

# 13 Tips to Boost Your Business

We asked and you answered. Here are some tips to help you market, sell, and close like a pro.

## Attract Referrals and Repeat Clients

**1.** *How do you celebrate a client's closing?* REALTOR® Chuck Bode, CRS, GRI, of Omaha, NE suggests hosting a housewarming party for your client's friends in their new home. Offer to take care of the food and beverages, set-up arrangements, and invitations. You'll only spend around \$500, but you'll make countless connections at the party, and your extra-mile services won't be forgotten by any attendees who may need a REALTOR® in the future.

**2.** A holiday card or a follow-up call one month after closing to make sure that your client is satisfied with their new home takes only minutes of your time and makes a lasting impression. Handwritten notes imply special thoughtfulness. Betty Wurm of Koenig & Strey GMAC has found a unique way to thank her clients. "I take pictures, unobtrusively during showings, of the outstanding view that the client is buying, which I have printed as note cards and first class stamps. For one client, who started looking in March when Lake Michigan was still frozen, I took a picture where the lake is white. Later, I took another picture when the lake was blue. The client was thrilled to get the note cards of the blue lake at her closing; but she will be astounded when she gets another set for her birthday, which is in November, with the lake covered with snow and ice. These make the perfect holiday card, too."

**3.** *For design or repair needs, refer your client to businesses you trust and would use yourself. Exchange contact information with the recommended businesses so that they can return the favor.*

**4.** If you were graced with good culinary skills, put them to use. Throw a casual dinner party for recent clients at your home, and ask each of them to bring a guest. Make your signature dish, pair with a fine wine, and hand out simple gift bags (make sure to slip a business card in each one).

## Attract New Business

**5.** The first place people go today for information is the internet. If you don't already have a Web site or blog, get one (or both!). Create an FAQ entry with simple answers to common questions about home buying or selling in your area. Now when people search for general information on real estate in your area, your site will come up in search engines.

**6.** Whether you advertise in print or broadcast media, come up with a slogan that sticks.

Think of local catchy jingles—"Save Big Money at Menards" and "American Mattress: Where Dreams Come True," are good examples—that you can't forget.

Your slogan should state who you are and your specialty in five or six words. Marki Lemons, a C.A.R. Board Director and foreclosure expert, promotes herself as "The Foreclosure Queen." This clever handle helped her land a segment on the ABC 7 morning show as well as mentions in the Chicago Tribune and numerous industry blogs. "Since the branding of the 'Foreclosure Queen,' my business has increased," Marki says. "And because

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the name is out there, I now appear to be more reputable. People feel as though they have a whole team when dealing with the “Foreclosure Queen.”

**7.** When you follow up on a call and reach a potential clients voicemail, make the message useful, suggest REALTORS® Erik G. Stegemann, Managing Broker, Property Consultants Realty, and Patrick Hawkins at Property Consultants. “Leaving a message saying ‘call me’ doesn’t do the trick,” Erik says. Leave a detailed message, indicating what the next course of action is, and whether they need to return your call right away.

**8.** Always answer your phone, unless with a client. REALTOR® Frank Mitrick, CRS, CRB, ABR, of Real Tek Realty says, “From 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., I’m on call all the time. I will not answer my phone while I’m with another client, but I will return a call within a short time or as soon as I can. I can not believe it takes some REALTORS® 24 hours to return my call.”

**9.** *To make it easier for potential clients to reach you, give out your cell phone numbers. People are less inclined to leave messages, and if they get you in person instead of your voicemail, they won’t hang up immediately to call another REALTOR®.*

### Improve Yourself

**10.** Get as much education and earn as many designations as possible, recommends Frank Mitrick. “Get involved and go to conventions, read trade magazines, and become a student of your profession.”

Dress the part every single day, in the event that you have an unexpected showing or potential clients visiting the office. A professional, neat appearance conveys that you take yourself and your business seriously, which can go a long way in inspiring clients’ confidence in you.

**11.** Take media reports on real estate with a grain of salt. REALTOR® Frank Mitrick does. “It is at best half truths, and twisted facts,” he says. Through sticking to the basics and delivering good customer service, Frank’s office is busier than ever.

**12.** Do not wear overpowering perfume or cologne, or smoke in your car right before meeting a client. Doing so will ensure that clients who suffer from any form of allergy or sensitivity to certain smells will be distracted and uncomfortable for the duration of the showing. **CR**

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