

# **The Basics of Marketing**

**By Todd Bates**

**“Control Your Fear, Be the Doctor, & No  
One Can Stop you From Achieving Your  
Goals” – Todd Bates**

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## **CHAPTER ONE - The Basics of Marketing**

### **You Must Know For Profiting In Your Real Estate Business**

I'm starting this manual out with a section on marketing because marketing is your business... without this information, and you'll never reach the levels of success you desire in real estate. With this information you'll become a more successful and profitable real estate agent.

You can't overlook the fact that if you want to build a successful real estate practice, you must spend a reasonable amount of time, money and effort on marketing. I know it sounds logical, but you'd be surprised by how many times something like this will bypass the typical real estate agent.

Agents everywhere need this information and any professional that's "in" business to make a profit... is in the business of **MARKETING!** That's what it really boils down to...

No Matter What Type Of Real Estate Agent You Are... What Your Market Is... Where You're Located... Or Anything Else - Forget It! You're Really In The Marketing Business!

If you're going to be advertising your business, then you must know the basics of marketing and build upon them. That's why I'm starting out with a section on the basics of marketing you must know.

But, having this information will do you good **ONLY** if you put the ideas into action. This whole special report is about action. And never forget this:

#### **There Is No Success In Real Estate Without Action**

Meditation won't get you there... more "3 Day Action Seminars" won't get you there... more tapes from the "Superstars" won't get you there... more "Boot camps" won't get you there... only action will. Some people won't like the ideas in this package because they are totally unique, different and proprietary in every way... but they work! All the time! For everybody!

My point is, you can't possibly hope to succeed in real estate in today's marketplace unless you have the marketing mindset, tools, techniques, systems and ideas (that I'm about to share with you) as part of your business arsenal. And, you must put them to work!

I know you want to succeed; otherwise you wouldn't have taken this step to invest in my materials. That's why you will not join the 85 out of 100 real estate agents that fail each and every year. Money is wasted, time is wasted, and dreams are torn every time one of these agents fails.

You will not be one of them if you will follow the marketing truths that you're about to read. If you take the time to learn these essentials of marketing, you will be a profitable agent.... very profitable indeed.

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Marketing is a game. A game that you can win with powerful advertising. To win, you must play by rules that will win the game. In this section I will give you the basic rules you need to be able to put marketing and advertising to work making money for you.

I have many people to thank for this information, too many to list. And much of this information I have learned, at great expense, by making all kinds of costly mistakes.

I hope you'll learn from my mistakes and won't fall into the traps that so many agents do, and end up out of the business.

### **Here Are The Steps You Need To Know To Help You Succeed In Marketing Your Real Estate Business:**

- 1) Focus On The Benefits To Your Buyers And Sellers
- 2) Know Who Your Prospects Are, How Many There Are, And How To Reach Them
- 3) Understand Your Competition
- 4) Understand The Frustrations & Problems Of Your Buyers And Sellers & How You Can Solve Them
- 5) Don't Use Expensive Advertising, Use Less Expensive Alternatives
- 6) Create Client-Centered Marketing Communications
- 7) Always Ask For What You Want
- 8) Be Persistent In Your Marketing Efforts

#### **Success Step One: Focus On The Benefits To Your Buyers And Sellers**

You may be very excited about what you do in real estate. You may be so excited about your service, company, how many homes you sell, the sales "club" you belong to, awards you've won, your popularity or anything else... that you could talk about it for hours... but your buyers and sellers are only going to respond with a resounding "so what!"

The "features" that you are so excited about and that boost your ego are basically meaningless to those buyers and sellers out there... unless you turn them into believable, powerful and compelling benefits to them. Benefits that will motivate them into signing the listing with you or working with you exclusively to find a home.

You must take every feature that you offer and translate it into a benefit that is meaningful for your buyers and sellers. If a feature that you offer has no benefit, then that is a feature you

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don't need to be talking about. (Which by the way are 99% of all the features the typical agent talks about.)

The essence of successful marketing is to discern and then disseminate precise, compelling benefits to your buyers and sellers... benefits which let them know in crisp, energetic, precise detail exactly what's in it for them when they work with you.

So, for each specific market (buyers, sellers, FSBO's, expired's, first time home buyers, investors, hard to qualify buyers, etc...) you are pursuing, you must determine what the benefits are that you provide the prospect. The easiest way to do this is to look at the features from your prospects point of view.

Ask yourself, "If I were a (buyer, seller, FSBO...), what's in it for me to work with \_\_\_\_\_?" Then answer that same question in reference to each and every feature that you offer.

When you are trying to compel someone to work with you, not only must you let them know what their benefits are, you must always tell them the benefits first, and then tell them what feature offers them this benefit or result.

By focusing on the benefits, you'll be head and shoulders above the agents going after that same prospect.

Now let's look at the next Success Step that will enable you to profit from marketing basics in your business:

### **Know Who Your Prospects Are, How Many There Are, and How To Reach Them**

If you are to truly succeed in real estate, then you've got to know who can and will work with you, how many of these prospects there are and how you can reach them in a cost-effective, consistent manner.

So, first you must understand the type of prospect you are looking for. You must realize that if you don't know what YOU want and what YOU are all about, what YOUR goals are... then you will have a hard time finding the best suited and matched prospect for YOU.

Most agents dabble in every type of market imaginable... from FSBO's to First Time Home Buyers and everything in between. But in order to be outrageously successful in real estate, you need a "niche" a "specialty" a market that you know and service better than anyone else.

Only as an example, let's assume that you love working with listing referrals only. Not FSBO's, expired's, buyers, or anything else.... just listing referrals. To determine this you would have had to ask yourself most, if not all, of the following questions (which I suggest you do now, if you do not yet have a "niche", "specialty" or market that you've already determined to be an exact match for YOU):

\* How far am I willing to travel?

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Determine your market area. Are you just interested in working around town, or are you willing to drive 45 minutes for a deal? This is important to decide right now.

Once you've answered this question, use it to answer the next:

\* How many prospects are there and how do I find them?

This question could be a little tougher to answer. Depending on which market you're after, it could be easy to find your prospects or tough. For our example however, let's take a moment to think logically.

Let's say that you've determined that you don't want to travel very far for new business, and that you'd like to stay in the immediate area. The immediate area may have three sub-divisions with a total of three thousand homeowners. Would it be possible to get the names, addresses and phone numbers to those 3000 residents?

Sure. Now, you've determined your business location and the exact target market you're going after - so forget, ignore and delete from your data bank of possibilities all the other prospects that fall outside of YOUR "niche" market.

As funny as this may sound, only one in 100 agents ever go through this simple process of deciding their exact target market. The majority of all agents are like kids in a candy store. There are so many options, so many choices, so many different things to try that they eat a little bit of everything and get sick. In real estate if you don't find YOUR "niche" and "specialty" you're just like the sick little kid in the candy store.

This example should open your mind to understand that it is relatively simple to determine and find a "niche" market for your business. It's crucially important to your success, so take some time and do it now.

All you've got to do is continually ask the questions that will lead you to the answers. Now let's look at how to reach your prospects.

There are many ways reach YOUR market, all of which work if done correctly. You can...

- Use direct mail
- Telemarket
- Door Knock
- Write a Newsletter
- Conduct Seminars
- Advertise - (classified, display, magazine, Val-Pak, card decks, etc...)

These are just a few of the marketing methods you can use, and each one will be discussed in great detail later in this manual. But rest assured that each one works well if set up and used correctly. After all, every traveling seminar, "Top Producing" agent who writes a book or

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“marketing system” that you can buy out of the national REALTOR magazine has their own successful approach.

Some “experts” say you must make 141 cold calls per day... another may say to send out 100,000 direct mailers a month... others may want you to advertise “FREE REPORTS”... others say to knock on 74 doors a day to reach your goals... still others say to focus 110% on past clients and referrals.

And you know what? They’re all right, because every approach will work... but the key difference here is that I’m telling right now that not every marketing approach works for everyone. That’s why you have to find YOUR way of marketing, YOUR “niche” and YOUR business objectives. And that’s what I’m all about and that’s what this program will teach you... among a million other things!

I am a believer in spending a reasonable amount of time determining your “niche” and then testing different marketing methods, based on YOUR own personality and work habits, to develop a complete and super profitable real estate practice. Not those of the “expert” on stage or any other agent out there.

I always attempt to spend as little money as possible finding these types of things out. I advise you to do the same as you are testing different approaches to making money in real estate.

Especially when you are new to the unique and proprietary marketing that I teach... you should NEVER throw all of your money, time and effort into one single method. NEVER. This is what most agents do, and it’s the real reason why 85% (or more) fail miserably.

One final note on this Success Step is that it helps to know how many prospects you have and how to reach them so that you can set your income goals based on real-life numbers... not approximations. It will also help you figure out potential expense costs in doing a direct mail piece, phoning, seminars, etc.

### **Knowing & Understanding Your Competition**

Once you've determined your marketing area, you'll need to know who else is after your target market. Your marketing efforts will never take place in a vacuum, there will always be other things competing for your prospects attention and money.

Your competition and dozens of other salespeople are approaching your same prospect time and time again. That's why an essential part of successful marketing involves close scrutiny of your competitors, in an attempt to understand what they are doing, why they are doing it, and how well they are doing.

To be ahead of your competition you need to know:

1. Who is offering real estate service in your area?

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2. What are the precise features of their service? (Do they push their company? Themselves? Their Credentials?)
3. What benefits are derived by using their service?
4. What's unique about doing business with them?
5. How does that compare with doing business with you?
6. Is their market exactly the same as yours?
7. Why do your buyers and sellers use your competition?
8. Why should a buyer or seller choose you ahead of them?

Unless you know this information, inside and out, it's impossible to formulate your marketing strategy. Which means, your marketing efforts will never pay off?

Understand this: a competitor is someone who's getting your prospects to work with them... thus, lowering your potential profits.

Is this something you like and want to keep happening? NO!

Therefore, you've got to know about all of your competition, who they are and how they work. You must research.

You need to gather the key facts on your competition in order to answer the questions above. Here are possible ways to do this

- Get Yourself On Relevant Mailing lists (Including Your Competition's)
- Subscribe To (Or Get) Periodicals That They Are Running Ads In
- Ask Their Current Customers Questions About Your Competition
- Ask A Friend To Call Up And Request Information About Your Competitors.

Also remember this: being anxious and worried about your competition will do you no good at all. Learn from them. Understand what they do, what works for them and how it can work for you. Some of you will be competing against the strongest and most successful agent in your area - SO WHAT! They weren't always successful, and quite honestly, they are the easiest to knock off - so go for it!

As a final note on this subject: Remember, there truly is more real estate to be bought and sold in this big world than any of us could possibly do, so don't get too caught up in worrying about

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your competitors.... you'll have plenty of business if you learn how to market yourself effectively.

And a key to marketing yourself effectively is to follow the next Success Step:

### **Understand The Frustrations & Problems Of Your Buyers & Sellers & How You Can Solve Them**

If you want to succeed in marketing your real estate business, you must understand that you are not selling anything, *YOU ARE SOLVING A PROBLEM FOR A BUYER OR A SELLER!*

However, you can only solve a buyer or seller's problem if you understand the problems they have. No one is really interested in your real estate service, they are only interested in getting a solution to a specific problem that they have.

So, solve your prospects problems for them and you'll make the big bucks!

Ask yourself these questions everyday and keep them forever forefront in your mind for each and every market you approach:

1)"Do I understand what is bothering my... (buyer, seller, fsbo, expired, investor, etc...)?"

2)"Do I understand what my (buyer, seller, fsbo, expired, investor...) wants to achieve?"

3) "How do I know for sure?"

You must walk a mile in your prospects shoes to understand the answers to these questions. To be a marketing success, you will do it, you must.

You can only succeed to the extent that you understand precisely what bothers your prospect, and precisely what that prospect wants to achieve.

Don't get caught up in what you *think* your prospects need or want in a real estate agent. No one uses an agent because they NEED them. They only use an agent because they WANT some specific outcome.

You must understand that your success is based on your ability to solve the problems of your prospects in any market you go after. You need to come to understand their innermost desires, dreams, anxieties, passions, and problems with buying or selling a home.

You need to care about these people -- you must sincerely want to help make their lives better... one at a time.

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Really when it comes right down to it, the attitude you need to create successful marketing is that of a salesman who's got a long term commitment to keeping his/her clients happy. If he/she doesn't keep 'em happy, he/she won't make any residual income... and will have to keep re-inventing the wheel every month.

Do you follow me?

Think about it for a second

If you're really hoping to make serious money in real estate you're going to do everything you can to make sure your clients are happy and content... the only way to do this is to really know what they want from you... NOT what you want to give them.

If you'll put yourself into that state of mind and understand what I'm saying here completely, you'll have come to know the attitude it takes to create winning marketing.

In order to create marketing that sells, you have to adapt this empathetic attitude. Grab your dictionary and take a look at the word empathy.

My dictionary says:

*Identification with and understanding of the thoughts or feelings of another."*

In plain English, that is what good salesmanship and marketing is all about!

Read that definition again!

Do you see the power and truth revealed in that definition?

That, my friend, is exactly what great marketing is all about... *being empathetic!*

You see, if you identify with and understand the feelings, hopes, and anxieties of your target market, you're going to be able to deliver to them what THEY want and need!

But first' you've got to understand them, their thoughts and feelings, their hopes and desires, and anything else you need to find out that'll help you create marketing that sells.

Essentially what I'm saying is that you must be sensitive and understanding as to what each individual prospect wants. The fears and hopes of a first time home buyer are much different than that of a FSBO. In addition, I think you'll agree that an expired listing will have a different demeanor than a homeowner who has never listed or sold a home before. You must listen and understand each prospect uniquely... it's the only way to reach the next level in your career.

As I think about it, that's probably not going to be easy to do for some agents that read this material.

But, if you're serious about wanting to succeed in making tons and tons of money in real estate and becoming a true success; you've got to get serious about serving people.... caring about

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people -- getting to know people and care about them and their concerns. Empathize with people.

Go out of your way to show your concern for people. Create marketing that solves their problems, and focus on them.... once you do all that - you will succeed big time!

**Avoid Using Expensive Advertising Always Use Less Expensive Options**

If you choose to run ads in newspapers, daily or weekly shoppers, grocery cart ads, magazine ads, Homes & Land type ads, and the, you are destined to lose money... unless you've tested and proven those media to be profitable in your area.

You must always test small, and then roll-out big. And sometimes your small test ads will be profitable and then sometimes they will die... you must not try to analyze, rationalize or anything - just test!

The inexperienced agent will always buy some "marketing gimmick" that some "Superstar" sells and jump into it with both feet... because it seems so easy for "that guy". But I'll tell you something, if you go ahead without testing first, you're guaranteed to be disappointed and lose money.

I always counsel my clients to find the least expensive way to reach their buyers and sellers. Find the least expensive way to test marketing approaches.

**For Example:**

- Instead of running a full page magazine ad... that's guaranteed to work because the "Superstar" says so... test the headlines, layout and copy of the ad on a smaller scale - maybe 1/8 or 1/4 page.
- Instead of sending a new direct mail piece or postcard to your entire 2000 person farm or database... test the card to only a couple hundred to check response or use it as a mail stuffer for the local paper at 5 cents a piece vs.' 40+ cents a piece.
- Instead of paying telemarketers to call for you per hour... pay them per appointment or sale. There is more in it for them and you're only paying for performance.
- Instead of running seminars and paying for the entire marketing yourself... coop with mortgage, title and legal professionals to run your seminar jointly.

These are just a few money-saving ideas (if you use them) that will save you hundreds and thousands of dollars spent on untested and unproven marketing ventures. But, you've got to be proactive about all this -- you've got to think hard and long about your objective. And that is *to spend the least amount of money for the greatest possible return!*

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Too many “Superstar” agents in this business tell you about how much money they make each year. But remember, they always give you the gross... not the net.

They forget to mention that out of the 1 million dollars they made last year that they spent \$400,000 on advertising and marketing, \$200,000 on their fifteen assistants, \$150,000 on their office, \$90,000 on taxes and another \$47,500 on miscellaneous business expenses.

When you stop and add it up... they aren’t making anything after they pay themselves a salary to pay their own personal bills. Get real right now. This business is not about how many homes you sell, or where you rank amongst the countries top agents, or how much marketing you do... this business (and every other business for that matter) is about NET-NET BOTTOM LINE.

What are you really making and how much money are you really spending? When it comes to marketing the only thing that counts are the results. Always, always, always look at your bottom-line. You must explore all the possibilities when looking at your business and the marketing of it.

If you don’t, you’ll be like those other “Superstars” that win all the awards, are recognized every where they go... but are really living month to month. Don’t be stupid - be smart about your business!

### **Create “Client-Centered” Advertising Materials**

Too much money is wasted every year by agents who try to further their name recognition, their company, their accomplishments and everything else with useless marketing communications. All too many of these marketing efforts forget to:

Focus on your buyer and sellers:

- Show your buyer and seller prospect that you understand their anxieties and aspirations
- Offer a compelling incentive to induce them into action
- Make it easy for them to get the information they are looking for right now
- Talk to your buyers and sellers as though you were sitting across from them at a table
- Remind your buyer and seller prospects of their worries and have a solution
- Provide complete details about what your buyer and seller prospects have to do to get the benefit you are offering
- Remind your buyer and seller prospects what will happen if they don’t take action

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These are things that you cannot afford to forget in your marketing efforts. These are the basics that must be in your ads, letters, postcards, scripts, telemarketing calls, seminars, display and classified ads. After you have done these basics, then consider putting in graphics, pictures of yourself or a house and other "less important" stuff.

### **Always Ask For What You Want**

More times than I can remember, I have been in consultations, training's and conference calls where agents tell me that they don't even ask their prospects for what they want.

Think about that...it's crazy!

Why bother to work so hard to get new business if you're not even going to ask your buyers and sellers for what you want! And what is it that you want? Maybe the listing, maybe the sale, maybe an extension, maybe a price reduction, maybe an appointment, maybe something else... but you DO want something, right? You have to learn to ask for what you want!

If you know you have a good service that will help more people buy and sell homes, it is your RESPONSIBILITY - to first of all tell them about it - and second of all ask for what you want.

And if they don't use your services today, you must keep asking them for what you for as long as it takes. (Ever heard of the old saying, "Keep asking till they list, buy or die!") When you think about it's really is your duty to get them to take action -- if you're truly empathetic liked I talked about earlier. You are a problem solver, not just a real estate agent.

Further, if they don't tell you why they won't use your services, you need to ask why and when they will. You must know.

Marketing is the art of finding out what the prospect needs, letting him know that you can get it for him.

You can never think that a listing or sales appointment is finished until you have explicitly asked him to use your services.

There are many ways to ask for the sale (you'll find all the questions you'll ever need in the Appendix where my 302 Magic Questions are). My personal belief is, however, that you need to ask interesting, straight-forward, emotion peaking questions to get to where you want to go.

(Study my 302 Magic Questions in the Appendix often, and soon enough you'll have the tools you need to ask the right questions at the right time)

### **Be Persistent In Your Marketing Efforts**

This is the Success Step that you must engrave in your head! You must internalize this and live by it if you want to succeed on a large scale in real estate sales!

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***MARKETING IS A DAILY ACTIVITY - IT IS NOT SOMETHING YOU DO ONCE AND THEN GET RICH!***

Never forget this.

Persistence is the key to marketing success, as well as every other type of success. Once you've identified your target market, you've got to proceed to connect with them over and over again, letting them know that you have the service and solution to their problems and needs.

You are the one they need to eliminate their anxieties.

The buyers and sellers that you approach will not always or even usually take action the first time they hear about your service. They must be exposed to you and your service again and again and again.

There's a general rule for how many times you should contact your prospects:

***AT LEAST SEVEN TIMES WITHIN 18 MONTHS***

...and those seven times will use a variety of marketing means:

- direct mail (letters, postcards, "stuffers")
- telemarketing
- free publicity
- print ads (classified or display)
- seminars
- television
- workshops
- and any and all other alternatives

Only after you've made a connection 7 times in 18 months can you drop them (unless they give you some other proof that they're not a qualified prospect), and be assured that your prospects know about you and how you can help. By then a significant portion of your market will have taken action themselves or passed your name on to a referral. This "rule of seven" is something you must live by.

You must take it into consideration when developing your marketing plan. Successful real estate agents understand and profit from the rule of seven. Unsuccessful agents expect outstanding results from a single mailing, a single ad or single seminar, etc...

Stop and think about that -- it's kind of ridiculous to expect that a one time "anything" is all it takes to build a successful real estate practice. Don't forget: no one is as excited about your service as you are. Remember this. You can't expect even a small fraction of your prospects to be as enthusiastic about your service as you are.

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Success in marketing is daily work -- persistent work. Those who succeed in marketing do this work. They are clear about whom they're selling to, they are clear about their prospects wants and needs, and they are clear about the time and expense it takes to reach their prospects on a continuing basis, in a way that'll get them to take action and use your problem solving service.

### **Conclusion**

Now you know the basics of marketing that you need to know to profit in your real estate business on a continuing basis. Others without this information will fail, die and blow away, losing the dream which once so brightly burned within them.

## CHAPTER TWO - Marketing Madness

The 12 Reasons Why Most Real Estate Agents Fall Flat On Their Face, Costing Themselves a Fortune Instead of Making Money Hand Over Fist!

### Introduction

Creating winning real estate marketing is an art and a science. And you don't have to be great to market your business effectively, but I'll let you in on a powerful truism:

You Must Be A Good Sales Person...If You Can Sell Well, Then You're More Than Half-Way There To Creating Winning Marketing! Because Marketing Is Selling... Just Without YOU Being There!

In this section I'm going to cover the typical marketing mistakes that 99% of all real estate make.

Once you begin to use the information revealed in this section, you'll be head and shoulders above 99% of all your competition.

I'm not tooting my own horn here either! Thousands of my clients have proven these marketing techniques, they work. And they'll work for you if you use them.

All 750,000 real estate agents in this country need this information, but you're the lucky one that's reading it right now, you're the one with the potential to put these ideas to work in your marketing efforts!

If you doubt that other real estate agents do a bad job -- trust me -- after you've studied this section a few times, start to collect all of the marketing materials that are already out there. Get advertising pieces by all kinds of agents and you'll see what I mean. It will all make even more sense to you once you do this.

These ideas work, I use them daily. In crafting persuasive marketing and advertising documents. You need to know the mistakes that are typically made, so that you won't make them. This section will guarantee your marketing efforts won't be full of the all-too-typical mistakes that are so evident everywhere you look.

There's nothing clever here folks, just strong common sense marketing that works. Clever doesn't sell. Read on and you'll find what to do to ensure that your marketing efforts do work... and you do succeed on a grand scale.

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You will do well if you study this section inside and out

Mark it up.

Study it time and time again; it will help bring you marketing success.

Once you've had some success in using these ideas, I welcome your success story. It excites me to discover that I may have helped someone else succeed to any degree. I love it! Success breeds success!

Now then, let's learn the mistakes that you must avoid in every marketing effort you make:

**The 12 Reasons Why Most Agents Fall Flat On Their Face, Costing Themselves  
A Fortune Instead Of Making Money Hand Over Fist!**

1. You Think You Need (or You Already Do) "Image" Or "Institutional" Advertising Instead Of Direct Response Advertising
2. You Offer No Unique Benefit That Will Attract Prospects To You & Not Your Competition
3. You Don't Use Powerful Headlines To Stop Your Prospects Dead In Their Tracks And Pull Them In To The Rest Of The Ad
4. You Don't Tell Your Prospect What's In It For Them - Instead, You Focus On You, Your Business, and What You're Selling.
5. You Don't Talk Directly To Your Prospect In A Conversational Tone, Using Specifics to Motivate
6. You Don't Open-Up With Your Prospects Problems & Frustrations
7. Your Marketing Pieces Are Too Boring To Motivate Anyone To Do Anything - They Don't Use Energetic, Exciting Action Words; They Have No Passion!
8. You're Scared To Create Marketing That Has A Lot Of Copy -- Instead, You Leave All The Compelling Benefits Out For Sake Of Your "Image"
9. You Don't Use Testimonials
10. You Don't Provide Your Prospect With A Compelling Reason To Respond To Your Proposition NOW -- Tell Them In Precise, Step-By-Step Detail What He Has To Do To Take The Next Step In Your Sales Process!
11. You Don't Look At Marketing As A Unified, Synergistic Team Of Money-Making Tools And Strategies -- Instead, Yourself & Marketing As Two Separate Functions, With Separate Goals.

## 12. You Focus On Your Credentials Instead of Focusing On What Your Credentials Can Do For Your Prospect

Now, let's take a good look at each of these money-sucking mistakes, and discuss exactly what you have to do to overcome them:

### **1) You Think You Need To (or You Already Do) "Image" Or "Institutional" Advertising Instead Of Direct Response Advertising.**

Have you ever seen a real estate ad that looked and read something like this: A large, full color piece with the agent in an expensive suit sitting on top of a cherry-wood desk with a pen in his mouth (looking as though he is thinking about something) or a folder in his hand (looking like he is reviewing important documents).

The caption in the ad reads "John Doe - A Professional Realtor Hard At Work & Committed To Excellence!" Or maybe the caption reads, "John Doe - Serving Your Real Estate Needs Since 1982!" Or maybe the caption reads, "John Doe - I Sell A Home Every 24 Hours, Why Not Make Yours Next?"

Have you ever seen something like this? Of course you have, because that is what's out there. But what a waste of money, time, and marketing! Terrible, terrible! All of the agents who use this type of marketing could use a lesson or two in effective marketing!

There are several mistakes that can be made in marketing... and I think these types of pieces make every single one of them! I don't think that talking about yourself, how long you've been in the business or an overused slogan is going to help you sell your service.

This is called "Image" or "Institutional" Advertising... whatever you want to call it is fine... I call it a waste of your money!

When people decide to become real estate agents, there are many who think they have to advertise like the "Superstars" do... why? Because, that is what "they" do. They don't know the real numbers behind this type of advertising. Think about it... if you spend \$1,000 on "Image" advertising and you make a \$2,000 commission, is it really working? I don't think that's the kind of return you're looking for, is it?

Let's face it... there aren't many who have money to burn -- and yet, if you choose to use "Image" advertising, you may as well go out and burn-up a huge stack of one hundred dollar bills, because that's essentially what you're doing when you run "Image" ads or create "Institutional" marketing pieces.

"Image" marketing has several downfalls:

1. It's a complete waste of your money.

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As a smart business person (no matter how many homes you want to sell) you need to watch every dime you invest in marketing... yes, I said "Invest in marketing." That's because marketing is an investment -- and it can really pay-off bigger than anything you can dream of on Wall Street. But, it will never pay-off if you use "Image" marketing!

Your advertising must be accountable. That's why you should to use direct-response advertising.

2. "Image" advertising does virtually nothing to help you make more money... and unless you've got deep pockets or are on n ego trip, you're *never* going to get "top of mind awareness" (or anything else for that matter) using this method of marketing. But, with direct-response advertising, you will get results... listings, sales and referrals.

If you can sell well, you can create marketing that works.

The problem is most agents do "cutesy" marketing pieces. Maybe they dressed up as some character, or running with their briefcase, or a picture of them with a milk mustache saying, "Got a Realtor"? (Copying the milk ads with famous celebrities saying "Got Milk?") or some other "gimmick." All of these are a total and complete waste of time and money. Don't do them if you want bottom-line, dollar for dollar results.

The truth is, most of these type of ads are somewhat entertaining and humorous (I'll even outright giggle at time), but the fact is though, that profitable marketing really has nothing to do with entertaining people. The down and dirty fact is the only purpose for marketing is to make money. The only way to make serious money is to get your buyer and seller prospects to take action... not laugh!

The sole purpose of marketing is to make money, or to get your prospects to take the next step. And my suspicion is that's ~ what you want to do... Make Money!

Using "Image" advertising is one of the worst traps a real estate agent can fall into. As a matter of fact, a good 99% of all agents that I talk to or come across don't understand the difference between "Image" marketing and direct response advertising.

"Image" marketing and advertising has nothing to do with getting the customer to take action. Oh sure, the "Top Producers" will argue that point by saying:

"It motivates buyers and sellers to action because by seeing my ad over and over again it creates "Top of Mind Awareness!" And when your name is at the top of your prospects mind, whenever he or she needs you, they know right where to go!"

Well, it sounds good in theory... but in practice... it just doesn't work as accountably and as effectively as direct response advertising!

"Image" advertising has serious drawbacks.

Honestly, I don't recommend any agent ever use "Image" advertising!!!

Why?

Direct response advertising is better! Any agent can use direct response advertising and get better results than with Institutional Advertising! Image marketing focuses solely on you, your slogan, or something clever, funny or cute. Direct response advertising focuses entirely on the prospect, what's in the deal for them, and how to solve their frustrations or problems with what services you're selling.

What you've got to keep in mind is the fact that people don't care a bit about you, your slogan, or anything else about you until you've shown them that what you offer will benefit their life in one way or another.

All they care about is what unique benefit, advantage, service, or personal enhancement you offer them that somebody else doesn't offer. Answer these questions:

- How am I going to improve their lives?
- How am I going to make their lives easier?

They want to know how you're going to enhance the quality, the value, the enjoyment, the profitability of their lives. Very few real estate agents truly understand that!

People just don't care what YOU want!

All the things you do in marketing and in selling should only be addressing what benefits you're giving your customer and your prospect, because they don't care about YOU. They just want to know what's in it for them.

However, they do want to know that you're qualified to help them. So, in your advertising, you must credentials yourself. If you've got a special expertise and people don't appreciate it, find a way to explain it.

If, in fact, you've sold more homes than anyone in your area, you've been around longer than anyone else, you're a specialist in FSBO's, take advantage of that and credentials yourself.

In everything you do, give people reasons why they should believe in you, so they'll use your services.

"Institutional" marketing and advertising, or the practice of doing anything simply to keep your name in front of the public, is a big joke.

"Institutional" marketing is ineffective, non-traceable, and a waste of your time and money. These ads are totally ineffective and accomplish nothing more than transferring your money from your bank into the bank of the newspapers, magazines or direct mail wanna-bees...

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I try to get my clients to understand this: Marketing and advertising is salesmanship multiplied. It's either salesmanship in print, salesmanship on the air, or salesmanship in the mail.

Marketing and advertising is not unclear, unmotivating, or off-the-wall statements that say nothing, make no case, or compel no one to action. But few, if any agents truly understand the reason for running an ad. I'll say it once, and you'll hear me say it again I'm sure:

The only reason YOU ever create marketing is to stimulate a direct and immediate response -- either a qualified inquiry, phone call or an appointment - or better yet, to promote an instant buy or sell. Nothing else is worthy of your hard-earned money!

How do you tell the difference between an "Image" marketing piece and a direct-response marketing piece?

That's easy...An "Image" marketing piece is not traceable in any specific way; its purpose is merely to put your name or your companies name or message in front of the general public. On the other hand, a direct-response marketing piece is traceable -- it asks your buyer or seller prospects to respond in some way by phone, by mail, by coupon, etc... so you can measure the effectiveness of a direct-response marketing piece.

When you run a direct response ad, you know within a few days whether it worked or not. With "Image" marketing, you can't tell where your business is coming from.

Direct-response advertising will help keep you from throwing your money away, because you can measure whether or not your creations are effective. After all, if your marketing isn't converting into closed transactions at a dollar amount equivalent to their overall worth, you might as well stop running that particular marketing. Doesn't that make sense?

And unless you know the purpose of marketing how to create profitable pieces, I don't think you should be marketing at all - because all you'll end up doing is throwing away your hard earned money.

When running direct response marketing, you must make sure you keep track (write it down) of everything: the positioning (the page number and position the ad appeared on), the basic appeal of your ad, the headline... what action you asked for, and any other information that'll help you come up with a better marketing piece next time you test.

You must always analyze your marketing - what they say, how they say it, the headline, the offer, the action you direct the prospect to take, the costs and the closings. After your analysis tells you which offer, headline and approach worked the best, try to beat it with a better marketing piece!

The kind of money-making leverage you can get from direct response marketing and advertising is incredible -- and it just can't be done with straight "Image" marketing... so don't do it!

## **2) You Offer No Unique Benefit That Will Attract Prospects To You & Not Your Competition**

Think about this: why do you go to the certain few restaurants that you go to? My answer is "Because they offer unique environment, food, or service.... I get some respect"

Now, even though most restaurants don't know their uniqueness, I'd bet the reason you go to those few certain restaurants is because of their individual uniqueness.

The same thing is true of the people who do business with you - you give something unique to the ones who chose to do business with you.

Most agents fail to identify and promote this uniqueness.

You won't do that -- nope, not any more.

Once you define what's unique about you and your services, it will make you take business from your competition. Why? Simply because the unique benefit is desirable, and because you've taken the time to define this uniqueness, you will get the listing or the sale. This uniqueness is often defined as a "Unique Selling Proposition", or a USP.

Your Unique Selling Proposition (or USP for short) will help you to shine as a real estate agent. Later on in the course I will go into great detail about USP's; how to figure out what yours is, and more.

## **3) You Don't Use Powerful Headlines To Stop Your Prospects Dead In Their Tracks And Pull Them In To The Rest Of Your Classified, Display & Magazine Ads.**

Your classified, display and magazine ads will go absolutely nowhere 99.9% of the time - without a headline. Your headlines must work. If your headline doesn't get your buyer and seller prospects attention and pull them into what you've written, he'll throw it away, or turn the page, or tune it out -- depending on the medium!

It doesn't matter how powerful, how good, how appealing or how wonderful your ad looks; if the headline doesn't stop your prospect they won't read that great marketing work of art!

Give headlines more attention than you do your copy or graphic design. Headlines are crucial to your classified, display and magazine ad's success.

As I see it, the purpose of the headline is to snag your specific prospects interest

Give your headline all the attention it deserves, because your prospects see hundreds such headlines a week in the form of mailers, classified, display and magazine ads... yours had better be good.... and it had better stop your prospects dead in their tracks!

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Your good headlines will:

1. Talk directly to your prospect. They stop him in his tracks because they yell out, *"HEY YOU! THIS IS FOR YOU! HERE'S THE PROPERTY OR SERVICE YOU NEED!"*  
Sound silly? It's true. If your headline doesn't do this, then it's missing the mark by a mile.
2. Promise a benefit This benefit may be implicit or explicit, but it must be there, right in the headline in order to snag your prospects attention.
3. Let your prospect know that there's a powerful benefit simply for reading the ad!

Tell me, do your headlines currently face up to these criteria?

I doubt it. If they don't, then you've got to change them -- even if you have to chuck that 4-color brochure in the garbage that you've spent \$4,000 on.... you've gotta do it! That beautiful 4-color brochure won't sell a thing if it doesn't have a prospect-focused, benefit-packed headline that grabs their attention!

In the mail today I received a real estate magazine with dozens of miserable headlines in it. See if you don't agree.

It's a beautiful, 4 bedroom, 3 bath house with 2800 square feet, wood floors, vaulted ceilings and a hot tub. Truly a very nice property. It's laid out in full color on a glossy paper. But, what does the message on the side of this great home say? "2-STORY IN ROCK CREEK VILLAGE." That's it. Nothing that yells out to the prospect "Hey! You'd better read this so that you can come see this house and make an offer... and it better be today because it won't last through the weekend!"

It doesn't tell me what I'll get. It doesn't tell me what I'll lose. In short, it fails miserably as a headline.

Later in this course, you'll learn in great detail about headlines, how to create them, how to use them, and most everything else you need to know to start making your marketing powerful and profitable with headlines!

#### **4) You Don't Tell Your Prospect What's In Your Offer For Him Instead, You Focus On You, Your Business, And What You're Selling!**

This has got to be one of the most often committed mistakes on this list. Real estate agents everywhere, everyday focus their marketing on themselves... they talk about how long they've been in business, how many homes they have sold, who they work for, and on and on and on! And none of it focuses on the buyers and sellers that they are going after!

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Just today I had a flyer left on my doorknob by some agent walking the streets. This is a valid marketing tactic for any agent, if they use the right approach with the right offer. Take a look at the headline this agent put on top of his flyer:

**"I am pleased to introduce myself as the neighborhood specialist"**

**That is the headline. Notice the focus? I am pleased to introduce MYSELF...." Man oh man! No focus on what's in it for the homeowner means no sales for the agent!**

Now, understand... This agent has a great marketing idea or plan -- getting his info, flyer and message into the hands of his target market - very inexpensively. At two to three cents per flyer - or even ten cents if he had someone do the hanging for him - that's a great way to market your service!

But, when it comes down to his headline - he fell apart at the seams!

I'm telling you:

**Every Advertisement You Create, Every Marketing Piece You Produce, Must Focus On Your Prospect And The Benefits He Gets From Doing Business With You!**

Everything from full-page ads that cost hundreds or thousands per run down to three cent flyers -- it should all focus on your prospects, and tell them the benefits they get from doing business with you!

It's that simple.

When you do talk about yourself in your marketing pieces, talk about yourself in terms of what your prospect gets.

Think about what your prospect wants to know. He wants to know that you'll give him the benefits you say you can deliver, and the benefits he wants you to deliver. Great service, quick sales, competitive listing periods, reasonable rates, good communication, consistent updates, strong negotiation skills and prompt attention are just a few of the benefits you offer. So put them into your marketing pieces.

Your prospect continually wants to know, "What's in it for me?" Therefore, you must continually answer that question, even when you're talking about yourself.

**5) You Don't Talk Directly To Your Prospect In A Conversational Tone, Using Specific Facts, Numbers, Quotes, and Details to Convince & to Motivate.**

Talking directly to your prospect is important. All of your marketing efforts should be from one person to another. People like doing business with people -- and they dislike doing business with powerhouse agents who don't give the time of day or put them on hold for hours, and talk on their cell phones every where they go.

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Therefore, you've got to make your marketing sound like it's coming from you when you're sitting across from them at the kitchen table.

The best marketing is created for a specific person with specific problems; ~ from a specific person, with specific solutions. That's right: it's from one person to another -- and never done any differently

Just remember that your marketing will be read by one person at a time... therefore you should talk directly to that person as if you were sitting across from them

Creating your marketing in a conversational tone has got to be one of the very easiest of all the 11 mistakes to overcome.

Simply put: when you're creating marketing pieces, talk in a conversational tone to your prospects. People will be more comfortable with what you are trying to convey if you talk in a conversational tone...

Use simple words, sentences -- make your points easily understood. Try not to use bigger words -- break your words down into their simplest expression. For example:

Instead of saying: "Immaculate and spacious 3 bedroom modern, stylish ranch"... Say, "You and your family will have all the room you need in this 1994 ranch..."

There's only a slight, subtle difference -- but it's more conversational, thus it's easier for your prospects to digest. We will give this subject a thorough treatment in this course.... and I will include a list of "big" words and their corresponding "little "conversational" words that you should be using.

People like doing business with other people -- and they don't like doing business with a "big" "super-busy" "going 120 miles an hour all the time" real estate agents. ..they want to know that behind that marketing piece there is a caring, sincere, likable person.

Your marketing must reflect.

Now, let's talk about being specific in your marketing.

There's one key rule that you need to remember in your marketing endeavors; and that is this:

Generalities Don't Sell - Specifics **Do!**

I'll go into great detail later on in the course -- but here, let me say that the more specific you can be about the benefits your prospects will, the more effective your marketing will be. For example, instead of saying:

"Sell Your Home Faster By Using XYZ Realty!" You should say:

"Sell Your Home 32 1/2 Days Faster With XYZ Realty... Call For Details!"

It's obvious isn't it? I mean -- look at the difference in the impact the specific headline has over the general headline! These types of specifics have a strong impact on your prospect... and thus, on your marketing success!

In every marketing piece you create, you must make sure you don't fall into the trap of "getting by" with vague, overused real estate generalities. Sure, sometimes it takes some effort and time to come to a specific, but that time and effort will be well spent.

Having specifics on hand and ready to use will take effort on your part. You're going to have to start being more responsible about taking care of your customers. For that is where you'll get most of the specifics that you need... by interviewing your current and past clients.

You need to call them, interview them -- find out:

- How much money did they save by using your service?
- How much time did they save by using your service?
- How quickly did you find them a house or sell theirs... how does that compare to the industry average?
- What's the specific reason they chose you?
- How much stress and anxiety did you relieve them of?

The questions that you should/could ask are endless - every agent out there needs to have a full list of these types of questions. If you don't, take the time right now and create one.

Being conversational in your marketing is one of the very most powerful things you can do to increase the response you get. You'll learn more about how to create and use specifics, which ones to use... when and where later in the course in precise detail.

## **6) You Don't Put Your Prospects Problems, Frustrations & Anxieties In your Marketing**

One of the most powerful ways to open any type of marketing is to remind your prospect of the problems, frustrations or anxieties they're facing in buying or selling a home. "Prey" upon their fears and worries... make them feel as though the worst might happen if they don't take action to stop it now!

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Most people have some discomfort in buying or selling a home - because it usually involves a lot of money and planning... plus, they rely so heavily on good representation that a ton of stress is typically laid on your shoulders. If you focus on this... really make them feel it deep down... and let them know that you have the answer that will solve their discomfort... you'll have a powerful marketing approach.

### **7) Your Marketing Is Too Boring To Motivate Anyone To Do Anything - You Don't Use Energetic, Exciting Action Words; Your Marketing Has No Passion!**

You must be excited about what you're offering -- or you may as well not be in real estate. For you are destined to fail. You must be excited about your service... if you're not excited about it, how in the world do you think your prospect is going to get excited about working with you.

And when I say "excited" what I really mean is passionate! You need to get passionate in your marketing efforts. Don't be afraid to say something controversial... say it and stand your ground with passion!

Passion is an element that's missing in too agents marketing campaigns - because of this, passion becomes an incredible advertising tool to help you get your prospect motivated to take action.

I think you'd agree... most real estate marketing is flat-out boring. It couldn't possibly motivate anyone to do anything, except turn the page or throw it in the trash.

Your marketing must exude with energy... of course it depends on the approach you're taking as to how that energy flows... but none the less, energy and passion sells! - being boring doesn't!

In this manual you're going to learn several key things about passion and energy in marketing -- I think you'll be surprised at what a difference they can make in the success of your marketing.

### **8) You're Scared to Create Marketing That Says A Lot - Instead, You Leave All the Compelling Benefits Out For Sake of Your "Image".**

Let's set things straight for the record right here and now: the only reason you're in the real estate business, is to make money by providing a quality service which benefits people in ways that they can't find anywhere else... a service people run to you for... one they think they can't live without; and so must use you!

That being the case... why is it so many real estate agents fail to present their entire sales proposition in their marketing?

I don't have the first clue!

But now, this won't be you anymore... a key to successful marketing is this:

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You need to present your entire case when you present an offer to a prospect... if you fail to answer a certain prospects question or concern, you've lost a listing or a sale... and chances are, there will be more of these same types of prospects.

I can't tell you how many marketing consultations I've done where the agent created these incredible, 4-color, graphic masterpieces on paper. They call them "personal brochures" or "property profiles" -- I often call them "garbage"! I promise you:

"Having a Graphically Gorgeous Marketing Piece (and I don't care what it is) Will Not Make You Much Money --It May Win You "The Best Known Real Estate Agent Award"... But As For Listings and Sales -- I Don't Think So!

## **9) You Don't Use Testimonials**

Unless your prospects are lined up outside your door, jamming your office wanting to list or buy a home, you will never sell your service to the degree that someone else could do for you.

Testimonials should do most of the work for you. Try to get specifics in your testimonials.

Using testimonials can reduce buyers fear as well.... especially if you use specific names, and numbers, etc. But not those vague testimonials you see most of the time, like:

"Nice Job, John. We would definitely use you again!" P.T. Denver

This type of testimonial is unspecific and useless. As a matter of fact this type of testimonial is actually harmful to your marketing efforts. It causes your prospect to think consciously or subconsciously, "Well, if P.T. is so happy with John, then why didn't they tell their whole name or leave a number?"

It leads the prospect to believe that there never was such a person! This hurts your credibility, and you have lost the sell... I guarantee it- people want to be reassured that they are making the right decision when they work with you. Specific testimonials are a powerful tool to help reduce a prospects anxiety.

If someone was looking to hire a real estate agent, that real estate agents would use a testimonial that went something like this:

"I was hesitant to use an agent, it worried me a little, because I thought I could sell my home on my own and save the commission. After hiring John, our net result was almost \$7,200 better than what we expected to get - even on our own. I had at least 13 buyers through our home every week, and at least three came back for second showings! That's service, and I'll recommend John to everyone I can!" Tom & Sally Bruthers Oakmont Hill, MA. Home # 555-5555.

Now that's a good testimonial. It's specific. Strive for this from now on.

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When you ask for testimonials, make sure it's **OK** with your prospect to use their quote, as well as their name, address, and phone number. That way you can use their quote at "full power"... there's nothing weaker than a testimonial with only initials, and no specific information. You'll learn about testimonials in great detail later on - just bear in mind that using specifics applies to testimonials just as it does to every other part of your marketing.

**10) You Don't Provide Your Prospect With A Compelling Reason To Respond To Your Proposition NOW -- Tell Them In Precise, Step-By-Step Detail What He Has To Do To Take The Next Step In Your Sales Process!**

If your prospect, after reading your marketing materials, picks up the phone or otherwise takes the next step towards using your services, then you have succeeded. If he's not motivated to act, then your marketing fails.

Pretty simple, eh?

This means that in every marketing document you create you must always give the prospect an invitation to ACT NOW!

Don't just tell the prospect to act, though, tell them WHY to act

For example:

"Pick up the phone now to solve your greatest problem in finding a new home."

"Schedule an appointment today to see our new models."

You see, in order for your marketing communications to succeed you must talk about your prospect continuously. That's all they're interested in.

They want to hear about themselves.

Every thought, every word in your marketing must clearly show that, above all else, you are thinking only of the prospect and what they want, and, that you'll do what it takes to solve their problem(s), if only they contact you NOW!

You must, in no uncertain terms, tell your prospect exactly what to do to take action. If you want them to call, tell them to:

"If you're serious about selling your home in the next 30 days, you owe it to yourself to get my fact-filled "Quick Sale Program Manual!" Pick up your phone right now, and dial these 10 little digits: (800)BUY-HOME. Ask for me and I'll send you this FREE informative gift today!"

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That's pretty clear isn't it? There's no question in that persons mind as to what they're supposed to do in order to get the benefit they want, or to solve the problem they have! Here's another example:

"Here's all you need to do to sell your home quickly and for top dollar: Simply print your name, address, city, state and zip code on this mail back card and send it back to me. I'll even pay the postage!"

Pretty clear isn't it? There's no question about what your prospect is supposed to do. And, it's worded in a compelling fashion. It tells them - what to do.

### **11. You Don't Look At Marketing As A Unified, Synergistic Team Of Money-Making Tools And Strategies -- Instead, Yourself & Marketing As Two Separate Functions, With Separate Goals.**

This is a critical mistake. You must understand that your marketing (in all its forms) **works hand in hand together as your sales team.**

It shocks me to see how many real estate agents there who talk to prospects differently in person then they do through their marketing efforts. This is wrong. In real estate, your marketing and advertising should be the same in person, over the phone, on a postcard, in an ad, at a seminar, and every other way you can think of. It's all the same - nothing changes except the medium.

If your "niche" in the market is selling home faster than any other agent, and that's what you advertise in your 1/4 page display ads every Sunday... then don't go to the listing appointment and stress the fact that you have been in the business for fifteen years... or anything else that doesn't focus directly on your "niche."

Or, if your specialty happens to be working with buyers who are looking for condos... please don't spend your marketing budget on full color ads for the two listings you have. Are you getting what I'm saying here?

One more. If you are known as the relocation king (or queen), then don't run classified ads that say "Buyers Wanted" run classified ads that say "FREE 24 PAGE RELOCATION PACKET!"

Make sure that all your sales presentations, marketing efforts and advertising campaigns are in synch.

### **12) You Focus On Your Credentials Instead of Focusing On What Your Credentials Can Do For Your Prospect**

I've stressed this several times already, but just as another reminder to you. In all your advertisements and marketing efforts, talk about yourself in terms of what your prospect gets from you.

Think about it: What does your prospect care to know?

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He wants to know that you'll give him the benefits you say you can deliver, and the benefits he wants you to deliver. Your prospect continually wants to know, "What's in it for **me**?" Therefore, you must continually answer that question, even when you're talking about yourself.

Your prospect wants to know what you can do for him; not how many degrees you have, where you got them, and when you got them, or anything else 99% of all real estate agents push. No one cares about any of that kind of stuff until they know what's in it for them.

I'll be telling you exactly how to take your credentials and "frame" them in a way that shows your prospect what's in it for him later on in the course when we talk about features and benefits. Right now, I just think you should know that if you've got a CRP, GRI or any of those other distinctions, you need to realize that your prospects don't give a you know what about them, until you tell them what benefits that those credentials deliver to them!

You'll learn how to do that in the next section of this course -- it's an easy yet important concept to understand and use.

**Conclusion About Marketing Madness: The 12 Reasons Why Most  
Real Estate Agents Fall Flat On Their Face, Costing Themselves  
A Fortune Instead of Making Money Hand Over Fist!**

There you have them. If you'll follow these rules, you can rest assured that your advertising and marketing documents will be read.

As I challenged you at the onset of this, begin collecting marketing documents of all sorts. Note what you like about them. Note what works. Test them against the guidelines in this section of the book to see why they work when they do... and you'll also begin to see these 12 mistakes popping up again and again in most of the real estate marketing materials you review.

It is your responsibility to learn these mistakes, and avoid them like the plague. They are money-sucking wastes that you can now avoid. If you don't learn them and internalize them, then your prospects will not get the solution to their problems from you, and you won't get that big, fat commission check!

That's what it all boils down to!

Now, I'd like to move on to a topic that's so incredibly important to your success in marketing, as well as real estate sales in general, that without it you'll go no where

## **CHAPTER THREE - Today's Missing, Magic Ingredient**

Which Will Almost Guarantee Your Success In Real Estate

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The information in this chapter will absolutely change your business and your life... if you spend just a few moments and really let it sink in.

This chapter will give you a thought process that I want to share with you - something which will give you clarity, give you an immediate advantage, give you purpose, give you certainty, give you the vehicle that will enable every one of your endeavors to be successful, give you the understanding to relate with your buyers and sellers, all with one simple business, life and marketing concept

This concept will give you a "vehicle", a "method", a "program" you can use to drive your entire real estate business and marketing ideas; drive your "niche" in the market place, your management philosophy; your personnel philosophy; and more.

With that in mind, let's get started:

What I'm about to share with you now, is going to help you understand all this in a way that will give you the kind of distinction that makes massive financial breakthroughs for agents all over the country.

What you've got to do, is take this information, and interpret it into your own real estate business. Force yourself as you read this chapter to make notes of not only what I say - but the implication and application it has to your marketing efforts.

To start off with, the first thing I want to tell you about is having a genuine empathy... a sincere empathy of where your buyers and sellers are and what their frame of mind is.

Empathy is very different than just understanding.

It is having emotional heart-felt comprehension of what someone else feels....the "plight" they're at, how they are seeing life from their point of view.

When you lose empathic respect for where your client is coming from, you've lost the immediate rapport right from the beginning. You've got to understand that.

You've got to take a position of "selling leadership". Leadership in the literal sense to your buyers and sellers.

Not leadership like being the agent in the area, but leadership in the context of leading your clients to solutions, to answers, to protections, to enrichments.

Our charge as real estate agents and marketers is to lead our clients to "higher ground", to better lives, to greater enrichment, to have more joy in buying or selling property.

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You must become extraordinarily adept at conveying to both your buyers and sellers the message that "I feel the way you feel, I understand what your problem is (or what you are looking for in an agent)."

Your buyers and sellers are silently begging to be led, but they want to be led by a leader who has their empathic best interest at heart not someone who is looking through them and to their wallet.

It's important that you realize that most people don't have a clear picture, they don't have a focus. They don't know what they want, they don't know what they feel, and they don't know what's possible. They don't know how bad or good they are doing because they have very little to compare to.

The more you help them paint their picture, provide clarity of focus, and show them what's possible -- the more you show them what they'll be denied if they don't use your services.

The more they are appreciative, the more they can be empowered to take action. Which means, to list their home or buy a home (and preferably both) through you.

Again, leadership. Your purpose, your responsibility, your charge, your reason for being in the real estate business is that you've got to lead your prospect to whatever the "promised land" is in their eyes.

You see, most people don't trust "real estate agents", and most people don't trust the systematic way that we operate in business. They don't trust everyone doing things the same way. They think they are basically manipulated. They don't think they have control.

Clients don't really think they have control. You don't think you have control. Customers don't think they have control.

**But, when you put on a pair of empathetic glasses and take off the blinders, you see that we all feel we're out of control.**

Think about yourself. Have you ever been in a buying situation where you feel helpless or frustrated? You're a human being. Those feelings are manifest by every other -- you will ever deal with because human nature is **inevitable!!!**

No one trusts anyone.

Even real estate agent at one point or another has felt like the competition is out to get them and they think the "system" sucks. They're just not in a good mood, they know that, but they aren't. A lot of people don't even know what they feel, but believe me, they feel it. They're desperate for an alternative for a better way, a fresher alternative.

Something that makes sense; or something that shows promise, or something that has integrity to it, whatever integrity might mean to that prospect.

People are mad, they really are. Have you noticed a level of, either apathy, or ambivalence, in your buyers and sellers?

They feel like they've been taken advantage of. They feel like they're always being screwed. They feel like they have no real choice. They feel like the whole real estate sales system is manipulated around them.

Do you understand that?

You've got to stop, step out of your shoes, and understand what it feels like to be in the buyers and sellers shoes!!! They feel like you do - you feel like they do. And in the real estate business, if you don't comprehend the feelings of your prospects, I can promise you, you won't be "in" business for long!

The fact is, people feel they're not being told the whole truth, or all of the facts, or all the options.

And the person who says, "here is the truth, as I see it", and steps out of that hedged, gray light, into the clarity, and naked vulnerability of the morning spotlight can get a great advantage. Even when that person flat out says, "Look, Mr. and Mrs. Homeowner, the price you want for your home and the price buyers are willing to pay are extremely different. You need to lower your price right now, today -- if you want to have any chance of selling your home!" Now, that's the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Don't you respect somebody who lets you "in" on the truth? Think about it in light. How many of you ever bought something from somebody who tells you what you think is *truthfully* how they see it' or tries to advise you honestly, or sometimes talks you out of things, and tells you what's wrong with certain things; gives you a really candid advice?

Did you ever have anybody like that in your life?

Did you feel confident of them?

Did you buy from them?

Think about that. You may need to read that paragraph again to really grasp this concept. If someone takes this "straight-forward and honest position"... you really find that you want to trust them... believe them.

Your job as a real estate agent and marketer is to give them clarified focus and help them realize that this is a greater way to look at buying or selling property. That's your responsibility. That's your higher "purpose".

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Give your prospects, buyers and sellers the focus. Help them see it as you see it. Give them advice. Give them an alternative to the way everyone else presents how to buy and sell real estate. Have a fresh, better, more honest, more empathic, more externally focused mind-set.

Tell them, "Here's the truth as I see it." Help them take a step.

Help them take the first step. Help them see what the logical action should be, and why. And give them reasons why that are in *their* best interest, not yours. And if you don't have reasons why, spend as much time as it takes to get some, because until you get them you have no advantage over the competition.

Having strong reasons why will give you the advantage, the purpose, the certainty, the vehicle that will enable you to take the next step in your real estate career.

Maybe this chapter has been a bit abstract in its thinking and approach. And maybe you don't understand the point I'm trying to make. I guess what it boils down to, is that if you're hoping to sell a lot of real estate, and you haven't taken the time to really get to know your prospects, there's really no way you can succeed.

You see, if you identify with and understand the feelings, hopes, and anxieties of your target market; you're going to be able to deliver to them both a hot product that helps them, and hot marketing pieces that sell them!

But first, you've got to understand them, their thoughts and feelings, their hopes and desires, and anything else you need to find out that'll help you create marketing that sells. You must walk more than a mile in your prospects shoes in order to understand how to market to them, and to create a service that'll solve their problems.

My question to you is this:

If you're serious about wanting to succeed in making tons and tons of money in real estate, you've got to get serious about serving people.... caring about people -- getting to know people and care about them and their concerns. Empathize with your buyers and sellers.

Go out of your way to show your concern for them. Create a service and marketing vehicles that help your clients solve problems. If you can do all that... you will succeed big time!

## **CHAPTER FOUR - Classified Ad Writing**

The Basics Of Creating & Writing Classified Ads That Produce Deals!

### **INTRODUCTION**

This section has been included for those who aren't very familiar with the process of creating and writing classified ads. I suggest everyone read it -- even if you don't currently use classified ads in your marketing approach -- for it sheds some light on the subject of how I look at marketing and advertising. Reading this will help you understand me better, and where I'm coming from.

So, even if you've never used classified ads to produce a deal in your life, this chapter will teach you all that you need to know to get "up to speed" as it were.

Creating winning marketing for your brochures, ads, flyers, business cards or any other communication is critical to your success in real estate. It's something that you can learn to do. I think.

At least I learned to do it... therefore I assume that you can too. I'm going to give you the basics here.

This section is full of the tips, hints and techniques that I have learned, proven and used for years, along with over 500 of my best clients from around the country.

Classified ads can be a powerful and inexpensive marketing tool if you do it correctly. There's nothing clever, nothing elaborate... everything's simple about the way I approach it I think that "the simpler the better" when it comes to creating winning classified ads.

In this section you'll learn how to transform your ideas, listings and features into benefits that your prospects will want to act upon.

We will also talk about using flyers, brochures, advertisements, postcards and newsletters and the...

You'll enjoy all of this I'm sure.

But, there's one thing that you've got to understand from the beginning. And that is *this*:

**No one will read or respond to your classified ads if you don't put their needs, wants, desires and passions first.**

Your prospects are only interested in doing business with you to the degree that he understands what you can do for him.

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You must be entirely unselfish in your marketing in order to create classified ads that produce deals.

In every word you write, every sentence you construct, in every paragraph that goes into your advertisement, you must realize that your prospects desires, anxieties and aspirations must always come before your own.

This is the basic fundamental rule of successful classified ad writing. And this is something that very few agents can do. If you doubt that this is true.... read through your local Sunday paper and notice all the bad classified ads that are in there.

Compare them to what you learn in this section and you'll understand that there are very few good classified ad writers out there.

You've got to understand that successful classified ad writing is "all about your prospect"... it's about their dreams and desires. If you can't understand this, then don't bother trying to create your own ads and marketing materials, because you won't be able to.

### **Typical Mistakes That You Must Avoid So That You Can Write Powerful Classified Ads**

Hundreds and thousands of dollars are wasted every day on classified ads that's not focused on the buyers and sellers out there. Too many mistakes mean too many dissatisfied, un-motivated prospects, which mean too many unprofitable real estate agents.

The problem is that:

- 1) Most classified ads: Do not focus on the prospect... they focus on the property, the agent, the company, etc... A very selfish thing indeed!
- 2) Most classified ads: Assume the prospect is as excited to respond to you, your property, your company, your offer, etc... as you are to sell! A false deduction if ever there was one!
- 3) Most classified ads: Try to be clever and creative. The minute you get clever with your copy is the minute you lose your prospect.
- 4) Most classified ads: Try to create a "professional image." This is ridiculous... but happens all the time! Your professional image should always come second to *THE PROSPECTS NEEDS WANTS AND DESIRES*. Nothing should be more important than your prospect... especially not "your image"!
- 5) Most classified ads: Drone on and on and on about the features of a home or the agent and not on the benefits and what they can do for the prospect.

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6) Most classified ads: Are deadly boring and dull. Copy should be written full of action, spunk and enthusiasm. It should move the prospect to action!

7) Most classified ads: Do not give the prospect a reason for acting NOW. After your prospect reads your ad they should be so excited about the benefits they get, that they drop whatever they're doing and take immediate action!

8) Most classified ads: Don't address the anxieties and aspirations of the prospect. If you don't know your market, don't even try to create and write classified ads.

9) Most classified ads: Do not sell specific benefits to the prospect. For example, the best listing classified ads are stuffed with specific benefits for the buyer... like "average electric bill is only \$67 a month." For each individual market you target, your copy must be *specific*. Stop writing general classified ad copy.

These are only *a few* of the mistakes that most real estate agents make.

After you've created a new classified ad, always turn back to these pages and test your ad against these listed mistakes.

If you've made any of these mistakes, weed them out! If you have to, go ahead and start from scratch and re-create your whole ad.

And by the way, get used to re-creating ads!

### **Transforming Your Features Into Benefits That Will Make Your Prospect Pick Up The Phone And Call You, NOW!**

Before I explain how to do this, I feel the need to reemphasize the fact that: If you don't know what your prospect wants to buy, or why he wants your service, then how are you going to sell it to them? You can't.

Thus the tremendous need to do your marketing research. You see, if your preparation has been thorough, you stand a much greater chance of writing a successful classified ad... as a matter of fact, that's the key to creating a hot ad:

Having said that, let's assume that you know what your prospect wants and why he needs you, and talk about how to turn your features (from yourself, your property, etc...) into benefits.

Features are the elements of what you're selling. The elements of your listing or service that is desirable for your prospect. Features are all about you, your product, and they define both.

Features are important, but only to the degree that they relate to a benefit that the prospect gets from the feature.

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Features will not sell your listings or service... benefits will. Benefits are the advantages to your buyer. Benefits are what cause a prospect to buy your listings or use your service. Benefits are what your prospect gets from a feature.

Benefits answer the prospects biggest question "What's-in-it-for-me?" Your prospect wants to know the answer to this question *RIGHT FROM THE START*. So tell him!

Thus, if you want to write successful classified ads then you've got to get good at transforming features into benefits.

One of the basic rules of successful classified ad writing is this...

### **You Must Always Lead With The Benefits, And Then You Can Follow With Features**

Prospects always want to know what's in it for them first. After they know that, they might want to know the in's and out's of your listings or your service.

If you have a feature that doesn't offer a strong benefit, then leave it out... don't even waste your time with it, or consider it. You should never list features of your listings or service as if they were in and of themselves, something meaningful.

They aren't!

A feature is only meaningful if it tells your prospect what he gets from the feature... and by their very nature, features don't do it. If you understand all of this, then you are ready to begin the process of turning features into benefits.

### **Here Are The Steps For Turning Features Into Benefits:**

1) List every feature that you can think of. (It doesn't matter if it's about a listing you want to advertise or about the service you are offering)

The features are basically the key facts about your listings and service: age, style, address, price, availability, square footage, color, experience, credentials company name, status, etc...

2) Now answer this question for each and every feature:

"What does my prospect get from this feature? How much? How often? Why does it matter? What problem of the prospects does this feature solve? How well does it solve the problem? Etc." If you do this, you'll have a list of benefits that mean something to your buyer and seller prospects.

3) Rank the benefits in order of importance to the prospect.

4) Rank the problems that your product or service solves in order of importance.

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You see, all of this is critical to your classified advertising success. A prospect doesn't care about your features.... they just want to know what's in it for them.

They care only about what you or your listing can do for them.

### **When Creating A Classified Ad That Sells Your Service Remember A Few Key Principles**

People use your services not because of what you've done for other prospects that are like them... The results you've achieved for other buyers and sellers that have used your services before... people who are like them.

Formal credentials are not synonymous with results. Results are always more important than credentials to your prospects.

Credentials are features, and features must be turned into benefits.

Some of the basic rules for telling your prospects about yourself, and how "professional" you are going like this:

- The professional real estate agent is seen as a warm and welcome, helpful and interested' not self-interested and "untouchable".
- The professional's credentials don't scare the prospect into using their services; they don't make the prospect feel insecure and unworthy of the professional. They reassure him about the professional and convince him that the professional is sensitive to the prospects needs and can help him solve his problems.
- Each feature of the professional's resume is transformed into a lever that helps the prospect understand that this is the person he should work with; this is the person that will help achieve any desired objectives.

You cannot succeed if you are viewed as being untouchable, a "god" of sorts! So get down off of any high horses that you are on, and realize that your prospects want to deal with someone that is personable, conversational and kind and gentle and will talk straight to let them know how to solve their problems.

If you want to create profitable classified ads that sell you and your service, these are the steps.

- 1) Write down all of the credentials that you have.
- 2) Now put the credentials in context -- Tell your prospect what difference this credentials makes to the prospect.
- 3) Write down the kind of prospect you want to take action.

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4) Now select the credentials that relate specifically to the prospect that you want to become a client.

### **Rules For Writing Classified Ads That Motivates Your Prospect To Respond NOW**

Remember, the main question to continually ask yourself, with each word or sentence you write, with each paragraph you finish, is this:

Does This Help Get My Prospect To Act Now, Or Not? If It Doesn't It Should Be Pulled-Out And Thrown Away!

The purpose of your advertising is to get your prospect to respond NOW! If the copy does not answer this end, then it doesn't belong!

Never forget this!

Realize that no matter what anyone else says, classified ads should always be written so that's it's focus is on the prospect, never on you or the home you're selling or anything. .

Put your ego aside, and realize that you will win at classified ad writing if *your focus is on your prospect, his desires; his wants his interests, etc...*

Tell your prospect that you have the solution to their problem. Prove it in your copy! Let them know that you understand what THEY are looking for. To do this you must:

- Identify With What The Prospects Wants and Needs Are
- Let Him Know You Have What He/She Is Looking For
- Remind Your Prospect That The Problem Will Stay If He Doesn't Take Action To Get Rid Of The Problem

More basic rules for writing classified ads that sell:

1. Target your market specifically.
2. Write the ad as if you were writing to one specific, select person.
3. Read your copy as if you were the prospect; consider it only from his point of view.
4. Never assume that your prospect understands what you are saying, tell him specifically what it is you mean.
5. Make your copy short and spunky, full of energy. Use action words and avoid adverbs and adjectives.

Using non-specific adverbs and adjectives tell your prospect that you don't have any specific facts or numbers to share about yourself, your property or anything else. You must prove each of these words when you use them.

6. Make Your Copy Interesting. Write everything so that it focuses on the prospect. That alone will make your copy interesting to the prospect. If what you write is not about the prospect, then it doesn't belong!

7. Make your copy active. You are trying to get your prospect to take action, so your copy must breathe action. You are basically saying to your prospect, "You're in this uncomfortable situation. You want to be in a better, more comfortable situation. I can get you in that situation. All you have to do is act NOW!"

8. Write your copy the way that people talk. Use sentence fragments. Use short sentences. Use one word sentences.

9. Use emphasis devices to draw attention to words that are important, words that are more likely to get your prospects attention sooner.

- \* You can underline important words.

- \* **You can make them bold.**

- \* You can use asterisks to set them off.

  - \* You can indent them.

- \* USE CAPITAL LETTERS.

- \* Use boxes, or other outlining devices

- \* Use different colors (pretend this is blue)

Basically, you should use anything that lets your prospect know that THIS IS IMPORTANT. READ ME! I'VE GOT A BENEFIT FOR YOU!

These emphasizing devices work, and will guide your prospects eyes across the page to the important messages you are trying to convey to them to get them to act in their own best interest.

In the Appendix you'll find many winning classified ads that use these highlighting techniques. Try to use these as a model for just how much highlighting you should do. Obviously it can be overdone... and that's not what you want.

10. This is a key rule to never forget:

**Always Lead With Prospect Benefits, & Follow With Features.**

Following this rule alone will help increase your response to a large degree. Make sure these benefits:

- Speak Directly To The Prospect
- Excite Him
- Frighten Him
- Let Him Know What He Has To Do To Get The Benefit

In short, motivate your prospect by leading with the benefits he gets, not with you, your property or its features.

11. Make it easy for your prospect to respond.

Don't hide your phone number by burying it deep in the text.

Writing classified ads that compel an immediate response is something that you can do, if you work hard at it and follow the guidelines in this section.

This section is full of the tips, hints and techniques that I have learned and used with hundreds of real estate agents across the country -- they will help you write classified ads that will get your prospect to call you NOW and buy your property or service.

## **CHAPTER FIVE – Benefits of Marketing**

The "Meat n Tators" of Winning Marketing!!!

Let me make the difference between features and benefits clear, right here.... right now:

### What is a Feature?

A feature is static -- it's the square footage, color, year built, size, style, layout, garage spaces, etc... of your listings. It's also your degrees, years in business, company you work for, experience level, designations, awards you've won, etc... of you and your service.

### What is a Benefit?

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A benefit is what your buyers and sellers get from your features!

These two marketing definitions are two of the most important definitions you need to understand if you're going to create some advertising magic that bring in new buyers and sellers to work with.

Your prospects don't buy features -- they buy the benefit that feature gives them.... its plain and simple. Yet so many agents seem to be hung-up on listing all the features of their listings or service.

Features focus on you and your service (what it is).

Benefits, however, are the specific results or outcomes your customer gets from your product or service (what it gives the customer).

People don't buy "things"... they buy the results those "things" bring to them. Things like happiness, making and saving money, saving time, safety, security and easier, simpler ways to buy and sell homes is what they "buy" into.

That's why you absolutely must become a master at transforming features into benefits. You must learn how to take the individual features of you, your listings and your service, and turn them into compelling benefits that get buyers and sellers to take action and call you!

A key point you must always remember when creating marketing is this:

**Always Lead With Benefits, and Follow With Features!**

Yes, always.

That's because benefits tell your prospects what's in it for them. Features focus on you. your prospects always are interested FIRST in themselves. They want to know what's in it for them. Once your prospect understands what's in it for him, then he might be interested in you. Most often, if you've focused on the benefits your prospect will get -- they won't even care to know anything more about you, your company, your awards, or anything else! That's how persuasive benefits can be!

That's why you must take a careful, close look at each and every feature, and turn them into powerful, motivating, compelling benefits.

Really, when you stop to think about this, it makes sense.

But when you open a magazine, or look in the mail, or read through the classified ads... the reality is that most agents don't even begin to do this. They focus on themselves and list boring feature after feature. And when they do include a benefit, they usually use no specific, meaningful benefit.

## **Specific Benefits Sell - General Benefits Don't**

Most of your benefits should be specific if you want them to pack a wallop. General benefits usually come across as "hype" -- and they're not half as compelling as a specific benefit.

How do you get specific?

One way to gather specifics is to gather your features together and examine the specific results they provide. For example, the feature of 20 years of experience means nothing to the prospect... until you tell them that the benefit of this feature is that you've been to over 1000 closings, signed over 30,000 real estate documents, seen over 100 ways to buy and sell homes and there is no transaction that you can't handle smoothly, quickly and efficiently. that's a little more specific isn't it?

Just remember, your prospects will be continually asking questions about your general features and benefits:

- 1) So what?
- 2) Compared to what or whom?
- 3) Says who?

You need to back-up your general features and benefits, by turning them into specific benefits!

Unless you do, your prospects will write you off as a "typical real estate agent" and nothing more.

And what enables you to deliver specifics instead of generalities? Your research! Your knowledge of your service and market. Your knowledge of the features you're selling, compared to what else is out there.

If you're going to be able to deliver specific benefits, you've got to:  
Know the features of what you're selling (you, your service and your listings)

Know the benefits of what you're selling (you, your service and your listings)

- Know the benefits of what your competition is selling! You must make sure you: Do your research carefully, continually, and completely
- Understand how the features of what you're selling relates to the benefits of what your buyers and sellers want
- Prove to your target market how empathetic you are by placing their interests first (lead with benefits, follow with features) and backing up your benefits and claims with facts!

## **Using Your Competition to Prove Specific Benefits**

Here's a slick little "ditty" that'll help you uncover specific benefits, based on what your competition is already doing. The procedure goes something like this:

- 1) First, you make a list of your features and benefits
- 2) Next, you make a list of your competitor's features and benefits.
- 3) Now, you make a comparison -- uncover the advantages your features and benefits offer your prospects over your competitions!
- 4) Lastly, turn that comparison into money-making marketing materials that work.... you can create a comparison chart, state it in bullet form, or simply in paragraph form.

This system is powerfully convincing! I hope you'll use it to your advantage.... it's really slick!

As you can see, benefits are powerful motivators. And knowing this will give you a definite advantage; for most agents don't use benefits. Instead, they choose to get "creative" and clever -- and they fall flat on their face!

### **Make It Clear... and Never Assume Anything**

And when it comes to benefits, understand that you must state them clearly and precisely, so there's no question in your prospects mind what benefits he gets.

That's why you can never "assume" your prospect will know what the benefits are. Don't think your prospects are smart enough to know what the benefits are of using your product or service.

You'll lose the sale!

### **You Must Never Assume People Can Figure-Out On Their Own What Benefits They Get From Your Features... You Must Always Tell Them Clearly & Precisely what Benefit They Get From Each Worthwhile Feature!**

Remember, the benefits your prospects get from what you or what you're selling is the driving force behind your all you marketing efforts. That being the case then, how do you turn features into benefits?

First off, let me say that this process is simple once you get the hang of it -- it's also pretty fun!

OK.

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The first thing to do is to create a list of all the features. Don't worry if you're not sure what's a feature and what's a benefit, just make a list.

Now, take a look at each feature and ask yourself, "What does my customer get from this feature?" If the answer is a good, strong answer, write your answer down next to the feature. Continue to do so until you've done this with the entire list.

Next you'll want to prioritize the list of benefits in order of importance from your prospect's point of view. (Do this for marketing yourself at listing appointments, or when creating advertisements)

You should know what your prospects priorities are -- if you don't, you haven't done enough research. Why guess at it? Why not take the time to find out for sure!

And there you have it... a list of benefits that your prospects want.

Let me give you some examples of features and their corresponding benefits:

Example 1: in this example, let's say you're selling a listing...

Feature: This house has 2500 square feet of living space.

Benefit(s): You'll have plenty of room for your entire family, including the dog... plus it's ideal for entertaining

Feature: This house is only two years old.

Benefit: You won't have to worry about getting a new furnace, roof, carpet, appliances, etc... for quite some time. This saves you money that many and gives you peace of mind.

Feature: This house is close to all three school levels

Benefit: No matter what age children you have, the schools are within walking distance of home.

Feature: This house has a full finished basement

Benefit: You get an already built and completed play room for your kids or office space for dad, or family fun center to put your pool table and dart board.

Example 2: In this example, let's say that you are marketing yourself...

Feature: I have 15 years experience

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Benefit: Your transaction, from beginning to end, will go smoother and with less headaches and worries...because I know the 12 most costly and deadly mistakes that happen in real estate deals... and how to avoid them.

Feature: I have two full time assistants.

Benefit: You are getting three professionals for the price of one. Three people working on your transaction ensures that your deal gets completed correctly and on time... for a third of the cost you would normally pay for this type of service.

Feature: I charge 6%, and not 7%, to sell your home.

Benefit: This means savings to you... on the average home this amount equals \$2,340... that you can put in your pocket and not somebody else's.

Feature: I work at the biggest office in this area.

Benefit: This means your property will get out to over 75 more agents than the average office... this represents over 300 buyers that are currently out there looking for homes. PLUS, because of our size and volume... we command the best title and escrow rates... which will save you even more money at closing... on average, about \$325.

Do you see how the features are transformed into benefits? The features are turned into "What the customer gets from the feature.... what it does for them! Now obviously, there are literally hundreds of different benefits that can be derived from the same feature... just put your brain to it and get creative!

So, what it boils down to is that you have to ask yourself "What does my customer get from this feature?" The answer to that question gives you the benefit. Understand though, that not all features can be turned into worthwhile benefits. Those benefits most-likely will not be used in your marketing materials.

Here's another way of turning features into benefits: Simply pretend that you're a prospect for what you're selling. For each feature on your list, ask yourself these questions:

"What's in this feature for me?"

"What do I get from using this feature?"

"What benefit do I get from this feature?"

By answering these questions, you will, undoubtedly, find out what the benefits are.

Benefits give you the selling power you need to create winning marketing and thus, a super successful real estate career. Without benefits, you will not make many (if any) sales.... that's the power of benefits!

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Understand, however, that your prospects are interested in features. But, by themselves, features will never sell you, your listings or your service. Only benefits will do that. Because only benefits tell the prospect what advantages there are for him to take action!

So, benefits sell because benefits are about what your prospect gets... where features are about you, your listings and your service... in other words, features are usually "me-focused" instead of "prospect focused".

Now, here's a little test for you to take to see if you can turn features into benefits. All you need to do is simply turn the features into benefits. Here, we are selling a new home:

Feature: It comes with air conditioning

Benefit:

Feature: It comes in any color you'd like.

Benefit:

Feature: It has an energy efficient furnace.

Benefit:

Feature: It's located in the hottest selling area in town.

Benefit:

Feature: It has a ten year warranty

Benefit:

Feature: It comes with 5% down financing

Benefit:

Feature: It comes with a three car garage

Benefit:

The heart and soul of creating winning marketing is knowing how to plaster-on benefit after benefit after benefit. Benefits answer the never-ending question: "What's in it for me?" That's the question your prospects will ask from now until forever!

Answer that question with benefits, and you'll get the business you deserve!

**Conclusion to Benefit Magic: The "Meat n Tators" of Winning Marketing!**

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Remember, a feature is basically some part of you, your listings or your service.

A benefit is what the prospect gets from that feature.... what the feature does for him!  
Features alone are virtually worthless, and will basically do nothing to help you sell more real estate.

Benefits put the focus on your prospects, and what they get. And that's where the whole focus of your marketing should be... on your prospect.

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## **CHAPTER SIX Openings: How To Start Your Marketing Pieces**

To Get Your Prospect's Attention!!!

OR...The Magical, Cash-Generating Power  
Of Headlines and How You Can Create Them!

More than 95 percent of the real estate marketing running today doesn't have headlines. Don't believe me? Open any real estate related magazine or newspaper or direct mail piece or any advertisement and look at it -- you'll be surprised.

Ninety percent of the success or failure of any marketing piece is the headline. Without a headline, your marketing is doomed to fail almost every time.

Headlines can increase your response as high as 2100% if they're right on target, making powerful promises and/or benefits to your market.

Think about the effect on your profitability with that kind of increase! Wow... let's say you run a 1/4 page display ad in the local Homes & Land Magazine \$350 and you get two calls.

That means you better close at least one of those calls to make it worth your while. Not the kind of odds I like. But, if you got a PLUS 2100% response, all of a sudden you have 42 prospects to work with... much more profitable.

See the difference a powerful, compelling headline can make? You'll see here how powerful headlines are. I'm going to tell you about the different kinds of headlines, when to use them, and how to write them.

**If You're Serious About Creating Marketing Pieces That Sell,  
You Need To Spend The Time It Takes To Write  
At Least Two Dozen Headlines Every Time  
You Sit Down To Create A New Piece!**

24, really?

YES!!!... at least.

I can show you files and files on my computer chock-full of hundreds of headlines that I've created to go with display ads, sales letters, classified ads, direct mail vehicles, newspaper ads, listing presentations, brochures, flyers... I save them all.

Why do I write so many headlines -- more importantly, why should you write that many headlines every time you sit down to create new marketing?

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Well look at it like this: even if you think you've come up with a sizzling hot headline after writing only 5 or 10 headlines, if you take the time to write out another 15 or 20, chances are you'll improve your best headline by 3 or 4 times.

And chances are that along the way... YOU may come-up with something much, much better!

Trust me.... to come up with profitable marketing headlines takes more time than just a few minutes. You've got to commit yourself to sitting down and writing out at least **24**.

I'm going to help you do that right here. You'll get a few dozen headline **words** that work like magic, you'll get several "Headlines formulas" that are proven to work (All these words and formulas will make it easier for you to come up with those 24 headlines.)

Why? Simply because they are much more important than you can possibly imagine.

Headlines are important because nearly 5 times as many people read the headline as the body of a marketing piece. Unless your headline effectively sells you, your listings or your service, and compels your target audience to jump in and read the rest of the ad, you are blowing the biggest part of your marketing budget.

Headlines should offer your reader a reward for reading the rest of the ad, and pull them in to the rest of the body copy.

### **What Else Do Headlines Do**

Good headlines are important for several critical reasons. They:

- Draw the attention of your exact target prospect. A headline fails unless it grabs the attention of your target prospect. Your headline must basically single out the audience you want to attract. Your headline must practically reach out to your prospect, grab them by the throat and say "Hey!!! I'm talkin' to' you!" You want to attract *only your target prospect!* Attract the "foxes" and don't worry about offending the "dogs."
- Communicate the strongest benefit(s) you, your listing or your service offers your target prospect; and talk to the self-interest of your target prospect. It answers the important question we'll keep on talking about: "What's In It For Me?"
- Your headline must deliver a clear, complete, understandable message... a message full of benefits and your prospects' self- interest OR, it must make a promise to overcome your prospects' frustrations or fear and anxieties.
- Your headline sets the "tone" for the offer you're making to your target prospect. And sometimes you'll want to put your offer right in the headline!
- Your headline must compel your prospect to keep reading. It's got to make them hungry to find out more, pull them directly into the copy and get them to read it all!

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• Perhaps most importantly, **your headline is the "ad for your ad."** If your headline doesn't get your prospects to stop dead in their tracks... it's a waste of your time and money!

I suggest every time you sit down to pump out headlines, you compare with the above bulleted criteria. Make sure each element is there.

That's the job of your headline -- to get them going down the path towards taking the action you desire.

Your headline must work. Let me put it in a way that really gets you to feel the impact of what it means when your headline doesn't work....

If your headline *doesn't* work, your prospect doesn't read on. If they don't read on, it means you've *wasted* your time, your effort, your energy, and your hard earned money on that ad, letter, postcard, direct mail piece or anything else! Every time you lose a prospect, you lose money.

Looking at it that way, doesn't it make good sense to spend a lot of time writing and rewriting at least 24 different headlines, if not more? It makes good sense to me!

Here are some guidelines and questions I ask myself when I create a great headline:

1. What am I trying to communicate to my target prospect?
2. Does my headline offer my reader a reward for reading this marketing?
3. What is the BIG benefit I've got to promise my target prospect?
4. Is my "promise" believable?
5. What do I have to induce him to read my message NOW?
6. Have I written a headline that's going to motivate him to take action?
7. Am I being selfish -- talking about me, my company, my production or the benefits my prospect gets.
8. Am I being focused and talking directly to one prospect, or any buyer or seller in general?
9. Is my headline interesting from my prospect's point of view?
10. Does my headline build on a frustration or problem that my prospect has, which I can solve?
11. Does my headline answer the question: What's In It For Me?

Essentially, your headlines are the key to your entire marketing success. And if prospects don't know what's in it for them, you won't get their attention, you won't hold and you definitely won't get their business!

With very little exception, you must always have a headline. And by using words and phrases that stop your target prospect in his tracks, gets him to start reading your marketing, and compels him to action.

If you sell plumbing supplies to the contractor market and you run ads in magazine you shouldn't run ads that begin, "The best source of them all." In with a headline that (again) communicates your purpose for running the ad; of the reader. For example:

### **The Best Way To Get Started Writing Headlines**

The main thing when it comes to writing headlines is to just write down everything you can think of. Look at your prioritized benefit list and write down everything that comes to mind.

Make sure you put the main benefit in your headline, and/or your prospect's biggest frustration that you can solve.

Remember too, that you're writing to one person at a time. So make your headline talk directly to that person.

### **Brainstorming Winning Headlines**

In order to get started writing your headline, as I mentioned earlier, you should have an "idea File" handy to go through and look at the headlines. Jot down the headlines that make you excited about taking action on something you would buy or some service you would use.

Find ads, letters, postcards, direct mail pieces, brochures, flyers or anything else that grabs your attention -- and they don't necessarily have to be real estate related... in fact, many of my best marketing efforts came from other sources that had nothing to do with real estate at all. OPEN YOUR EYES - THERE ARE IDEAS EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK!

The main thing to remember when it comes to creating headlines is... just get things down on paper (or in your computer as I do.) At this point, don't worry a stitch about getting it perfect.

This is a "brainstorming" session for headlines. And as you know, when you brainstorm you don't edit anything. You just get all the ideas out and onto the paper, and worry about cutting out the "losers" later.

STEP ONE: To Creating Winning Headlines... get out your Idea File and begin using the winning headlines you find - apply their same themes, words, and approaches to your marketing efforts. Plug-in your benefits, your listings or service, and get some words down on paper!!!

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Doesn't it make more sense to borrow ideas that are working, and make them your own than to sit and try and invent the wheel again? (I'll give you many good ideas in the appendix of this course, but I also want you to learn how to create your own "reference library" of great marketing ideas)

STEP TWO: The next step to take when it comes to creating headlines, is to brainstorm some more. Except this time you do it with a little twist... you make it outrageous and fun.

What do I mean?

Let's say you have a listing that is below market value compared to recent selling comps. So, what you do is get crazy, and write some headlines like these:

Family Sells House For 88% Of Market Value! or maybe,

INSTANT EQUITY! Over \$10,000 in equity available to smart buyer or investor! or,

How To Buy A Home For 12% LESS Than What It's Worth!

The point is to have fun, be creative. Don't you think headlines like these will grab someone's attention? Believe me, they will... because they are so different, so outrageous, and so unique... that your prospects will have to stop and look.

### **Powerful Headline Words That Are Proven Effective**

I feel like the absolute safest headline begins with the words: "How To". Although it's not very original or creative, the words "how to" immediately appeal to your target prospect's self-interest. As long as there are people, I think the words "how to" will always be powerful.

"How-to" also arouses curiosity. And if your benefit and promise are powerful, it's a sure bet your prospect will go on to read the rest of your ad.

With the words "How To" you immediately involve your reader in something they have an interest in.

I've used the How To headline so many times I can't begin to tell you. I use it because it works. You should try it!

Here are my favorite, proven-to-work, power headline words:

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. Announcing | 14. How Would |
| 2. Advice To  | 15. Amazing   |
| 3. Yes        | 16. Here      |

- |                         |                  |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| 4. Inside-Secrets of    | 17. This         |
| 5. The Truth About      | 18. Facts        |
| 6. Little-Known Secrets | 19. Discover     |
| 7. Amazing Secrets      | 20. Only         |
| 8. Love                 | 21. Breakthrough |
| 9. New                  | 22. Do You       |
| 10. How Much            | 23. Which        |
| 11. Which of            | 24. Sale         |
| 12. Now                 | 25. At Last      |
| 13. Life                | 26. Bargains     |

**And finally, the two most powerful headline words:**

**26. Free      27. You**

Use them whenever you can... for obvious reasons, nothing sounds better to a prospect than “FREE” and “YOU.”

Your headline must stir an emotion in your prospect.... it must strike a chord. It must get your prospect excited or scared or remind him of his problem or frustration... a frustration that you can solve. That's why you need to use the words listed above.... they create intrigue, and build passion.

Your headlines must motivate your prospects in one powerful way or another.... either you need to hit the nail on the head about their biggest problem, frustration or worry, or you need to hit smack-dab on their most desired benefit as it pertains to your service.

### **Different Kinds of Headlines**

To help you create headlines that work, I want you to learn the several different kinds of headlines which can be used effectively; and the fact that they can be mixed together effectively as well.

When you sit down to write a headline, you'll want to turn to this section, open your Idea File, and write a headline for your listing or service using each of these styles... at the very least the headlines covered here will give you a spring-board for discovering more and better headlines... ultimately you'll find your best headlines for testing.

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These different types of headlines will help you uncover that winning headline that you're searching for.

Here they are:

- |                                     |                              |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1) The Direct Headline              | 7) The Personalized Headline |
| 2) The News Headline                | 8) The Question Headline     |
| 3) The Guarantee Headline           | 9) The Reason-Why Headline   |
| 4) The Testimonial Headline         | 10) The Benefit Headline     |
| 5) The Frustration/Problem Headline | 11) The How-To Headline      |
| 6) The Discount Headline            |                              |

Now, let's take a closer look at each of the different kinds of headlines, how and when you may want to use them, and which one may be the best one for your particular situation.

**1. The Direct Headline.** A direct headline tells your prospects in no uncertain terms (directly) what's in it for them, and why they should act now.

"FREE REPORT Reveals How To Stop Paying Rent & Start Owning Your Own Home Within 27 Days!"

OR

"Buy Your Next Home From Me And I'll Sell Your Home For FREE"

The direct headline speaks straight-forward to your prospect.

**2. The News Headline.** If your real estate service offers something newsworthy, you may want to consider the News Headline. Newsworthy is usually something new. If your service offers your prospect something new, something he can't get anywhere else, you may want to consider using a News Headline. Here's an example:

"Just Released... Real Estate Marketing Expert Reveals Little-Known Home Selling Secrets That Could Save You A Fortune At Closing!"

Here's another example of a News headline:

"Announcing a New Way To Buy A Home... Those Who Spend Hours Driving Around Are Missing The Boat!"

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**3. The Guarantee Headline.** Guarantee Headlines state a desirable benefit, and guarantees results, or other benefits. Here are a few ways to use a Guarantee Headline:

"Announcing a New Home Selling Technology That's Guaranteed To Sell Your Home In 62 Days Or Less!"

Attention For Sale By Owners... I Personally Guarantee You Will Get More Traffic Through Your Home By Using My Unique 21 Step Marketing Program!

This type of headline has worked very well for me; I suggest you give it a try. It seems to really give an added kick to the headline, making it more attention-getting, compelling, and plus people want to find out more about you, your listings and your service.

**Here's another example:**

"Are You Tired of Throwing Your Hard-Earned Equity Away On Part-Time Real Estate Agents Who Do You No Good Whatsoever? Here's a New Way to Solve All Your Real Estate Problems.... 100% Guaranteed!"

**4. The Testimonial Headline.** A testimonial headline is just what it says... it uses a powerful customer testimonial for the headline.

"I was hesitant to pay 7% commission to get my home sold -- after all, that's a lot of money. But, when everything was said and done (Joe Schmo Real Estate Agent) actually paid for himself by getting me a higher sales price. He was right all along... my wife and I would recommend him to anyone!" - *Mr. and Mrs. Homeowner*

**5. The Frustration/Problem Headline.** The frustration headline takes your target markets' biggest problem or frustration (one that you can solve), and makes them acutely aware of it -- and then you proceed to show them how you can solve it.

Is this twisting your markets arm, or is it smart business?

Well, undoubtedly, some of you won't feel comfortable using the anxiety and frustration tactics talked about in this course, but let me promise you this:

If your service helps solve your prospects frustration, "scaring" them into using you is doing them a **BIG, BIG** favor!

If you've got the answer people are looking for, you owe it to them to do everything you can (short of lying, cheating or stealing) to get them to realize it and use your services!

Here are a couple of frustration/anxiety headline examples:

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"If You Were To Sell Your Home Today, Do You Know The 11 Most Costly Mistakes Homeowners Make... And How To Avoid Them? Here's A Way to Take Care Of It All With One Phone Call"

"If You Are In The Market To Buy A New Home, And You Don't Understand Financing, It Could Cost You Thousands At Closing... Here's a 100% Guaranteed Way to Make Sure That Never Happens!"

That's a lot of anxieties isn't it?

**6. The Discount Headline.** This headline focuses entirely on the fact that you're inviting your prospects to take advantage of a discount that you are offering. Many times this has to do with commission rate.

"You get the deepest commission discounts I've ever offered... 50% off. Why? Simply because I'd rather give you a great deal on the selling of your home so that you have plenty of money to buy the home of your dreams."

"Our market has too many buyers for the number of homes available -- we need more listings. If you're looking to move, I'll slash my commission by a full 1% if you'll allow me to find you a new home. That's a whopping \$2,352 for the average priced home in this area!

**7. The Personalized Headline.** This headline can be any combination of the others, but it is made personal. For example, if you use mail merge in a direct mail piece (possibly to your people farm or farm area) this would be a powerful headline:

**"Finally, Here's How You, John Smith, Can Get Great Real Estate Representation... Without Paying An Arm & A Leg For It!"**

The "John Smith" portion of the headline is the personalization. This type of headline can be incredibly profitable. For some reason, it can motivate prospects who wouldn't be motivated in any other way... because you are spending the extra time to personalize each letter. At least that's the way it looks to your prospect... you and I both know that a simple mail merge can make every marketing piece you send out look "personalized."

Personalization can be extremely powerful. Combine it with good copy, good layout, good research, good copy basics and you're on your way to a hot money-maker!!!

**8. The Question Headline.** This headline can work great ....with only one caveat... you absolutely must know your prospect what he's thinking... what his anxieties are... and what he is looking for in a house or a real estate agent.

If you do know your prospects this well you can make powerful use of the Question headline. You must deeply understand the problems or wants of your target market in order to use the Question Headline. An example is...

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"Which Of These Home Selling Headaches Do You Want To Avoid?" or,

"What's Your Best Chance To Sell Your Home Quickly? The Answer Below May Surprise You!"  
By using this type of headline, you can jump right into your sales pitch with powerful copy.

**9. Reason-Why Headline.** I've mentioned reason-why thinking before, and it basically applies to this type of headline as well. The Reason-Why Headline typically uses the actual words "Reason-Why." You can also use other words to open the Reason-Why headline.

Example: "Ten Reasons Why You Should use A Real Estate Agent To Sell Your Home"

**10. Benefit Headline.** This headline is just as it says, the benefit headline. Its effectiveness depends greatly on how well you've researched your target market and found out what their hot buttons are. You must research your target market in order to know what benefits are going to motivate them to take action.

Once you do your research, take the biggest, most desirable benefit that your market wants, put it in the headline in a compelling way, and there you have it.

Example:

Here's a winning headline for people looking for New Home Buyers:

"Ten undervalued, under priced homes available... call today for FREE information!"

Here's a winning headline for Expired Listings:

"Want to get your home sold for top dollar... without spending an arm & leg to do it? Here's the 21-step marketing plan you need to sell your home quick... 100% Guaranteed!"

Both of these headlines focus on a major benefit the target market wants. That's the key to a winning benefit headline -- knowing your market so well you can offer them a powerful, compelling benefit they can't easily get somewhere else.

**11. How-To Headline.** This headline is the headline I use whenever I get stumped for a headline.

People like to learn "how to" do all kinds of stuff. And so, if you're offering a strong system for showing people how to do sell or buy a home, you may want to consider using a how to headline.

Here's an example of a how to headline that my client used for 5 months, and sold dozens and dozens of homes:

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"How to sell your home inside of 59 days... guaranteed!"

The How-To headline is one of my favorites to use... when you're stuck for a headline you should turn to the how-to... it will at least get you going, and soon it will help you to kick-in the creative juices for coming-up with your winning headline.

Conclusion:

Some key questions to ask yourself every time you decide which headline to use:

- What is the message, and the feeling of the message I want to communicate to my target prospect?
- What is the strongest benefit I have to offer?
- What is the strongest frustration I can build on to get my prospect interested?
- What's the most compelling offer I can make, and can it be stated clearly in my headline?
- Have I written a headline that will motivate my prospect to keep reading?
- Is my headline an "ad" for my ad... or is it just a plain-Jane, boring statement?
- Is my headline speaking directly to my target prospect, or could a snake-breeder read it and think it was for him?
- Am I focusing on my prospect and his wants, desires, fears or frustrations? Or am I being selfish and talking about myself?
- Will my headline be interesting to my prospect, or does it bore him?
- Is my headline passionate... does it use action words, and not "fluff" adjectives?
- Have I used specifics in my headline, and not just generalities?
- Have I thought about the headline, what I want to say and what I wish it to accomplish, or have I just written something because I had to?

Answer these questions each and every time you write an opening headline and you'll stay focused on writing powerful headlines that will work.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN The Question Your Prospects Want Answered**

- "Why Should I Do Business With You Instead of Your Competition?"
- Finding Your "Unique Competitive Advantage" and Blending It Into All
- Your Advertising and Marketing To Boost Immediate and Long-Term Response!

Most real estate agents I consult with or talk to don't have a clue about the advantages of having an UCA. I've even had some who say to me, "You know, I don't get this UCA thing -- what's so powerful about it and why should I have one?"

What is an UCA anyway? UCA stands for:

### **"Unique Competitive Advantage"**

Simply put, your UCA, or "Unique Competitive Advantage" is the feature or benefit that makes you and your service stand out from your competition's... and we all know that the competition in real estate is fierce. Why? Because everyone has a relative or friend in the business and half the time that's the person you have to beat to get the job. So having a UCA is crucially important.

It's what makes you and your service better than all of your competitors, of and by itself... it's the "something different" that your prospects can't get anywhere else... it's only available from you.

Some people term it as a "USP" (unique selling proposition) -- and still yet, some call it a "SOB" (statement of benefit). Whatever you choose to call it -- you need to know what a UCA is, and how it can benefit your marketing and advertising in a big way!

Without an UCA, the average Tom, Dick or Harry has no way of knowing why he should choose you and your service over all of the others that are available. And it's your responsibility as a marketer to inform and tell your potential customers why you and your service is more desirable.

If you don't tell them, they'll never know.... it's that simple. Never assume that your prospects know anything -- take the effort needed to tell them!

UCA-based marketing is the most effective, wallet-fattening advertising there is. With very few exceptions, all truly effective advertising is UCA-based advertising...

In short, when you find out what that "certain something" is that sets you and your service head and shoulders above the rest, and then you should use it in your marketing, in your listing presentations, in your ads, on your signs, on your cards... everywhere.

Your UCA is that one distinct, appealing benefit that sets you apart from every competitor you have.... it's something special -- something that makes you unique. It's how you position yourself as compared to the competition....

There are different kinds of UCA's... any one of which may be the one you'll want to use for your business -- or you may want to come-up with your own:

- Some agents position themselves as having the lowest commission available. Their UCA is "discounted fees."
- Other agents specialize only in buyer transactions... and their UCA is "exclusive agency."

### **Formulating Your Own UCA**

Coming up with your own UCA can be very simple. What I'm about to share with you, is *a* really easy method for formulating your UCA -- it's a new method that I recently learned from another marketing minded teacher.

It is, by far, the simplest way of coming up with your UCA that I've ever come across:

Here's what you do:

- 1) Get a couple of sheets of paper.
- 2) On the top of one page, write, "You know how..."
- 3) On the top of the next page write, "Well, what I do is..."

Next, you simply fill-in the blanks. Let me give you a couple of examples, and then you'll catch on rather quickly. Let's say you're a real estate agent who just lists properties and nothing more -- here's what your UCA might look like:

"You know how most real estate agents work with both buyers and sellers - splitting their time equally among both groups? Well, what I do is only list properties and deal directly with sellers only... it's my only job to conduct my 21-step marketing plan on each home I have listed... this means more time, money and attention are spent trying to get your home sold - instead of spending time on other less important activities."

Do you see how the questions work to help you get a handle on what's so unique about you?

Let's do another one to make sure you know how to formulate your own UCA:

Let's say you are a real estate agent who offers to sell a home for 1% commission if they seller agrees to buy the next home through the same agent -- your UCA may look something like this:

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"You know how most real estate agents charge you a full 6 or 7% commission on the sale of your home? Well, what I do is save you thousands of dollars by only charging a 1% commission if you buy your next home through me."

Are you getting the idea?

This method is so simple, it's beautiful. Its power is in its simplicity. I've had this UCA/USP thing explained to me time and time again, but nowhere have I found such a simple (yet thorough) way to formulate an UCA so quickly and easily.

And that is the power of an UCA. A well-formulated UCA will accomplish several things for you:

1. It will lay out in precise detail what your prospects/customers can expect from your relationship -- there are no hidden surprises, and this gives you more credibility!
2. It gives you an overall focus of where the rest of your advertising and marketing should go. Once you have your UCA on paper, all you need to do is take those words and tuck them into every bit of marketing you do!
3. It's highly unlikely that any of your competitors will have anything even remotely like an UCA; and so yours will have an incredible knock-out blow to anyone else who is a competitor. They don't stand a chance, because they can't clearly and succinctly express the reason why their prospects should do business with them, instead of you! That's a powerful position to be in!

The real key to creating a highly successful UCA is to focus on the one little need, or gap that is lacking the very most. (Of course, you've got to make sure you can keep the promises that you make!)

By finding the one little problem that no one else in your area is taking care of, and building your UCA around it, you can profit enormously.

### **Putting Your UCA Down on Paper**

Before you jump in and start throwing your new UCA all over the place, you need to focus and say it as clearly and crisply as you can, with impact. And, whatever you do,

**Do Not Try to Be Cute or Clever!!!**

Doing so will defeat the entire purpose of your UCA: to clearly and crisply state the reason why your prospects should do business with you instead of your competition. Think it through carefully.

Take the time you need to so you can write out your UCA in one compelling paragraph or less.

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It may take a few tries to get it down clearly... but its well worth it- And believe me, if you use the method I outlined above, coming up with your UCA is going to be 10 times easier than it was for me back before I found out about this method! *Use it!*

### **What To Do If There's Nothing Unique About Me or My Service?**

There are two ways in which you can easily create a UCA (Unique Competitive Advantage) for your service; even if it really isn't much different from what you competition has to offer:

- 1) Use Your Commission Rates as Your UCA. That's right... make sure that you offer the best rates in your area and sell homes on volume. This type of UCA makes for great headlines!
- 2) Highlight an Unusual Guarantee as Your UCA. This is probably the single-easiest way there is to create your own UCA if you don't already have something special to capitalize on.

Your service might be just like anyone else's on the block -- but by highlighting a unique, attention-grabbing guarantee, you'll instantly boost the perceived value of your service over that of your competitions!

For instance, one client uses the following guarantee for a headline:

"Uses my services for 30 days. If, at the end of 30 days your home isn't sold, you may cancel your listing... guaranteed!"

Do you see how incredibly powerful that is? Basically, this fellow's UCA is his guarantee... and there's nothing wrong with that! That is a GREAT UCA!

### **Conclusion**

Your UCA will be one of your very most powerful marketing weapons, and it needs to be a part of everything you do. That being the case, you need to take the time necessary to come-up with your UCA today!

If you have any questions about this subject, I urge you to call me I understand, because this was one of the topics I struggled to understand the most... (303) 805-2311.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT 10 MARKETING & CASH-GENERATING SOLUTIONS**

### FOR YOUR REAL ESTATE BUSINESS

These marketing and money-making strategies, techniques, and over-all “smart” business practices I share with agents and brokers who are in dire need of a rapid, quick shot in the arm to get their business going and growing again. These are not in any particular order, and they're intentionally brief. They cover a broad spectrum of situations and problems because each person's business is going to be different.

#### **SOLUTION #1- Work your customer list and your prospects**

When I start a marketing consultation with any new agent, the first place I start is right here. Work your current and past customer lists completely. If you have taken care of the people you have served in the past, you should have good will established with them.

Most agents wait for their past clients to call them or refer them to someone else automatically... but this is rarely the case. Sure you have a few great clients that give you name out whenever they can without being prompted, but most won't. Not because they don't believe that you did a good job for them... but because you are not in their daily thoughts.

The truth is, everyone's life is too busy and hectic to worry about giving referrals out. You can have enormous control and capability of getting people to refer your name out, or use your services to begin with, by following up with them.

Following up means, working your customers and working your inactive or past customers and those who didn't convert by calling them directly... on a regular, on-going basis. Which to me means every 60-90 days.

Following up and working them means you write letters to them re-establishing the basis of why they need your services...

I had a client about a year ago, for example, who has been an agent for over 10 years. He closes an average of 50 homes per year and comes in contact with literally hundreds of prospects every year.

I showed him that he had had a “gold mine” of untapped potential in those past clients and non-converted prospects... and that by following up with them that he should be able to get a quick-boost of new business.

He wasn't as convinced as I was, but he agreed to follow through. He followed up every 60-90 days on all his past clients and called all current prospects until they were “dead or a deal.” The

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results were phenomenal... this past year he closed 66 homes (a 32% increase from the year before) and made an extra 43,000 dollars in commissions.

### **SOLUTION #2- Don't spend a lot of money on untested advertising**

Most real estate agents see an idea, a marketing approach, a concept, an ad, a strategy or something else that really excites them... and they put 100% of all their money into a big, huge, all or nothing type of campaign. This is a terrible way to go about getting the immediate income boost you're looking for.

First, never put all your "marketing eggs" in one basket... be diversified... spread it around a little bit to ensure that you're covering more than one approach.

Second, never do anything on a grand scale (like a full-page ad or 20,000 mailers) until you have tested the headlines, text and graphical layout first. The key is to test small until your piece is perfected and then roll it out on a bigger scale.

Third, never sign long-term contracts with any media just because the rates are lower. Many agents make this mistake, and it costs them thousands each year. Start slow when spending money on advertising, and then increase your budget when the numbers are right.

It may take you a little longer following the above advice, but the rewards are much better and bigger on the backend.

### **SOLUTION #3- Never give up!**

This recommendation is as obvious as they come... but many agents still do not follow it. It's simple; whatever you do - good - bad - ugly - DON'T EVER GIVE UP!

Why? Because you're closer to having your "breakthrough" than you think you are. Be persistent in your marketing efforts... nothing worth while in real estate comes easy. If you want to be a "top producer", then you must press on... no matter what your last marketing results were.

Because there are so many factors and other nuances that go along with real estate success... it may take you 10, 20, 50 or even 100 tries to get your marketing and business just right. Stay after it until you reach that point - its well worth the struggle.

### **SOLUTION #4- Keep trying new marketing approaches**

An important recommendation that I can make to any agent or broker is to keep trying new marketing strategies, ideas, techniques and systems. Never assume prematurely that one or two marketing approaches are the best way for you or your business.

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You have the power to choose from telemarketing, direct-mail, door-knocking, referral based, seminars, postcards, fsbo's, expired's, listings, buyers and everything in between (plus 100 more I don't have room here to mention). Each target market is a profit center waiting to be captured and ethically exploited to its maximum potential.

The real estate environment today is jam-packed full of money-making opportunities... take full advantage of as many of them as you possibly can.

#### **SOLUTION #5- Make your service "risk-free" for your clients**

Whenever two parties come together, one is always being asked, whether it be implicitly or explicitly, to bear more of the risk in the transaction... whether they are a buyer or a seller. If you can make it "risk-free" for your prospects to do business with you... both in your marketing pieces and your personal approaches... you will increase your chance of success substantially.

If you can tell every seller you sign to a listing contract that their satisfaction is 100% guaranteed and that they may cancel at any time... you are taking away the risk from their side.

If you can work with every buyer without a lengthy contract, you are taking the risk away from them. It puts them at ease and it will increase the number of deals you do, because very few other agents are that confident in their services and performance.

It's just plain smart to reverse the risk whenever possible. Think about this solution very carefully before dismissing it as a "crazy idea."

#### **SOLUTION #6- Use vendor co-op relationships**

Use vendor co-op relationships as often as possible. These are people you work with in your business already. Such as: title reps, lenders, loan officers, attorneys, inspectors, appraisers, newspaper and magazine reps, insurance agents, etc...

All of the above mentioned can split the cost of advertising and marketing, provide valuable services for your clients, share prospect and lead lists and refer business to you... you just have to spend the time to look at all of your vendor relationships and maximize each one for yours and their benefit.

There are so many ways to capitalize on your current professional exchanges... all you have to do is find out whose willing and able to work with you in this fashion. Be creative.

### **SOLUTION #7- Offer incentives**

Offering your buyers and sellers incentives is similar to the concept of risk reversal. The more you offer a prospect, the more people will avail themselves of your service.

For example, you can offer

1. Lower commission if your prospect sells AND buys through you
2. A FREE appraisal if they use you or your lender (credit reports and other fees also work well as incentives... plus, your vendor can pick up these FREEBIES)
3. FREE home warranties to buyers and sellers
4. If your seller prospects list before a certain time frame they get a discounted fee (this is an effective incentive around the holidays when things are typically a little slower)

I think you get the idea; you can come up with another 100 ways to induce more business through incentives. Remember be as creative and generous as you can - the more exciting the incentive - the more deals you'll do.

### **SOLUTION #8- Test your commission rates**

If you'll test your commission rates you may find that by changing them up or down - by changing it to 5.5% instead of 6% you may close 50% more deals... and conversely, it may not pay to change them at all.

The point being, everything in this society is price driven... so be flexible in your approach to commission. In my experience, a slightly lower commission will increase the embrace and the receptiveness you get from your prospects by as 50-75%.

Think of it this way, you can take 10 listings at a full commission rate or take 15 to 18 listings at say 5.6% or 5.8% - which is better in the long run?

Test your rates and see what makes the most sense.

### **SOLUTION #9- Decrease your overhead**

A lot of people get so debilitated when business gets slow that they can't bring themselves to ask these questions:

How much smaller could I be and still operate successfully?

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How much overhead could I remove?  
How many assistants do I really need?

Is it worth it to pay a franchise fee or high desk fee? How much of my business depends on the "brand name" on my signs?

How much am I spending on marketing? Is it bringing in the results I need? Can I reduce this amount and still get the same results?

What could my vendors help me pay for?

How else could I get them to use their time more productively?

You have to ask yourself a lot of questions... if you keep asking, you'll get your answers and reduce your overhead quickly.

**SOLUTION #10- First understand where you are by measuring and analyzing  
Your current marketing results**

You can't grow your sales and profits until you first understand where you are.

There's a concept that has been extolled by W. Edwards Deming. It's called optimization. Optimization in the terms of what I'm all about would be like optimum marketing. That would be the process of getting the maximum results for the minimum time, the minimum risk, the minimum effort, the minimum expense.

You cannot do that until you first measure, evaluate and create a base line of comparison for what you're doing now. Everything you're doing in marketing is a marketing process that can and should be measured. Until and unless you measure it and analyze it and know with certainty how well it can produce, you can't possibly do any better. So the first thing you've got to do is say to yourself:

When I do any type of marketing it costs X, but what happens?  
What does it produce?  
What's the minimum I'll accept?  
How many people respond?  
How much business is transacted?

Until and unless you analyze all these questions, you can't have a base line from which to try to improve. Once you do analyze that, you have a base line. You know on a controlled basis where you are right now. Then you can try, comparatively speaking, to test differing, improved ways of doing things, of marketing, selling, running ads, giving seminars, knocking doors, sending

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postcards, getting referrals, talking to fsbo's and expired's, etc.... You can compare how they perform, but you cannot do anything of these until you first analyze and measure your results

## What's The Next Step?

The #1 question that I get after agents, lenders, and real estate service providers who read this book is "So Todd, what's the next step?"

I invite you to take action on what you have learned and build systems around what I have covered in this guide. You now have the knowledge to take what you have learned and dramatically increase the business that you have now.

My average client reduces their expenses by 50% and increases their business by 89%. They do this by making their marketing more effective and cutting out what doesn't work.

In fact I have put together a complete system that is affordable to all real estate agents regardless of where you do business and what your average commission is.

I invite you to discover our Success System at [www.36dealsaYear.com](http://www.36dealsaYear.com) where I have more information for you on what it takes to get to the next level in your real estate career.

To your success,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'TB' or 'Todd Bates', written in a cursive style.

Todd Bates

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