales is your aim? What, precisely, are your goals for 2005?

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 for 2005, 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 small 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 timing as well as 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!

On a personal note, my own New Year's resolution involves recreating myself. My fourth quarter planning last year led me to the decision to pursue different career objectives. I'm taking my passion for marketing and information technology to a new level by focusing on helping others develop their businesses using these important skills.

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

Jo Becker has eight years of licensed real estate experience. As a former agent, 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 being approached by a fellow agent in 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 to get yourself organized!* 503/493-6883;
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