



Mark Sampson

*This Article*  
**Compliments of Call Realty**  
[www.pvsouthbayrecareer.com](http://www.pvsouthbayrecareer.com)

## **18 hot real estate marketing tips from Realtors conference**

***Your goal is to go for the 'Gosh!'***

**BY BERNICE ROSS**

*The challenge that agents face today is standing out from the competition both as agents and in terms of their listings.*

*What does it take to motivate buyers and sellers to say, "Gosh, that's amazing!" about you and your marketing materials? Peter Knight of the United Kingdom-based Property Academy shared several fresh ideas from around the globe at the recent National Association of Realtors conference.*

Do you need to kick up your marketing efforts in 2012? If so, the 40 marketing tips that Peter Knight delivered at this year's annual National Association of Realtors conference may be exactly what you need to kick off a stellar year in 2012.

What does it take to create an outstanding marketing program for your business? Peter Knight of the Property Academy answered that question with 40 different suggestions drawn from some of the world's most successful marketers.

### **1. Go for the "Gosh, that's amazing!" reaction**

How often have you heard the claim, "You should hire me because I'm No. 1"? Have you ever made the claim that "I'm the top agent in this area," or "I'm an expert in real estate"? When Realtors constantly make the same claims and offer essentially the same services, there's no market differentiation.

Knight argues that expertise, professionalism and excellent customer service should be a given. In order to differentiate your services, you must identify your personal "separators of value." In fact, Knight argues that if you really

want your marketing to succeed, it must be so different and unique that people say, "Gosh, that's amazing!"

## **2. Getting to "Gosh!"**

To arrive at "Gosh, that's amazing!" Knight suggests that you start with the fundamentals. Agents often become caught up in the technology connected to selling the home. For example, we're focused on the photos, the brochures, how the property appears online, where to advertise the home, the type of postcards to use, etc.

Agents get off track when they lose sight of the fact that a home is really about the memories you create. For example, your child's first steps, the garden you built over the years, or holidays spent with family. Your home is the frame in which you weave the events of your life.

## **3. People move for life-stage reasons**

Knight cited a survey that showed that 61 percent of the moves in 2011 were for life-stage reasons. To capitalize on this trend, target market people who are experiencing a life-stage change.

This can include getting married, having children, relocating, retiring, or a host of other issues. These are times when people need the services of a Realtor. As Knight put it, "We are people serving people."

## **4. Overcome the objection, "We're waiting for the market to improve."**

When you focus on the home as the frame in which people create their lives, the way you overcome buyer or seller reluctance shifts dramatically. Many agents attempt to close buyers by describing the logical opportunity -- i.e., that prices are low and interest rates are the best in our lifetimes.

In contrast, Knight suggests that you ask a simple question that touches the heart of the family: "Are you going to deprive your kids of living in a better home for an extra three years?"

## **5. Show off the property's potential**

While the staging of homes -- or virtual staging online -- can make properties more appealing, Knight suggested a completely different approach: going to a warehouse department store and getting bids to update a kitchen or add on an extra bedroom and bath. When you advertise the property, point out the price differential.

For example: "Equity builder! This three-bedroom, one-bath home is priced at \$400,000. A four-bedroom, two-bath home in the same area on the same size lot recently sold for \$520,000. Two bids to build a bedroom and bathroom addition place the estimated remodeling cost at \$58,000-\$60,000. Build the addition and create instant equity."

## **6. Extol the virtues, describe the blemishes**

Realtors normally do a great job in extolling the virtues of a property. Almost no one, however, describes the blemishes. If your sellers are realistic about their pricing, they can actually use a defect to make their property more attractive.

For example: "This property is located on a busy street but is priced \$35,000 less than the same floor plan a block away."

An even better approach is to have some fun. Here's what Knight suggested: "This property is priced \$40,000 less. The reason? The small second bedroom is the perfect size for an office. Besides, how often do you have someone stay the night, anyway?"

## **7. Competition, not comparables**

Many agents fail to draw a distinction between comparable sales and competing properties. A comparable sale has closed. A competing property is still on the market. Knight suggests that agents include the competing properties in the agent's ads.

Let buyers and sellers see the differences by comparing the major rooms in each of the houses, especially if the home is competitively priced. This is an excellent way to help both buyers and sellers be more realistic about prices.

## **8. Get back to real life**

Most Realtors in the U.S. go for sterile staging. In other words, we remove all the signs that a real family lives in the house. Agents encourage sellers to remove personal items including pictures, unusual art, or just about anything that would not fit in a model home.

The strategy seems to work, as staged properties consistently sell faster and for more money than those properties that have not been staged. Knight suggests that it may be smart to go in an entirely different direction. The example he used was a picture of the door to a little girl's bedroom. The little

girl had a brother who constantly teased her with his rather obnoxious habit. The girl took out her crayons, made a sign, and taped it to her door. The sign read, "No Fart Zone."

Knight believes that when you're selling homes rather than selling houses, sharing some of the idiosyncrasies of family life actually makes the home more desirable to potential buyers.

### **9. Create a resume for the property**

While most real estate marketing focuses on features, buyers purchase based upon the emotional benefits they believe the property offers. Instead of doing the standard description that most agents use, get the "Gosh, that's amazing!" response by creating a resume for the home that tells as much as possible about the house.

For example, describe who built the house, who used to live there, as well as the human side of the home's story: "We watched our son take his first steps next to the big hibiscus bush in the backyard. When he reached junior high school age, we finished off the basement. He promptly named it the 'man cave.' Now that he is grown, it's still the favorite place for his children to hang out when they come to visit us."

To use this approach in your business, invite your sellers to share their unique insights about the home as well as any special memories they may have. Ask them what attracted them to buy in this area and what they loved about living there. While this is clearly not an option for all properties, where it is appropriate, it is an extremely effective way to market.

To put this approach on steroids, don't rely exclusively on written words. Instead, use your video cam to capture 60- to 90-second clips of the sellers describing what matters to them about the property.

To illustrate this point, a Realtor who had listed a ranch decided to interview the seller on camera. The rancher explained how the ranch had been in his family for more than 100 years. He shared what it was like when he was growing up as well as the fun he had raising his three boys. As he described his memories, a small tear ran down his cheek. No ad copy could ever match the power of this touching video.

## **10. Locate an "in-house" historian**

Almost every area has a number of people who are local history buffs. It could be someone who is an antique collector or a local history professor. In either case, many of these people are eager to find audiences where they can show off their knowledge. You can turn this to your advantage in several different ways.

For example, if your "in-house" historian likes writing, you can invite the person to post on your blog. You could also have him or her write a column for your newsletter. If the person is not a writer, you could conduct a video interview at different times of the year. Ask about local holiday traditions or how people managed during extreme weather in the past.

Another way to capitalize on the "in-house" historian approach is to have the person conduct a walking tour of some of the local sites. If you have ever been on one of the ghost tours in New Orleans or Hollywood, these can be quite fascinating.

You can also conduct your own tour as well. For example, if you work in a historical part of town, you might conduct a walking tour that points out features unique to the area. This can include architectural styles, old restaurants that still operate today, or any of the other historical events that someone buying in the area may find fascinating.

What makes this approach particularly effective is that people who live in the area see you walking with a posse of potential buyers following you. This is a great way to make you the Realtor of choice when they are ready to buy or sell.

Remember, people purchase upon the story and the emotional benefits -- that's what creates the "Gosh, that's amazing!" experience.

## **11. Make your phone jump off the hook**

When most agents post an open house, they list their phone number, their website address, the price, the time, multiple pictures of the property, and often a video.

Knight suggests using a different approach. When you run your print ads for your open house, provide intriguing pictures, but do not provide the price or a website address. Instead, just provide the phone number. The agents who devised this approach get great results.

The key is to make sure the house has "curb appeal" in the picture, which will motivate people to pick up the phone and call. You can also provide additional motivation by noting that you will be serving refreshments.

### **12. Advertise in places that are not obvious**

One very creative agent decided to take out an ad for his listing in the "lonely hearts" section of his local newspaper: "This house is looking for the perfect mate." The agent went on to describe what makes the house special and appealing.

A slightly different approach would be to ask, "Which of these three houses is the best match for you?" The more creative you can be where you advertise, the more likely you are to get the "Gosh, that was amazing!" response.

### **13. Change up your photos**

A major drawback in most Realtor marketing is that they post the same listing photos on multiple websites. Knight suggests that you will get better responses if you change the photos for each major website where your listing is posted. To do this, shoot pictures from different angles and different distances.

If the house has a second story, take photos from a balcony or upper deck looking down into the backyard. Your goal is to have potential buyers view your property a second time rather than skipping over it because they remember the pictures that were displayed on another site.

### **14. Avoid the usual marketing "blah-blah-blah"**

Most agents like to market themselves as being "knowledgeable" and as "customer service experts." Exactly what do these phrases mean? Knight suggests that you use a much more specific approach to describe how and what you are marketing.

For example:

"We give you feedback every 24 hours on the activity on your home."

"Our sellers sell their homes for 97 percent of their list price."

"We provide you with a comprehensive market profile each month."

Rather than using some vague marketing slogan, the agent in each example above specifically describes what the client will receive in concrete, measurable terms.

### **15. Register for market updates**

If your company has a program that updates buyers on new listings, register your sellers for this tool as well. This is an easy way to keep them up to date on the new listings in your market area and to help you obtain price reductions. This can also be especially helpful as a marketing tool to convert more for-sale-by-owner homes into signed listings.

### **16. Use GPS functions to set up drive times**

Drive times are often important for many buyers. Knight suggested using some of the new GPS apps to log this data for you. Two examples are the MotionX GPS Drive and TripCase. Both of these apps have mapping functions while also clocking how long it takes you to reach your destination.

To illustrate this point, turn on the app when you leave the office and calculate how long it takes to arrive at the various houses you are showing. When you show the last house of the day, your phone will display the various drive times between the places where you stopped.

This can be especially useful when the buyers want to know how long it will take them to drive their children to school or to where the child takes music lessons.

### **17. Make your listings look their best**

Although based in the U.K., [Vizzishots.com](http://Vizzishots.com) offers a great service that costs \$4.50 to make your listing photos look great. One of the greatest challenges that agents face, especially in areas that have very little sunshine or lots of snow, is getting a great picture of your listings.

Vizzishots cleans up all the issues in your photos and creates the perfect blue skies and sharp colors that will make your listings look their best.

### **18. The marketing makeover**

This is a great approach for a company marketing campaign. Anyone who buys or sells a house during the campaign time is entered into a drawing for a home makeover. Ideally, hire one of the top designers in your area. Furthermore, the designer may be willing to exchange his or her time for the free publicity.

Ultimately, marketing comes down to standing out from the competition. With a little creativity and the guidelines from Knight's talk at the National

Association of Realtors conference, you have plenty of ammunition to create effective marketing campaigns throughout 2012.

*Bernice Ross, CEO of [RealEstateCoach.com](http://RealEstateCoach.com), is a national speaker, trainer and author of the National Association of Realtors' No. 1 best-seller, "Real Estate Dough: Your Recipe for Real Estate Success." Hear Bernice's five-minute daily real estate show, just named "new and notable" by iTunes, at [www.RealEstateCoachRadio.com](http://www.RealEstateCoachRadio.com). You can contact her at [Bernice@RealEstateCoach.com](mailto:Bernice@RealEstateCoach.com) or [@BRoss](https://twitter.com/BRoss) on Twitter.*