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Internet Agents Earn More than Twice Traditional Agents-2

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“Give a person a fish and you feed them for a day; teach that person to use the internet and they won't bother you for weeks.” Author Unknown

I love that quote and it's so true. Have you ever watched people surfing the internet? A bomb could explode and they'd never notice.

And speaking of explosions, there has been an explosion of internet users. According to Internetworldstats.com, 251 million people in the United States use the internet. And worldwide, the number balloons to 1.6 billion.

To top it off, the National Association of Realtors reports that 87 percent of all buyers start their searches online. This is precisely why internet agents earn more than twice what traditional agents make. These web-savvy Realtors have gone to where the eyeballs are.

So what are the best ways to tap the internet so you join those top producers?

First, your website. Yes, it's likely you have one (if you don't, get one, now!). But have you recharged it with the latest tools? Today's top agents have sites that are customized to reflect their local marketplace and that are chocked full of useful, practical and interactive tools that draw and keep visitors on their sites.

A tool I really like is one that allows site visitors (buyers) to tell the agent specifically what they're looking for – site visitors can create a personal portfolio for homes that interest them and then get e-mails automatically via a drip system when a match is available.

One of my clients, Valerie Hunter-Kelly, a Realtor in Clarksville, Tenn., has set up a system that sends incoming e-mail directly to the buyer agent on duty. Plus the e-mail automatically goes into the company's database and a plan of action begins. "The faster we respond, the better rapport we build, and we keep in touch whether it's short term or long term," Hunter-Kelly says.

So the best site tools are those that engage the visitor quickly and let you respond within 15 minutes. If you reply within that timeframe, you have an 85 percent chance of connecting with the customer. I'm a firm believer that the first agent to respond wins the business.

That's another reason I strongly encourage using I-phones and Blackberries -- so that you're always connected to your e-mail. I was talking to a buyer agent recently who told me he checks e-mail every morning. To me, that's a huge problem. Check your e-mail three times a day, minimum.

Obviously, even the best sites are pointless unless clients and potential clients can find them. Visit http://www.prchecker.info/check_page_rank.php to see where your site ranks. If it's not high, hire a virtual assistant (typically very affordable) who knows search engine optimization to boost your ranking in Google, Yahoo and other search engines.

Outside of websites, but still very much related to the internet, is **social networking**. Again, a must. Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, Active Rain and

many others each have their own way of communicating with potential and current clients that must not be ignored.

But let me also leave you with this quote from publisher and writer Paul Carvel to make an important point: “Internet: absolute communication, absolute isolation.”

Real estate is, always has been and always will be a people business founded on relationships. The well-rounded real estate professional avoids putting all his efforts in one area, such as the internet. I think those who do, end up losing the edge on one of their most precious tools: their face-to-face communication. Remember, you have to talk to people. Don’t let it become a lost art in your business.

Best of luck to you!

Bob Corcoran is a nationally recognized speaker and author who is founder and president of Corcoran Consulting Inc. (CorcoranCoaching.com, 800-957-8353), an international consulting and coaching company that specializes in performance coaching and the implementation of sound business systems into the residential or commercial broker or agent’s existing practice. We look forward to hearing from you. Sign up TODAY for your complimentary business consultation. <http://www.CorcoranCoaching.com/bpw.php>