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6 steps to grow your real estate business in 2012

When setting goals, start small

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Have you been struggling with the tough recessionary market? If you want stellar success in 2012, now is an excellent time to alter those pie-in-the-sky plans and dreams so they also include simple, small steps that you can take on a daily basis.

How many times in 2011 did you find yourself daydreaming about that one big commission that would take the financial pressure off of you? While plenty of people dream of the big win, those who actually turn their dreams into reality often take an entirely different path. Successful people narrow their focus and take small, specific steps each day to make their dreams a reality.

When you rely on the one big deal and it doesn't work out, it can be a disaster for your business. In contrast, when you consistently take small steps, a minor misstep will likely be of little or no consequence to your business.

While thinking big is great, where most people miss the mark is when they fail to take the small action steps each day that lead to success. As the ancient Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu put it, "A journey of 10,000 miles begins with a single step."

One of the many challenges agents face is being pulled in so many directions that they don't know what to do. Should I cancel my lead generation time to take out a buyer? Will investing in this technology really produce any difference in my bottom line? Do I really need to have a presence on social media?

Here are six proven steps that can help you resolve the confusion and make your dreams a reality:

1. Observation

This is the first and most important step. Once you develop the ability to carefully observe what you are doing in your life, you can quickly identify whether you are on track for accomplishing your life dream. The challenge for most agents, however, is remembering to create the time necessary to monitor and evaluate their successes as well as their failures.

2. Define your focus

Make a list of all the things that you could do to build your business. Next, identify the top three items that you believe will help you reach your goals. Now dump everything else and focus on those three items exclusively for the next 30 days. At the end of the month, did you achieve more than you had in previous months? If so, stay the course. If not, continue making course adjustments until you discover the perfect combination of activities for your business.

3. What is your top priority today?

A great strategy each day is to ask yourself, "What are the three things that I must absolutely accomplish today to hit my goals?" Make sure that you complete those activities first before tackling the items that are lesser priorities.

4. Track what you accomplish

Many people sabotage themselves by focusing on what they did not accomplish. For example, suppose that there were 15 items you had hoped to complete today but you accomplished only 12. A common self-defeating pattern is to say, "I didn't accomplish those three important items," instead of

acknowledging that you accomplished 12 of the action steps you hoped to achieve that day.

5. When it stops working, dump it

To achieve your goals, be willing to change course when necessary. For example, if you have been working short sales and your market is really starting to improve, it may be time to shift to obtaining more traditional resale listings. As you gather feedback, always be evaluating whether what you are doing is helping you achieve your goals or whether it's holding you back. If it's not helping you to move forward, then stop doing it.

6. Innovate

Be willing to innovate with new approaches or technologies. Often, these changes can allow you to accomplish your goals more quickly. For example, instead of faxing documents, you can now create them digitally and send them as an attachment to an email or post them online where they can be easily downloaded. In terms of what to add, keep a list of ideas and place them in rank order.

Are you willing to take the sometimes small, but tedious steps day in and day out that lead to major success? If so, you can make your dreams a reality. Keep moving forward, keep your eyes on the goal, and be mindful that every small step takes you that much closer to achieving your dream.

Bernice Ross, CEO of 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. You can contact her at Bernice@RealEstateCoach.com or [@BRoss](https://twitter.com/BRoss) on Twitter.