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Will You Have the 'Touch' for 2010?

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Here's one way to make 2010 better than 2009 – stay in better touch with your past clients and prospects.

How do I know it will make your business better? Many reasons but here are three that come to mind immediately:

1. It keeps the door open for referrals. Remember, it's much easier to keep the clients you have than to find new ones. Plus, why not let your past clients find new clients for you through their referrals?

2. It helps you stand out from the crowd. NAR reports that most Realtors begin losing touch with their clients in six months. Stay in touch and you'll shine.

3. It shows you care. What do you think your past clients think when communication drops off or ends? One possibility is that they think you “got your money and ran.” That doesn't put you in a very good light.

Now, how to stay in touch? Yes, customer relationship management (CRM) software packages are plentiful and I'm not saying ignore them. In fact, I often recommend Top Producer to my clients because it operates online and you can see everything at once.

But let me address all those bland postcards, cut-and-paste generic letters and e-mails that border on spam. They're not cutting it today. We're smack dab in the middle of the information age, and people are becoming connoisseurs of information because it's so pervasive and accessible with a single mouse click.

So what does this have to do with CRM for Realtors? It means you better be dishing out some high-quality, useful information about real estate.

Today's best agents and brokers understand this. And they're steadily building job security by giving past clients and prospects bona fide information they can use. Not just postcards talking about how many listings they got last month.

This is just one of many CRM tactics I suggest (and I'll hit on some more in a minute), but I believe it's one of the most important ways to keep your business growing both in the number of clients and your reputation as a professional.

So how do you share this information and exactly what kind of information are we talking about? First, I like blogging, it's easy and it's free. I blog once a day and it's helped me grow my business by leaps and bounds. I give my clients – Realtors – tips and news that help them in their business.

So consider a blog, Facebook (and other social media) and an electronic newsletter (emphasis on news) that's chocked full of items that relate directly to your farm area. The better quality information you're sharing the more demand you'll create. And remember, if you don't have the time to do this, hire a virtual assistant to manage your social networks for you.

In a phrase it boils down to this: be helpful. Share referrals for plumbers, electricians, contractors, carpet installers, landscapers, or appliance dealers – these are things every homeowner has to grapple with. What about offering a

free advice on which home improvements have the best return on investment?
Market updates? You bet.

As for how often these touches should occur, I recommend a touch a month:
think personal such as birthday cards, home anniversary cards and toss in a
phone call each quarter.

And start off your post-closing relationship with a memorable closing gift. Be
strategic here. I recommend gifts that they see often and that remind them of
you. Some I've heard about include: Cool mailboxes, a door hanger, brass
house numbers, doorknockers or nameplates, wind chimes, bird houses or
feeders, picture frames or a nice photo of the home.

Let me know your thoughts. How are you being useful to your past clients?
Send me an e-mail at Bob@CorcoranCoaching.com.

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.
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