

By Jo Becker, BA

So far this year we have talked about planning for your success and getting organized by creating or updating your client database. Hopefully my last article convinced you of the reality that you are the personification of the service you provide; the importance of building lasting relationships to succeed; and the merits and urgency of consistency in your approach to marketing your practice.

Before we can get down to exploring specific marketing options you might employ and the technologies behind them, there's one more conversation we should have—that is, the six Ms of Marketing:

1. Mission—Know exactly what you have to offer

In order for your marketing to convey a clear, concise, and consistent message, you must first be clear yourself on what your mission is.

2. Market—Know who your ideal clients are and how to reach them.

Defining your ideal market is up to you. Do you want to specialize in your own (or some other) neighborhood? Do you want to focus on first-time or move up buyers? Do you want to service sellers or seniors exclusively? How about vacation homes, bank-owned properties, or high-end luxury homes? Define your market and you'll begin to see the demographics that make it up; this will point you to the most practical way of reaching your ideal client.

3. Message—Must be clear enough that you can convey to your target market who you are and what you have to offer.

Parlaying your mission in to a concise message targeted to your ideal market isn't easy. It may be useful to you (and your target audience) to begin with a slogan. For example, in our practice, my parents/partners and I chose to pool our personal contacts and market to those we knew personally. As such, we marketed ourselves as "The Beckers—Your Family of Real Estate Professionals." Our marketing pieces assumed a professional but personable tone that strove to speak from our family to theirs. What slogan or phrase summarizes you and your approach to your practice?

4. Media—Defined as any vehicle used to convey your message to your market.

..But not all media are created equal. What medium will work for you will depend a great deal on the market you choose. For example, if you're focused on entry-level buyers, mailing to tenants in apartment complexes may be a good strategy; but it would be a stinker of an idea if you're trying to reach and impress luxury homeowners.

Now, all the best marketing in the world would be for naught if you don't also have the following two points down:

5. Method—Knowing what to do, with whom, with what, when and how. IE: Being in control of your business!

This means staying on top of your game—knowing how to market listings for sellers, finding properties for buyers, understanding the forms you use forward and backward, negotiating winning offers and working through to successful closings (with all the three trillion lil' steps in between). Notice that Method is number FIVE. You may be an excellent agent, but if you don't do steps 1-4 to market yourself, no one will know about it!

6. Management—Operating your business in such a way that your clients are completely satisfied.

Management is completely individual—it may mean a prescribed daily routine, a set of procedure and transaction checklists, or one or more assistants or professional specialists to assist you. Whatever system(s) you can devise that works for you—that keeps you sane and assures your clients are so well serviced they'll scramble to tell others about you—is a good one!

Now these six steps involve fundamental questions that many business people never contemplate. Let's face it, they're tough, soulful questions that demand time and consideration. Yet, to skip any one of them will leave you holding on to luck alone for the success of your entire practice. **I know it's tax time** and you're busy, but it needn't be taxing—if you need help or inspiration talk through the points with a friend or family member, hire a coach or consultant to assist you. The answers are inside you, but sometimes they're easier to see when you have someone else to help pull them out.

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 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 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!* 503/493-6883; JoByEmail@yahoo.com