



Mark Sampson

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Back to School Strategies for Real Estate Professionals

How You Can Make the Grade in Your Market

By Julie Escobar



It's that time again. Tens of millions of children are headed back to classes, and even those without little ones can get caught up in the thirst for knowledge, need for more certain schedules and the never-too-old-for allure of new notebooks and supplies. All right, maybe that last one is just me, but you'll have to admit there is something exciting about creating a clean slate, learning to the best of our abilities and growing as a sales professional as well as a person.

Ready to get started? You've had a healthy breakfast, donned your uniform (name badges everyone!) put on your thinking caps and you're ready to learn – right? Here are the “classes” you must master in this market:

1. Niche Marketing: New or experienced, the most important thing you can do to grow your business is to establish a niche,” shared Real Estate Speaker

and Coach Roberta Ross. “Niche players fare better, earn more, usually are better at time management and can more quickly define themselves as an expert in their market area. Why? First, it gives you clarity of purpose, so you’re more efficient in the way you conduct your business, in the manner you build your skill sets and your knowledge base and in how you grow your customer base. You don’t need to be all things to all people. You just need to be the best at reaching out to, teaching and building relationships with that core group or niche. That not only builds your business faster, but it gives you a sense of certainty and confidence that you wouldn’t have if you were trying to work with any and all customer types.

An example: I recently talked to an agent that was a FSBO expert who told me she didn’t need to work any other prospecting base. She has been working with FSBOs so long and so well, that she knew, almost even before she walked in the door for the listing appointment what they would ask, what they would need and what it would take to get the listing. Now if YOU had that kind of confidence for every appointment, how many MORE doors would you walk through?”

FSBOs not your thing? Consider becoming a “condo king” or specializing in working with people who are going through a divorce. So often those people need a trusted resource they can turn to, and you can start by networking with area divorce attorneys. Put them on your sphere of influence mailings and your Just Listed/Just Sold postcard system. You’ll demonstrate that you’re the expert to get things done in today’s market.

Another of Roberta’s students in Annapolis had a former career in the medical profession and focuses all of her efforts and energies building her niche in the medical communities. Remember our friend Karin Hill, manager at Watson Realty Corporation in Florida who makes the motorcycle community her niche of choice or her agent that specializes in working with the hearing impaired? Now that’s thinking outside the box!

Whatever niche you choose, make it your own, speak the language, reach out to everyone and anyone in that sphere and you’ll find yourself building a business that’s more fun, more interesting and believe it or not, less work!

2. Leveraging Technology Tools: Leveraging technology and available networking to maximize your potential for lead generation, prospecting

and keeping your pipeline of customers filled is crucial to your success,” says Mrs. Ross. “That means learning how to use Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and the social networking tools that are available today. Not to mention things like QR Codes, Craigslist and other top tools. It can also mean hosting weekly or monthly conference calls, webinars and workshops for those in your niche, community or sphere of influence. These are great ways to inexpensively and effectively establish and reinforce your niche. Technology allows you to be in many places and in front of many people at one time, which helps you build relationships by using these tools to share information on a regular, consistent basis.

Technology also allows you to put systems in place such as automating the marketing of your listings using systems such as MLSmailings.com, www.GettingListingsSold.com or your ProspectsPLUS.com postcard gallery which can take some of the daily, weekly and monthly marketing chores off your to-do list, freeing you up to spend more time at what you do best – getting face-to-face with customers and prospects. Also, you’ll want to use RSS feeds from your blog to auto-update your social networks and websites as well without costing you precious time.

3. Work High Priority Activities First. Bottom line? Real estate agents get paid to build relationships and provide exceptional service. There are, of course, a million and one ways to be busy but making no money – critical to your success for both new and experienced is to make sure those priorities are worked first. If you put them off until later, too often, later never comes. You need to have absolute focus on scheduling the time to prospect, present, close and build relationships before anything else. That means making and KEEPING that appointment with yourself every day.

4. Develop Good HABITS. Just as it’s important for students to have good study habits – it’s important for us as business professionals to do the same. How? First, appreciate the time you already have. Think about the down time you have commuting to the office, running errands or driving back from an appointment. You could easily use that time to nourish your mind and build your skill set by listening to audio books, podcasts or powerful motivational or technique-filled CDs. Roberta pointed out that often, these little “bites” of

education along the way can be even more conducive to learning as we can absorb information better in snippets than we can if we were to try to sit down and try to digest a one-two hour audio course at once.

Another great idea is to begin and end your day with a chance to learn. Keep a book or two beside your bed and spend that first fifteen minutes or so when you rise and before your head hits the pillow at night to drink in new information. It's a great way to fuel our minds and a powerful way to bookend your day.

Another good habit and rockstar tip from my friend Virginia Munden – never underestimate the power of a written note. Virginia is a leader in her market and in our industry – because she gets the value, importance and end-results of going the extra mile. So practice that penmanship and start sending thank you's. It's a connectivity tool that will earn you big brownie points from clients and referring agents.

Much thanks to Roberta for her time and wisdom. We challenge you to make the most of your time, this market and the clean slate that this “back to school” season offers all of us!

***Need help?** To learn more about Roberta, visit her online at www.SixFigureRealEstateCoach.com or follow Virginia on Facebook at www.facebook.com/VirginiaMunden.*