

4 Marketing Strategies in the Age of 'Do Not Call'

Learn how you can still reach out to prospects without breaking the law

APRIL 2010

Sometimes, following the law goes hand-in-hand with effective marketing. Such is the case with the National Do Not Call Registry, says Denver real estate practitioner Jennifer Allan. Long before the do-not-call list, technology was changing the way that consumers want to interact with salespeople.

"All the law did was give salespeople a push into the 21st century," says Allan, author of *If You're Not Having Fun Selling Real Estate, You're Not Doing It Right* (Bluegreen Books, 2010).

Here are Allan's rules for reaching out to prospects without being a nuisance.

Leave people alone. Whether it's their use of TiVo to skip the commercials or caller ID to avoid sales calls, people have made it clear they have little tolerance for being sold to. Even if they're not on the no-call list, you risk irritating 95 out of every 100 people you call if you solicit their business with a cold call. And irritated people don't refer business to you.

Get them to call you. People like to get to know you in a non-pressure environment, and then when they need something, they call you. Social media is perfect for that. Use the Web to keep your real estate expertise front and center without making it explicit. Answer people's questions in a way that showcases your expertise without trying to sell anything.

Keep it personal. When you blog and send e-mails to your sphere, only focus on real estate if you have a good story to tell: An interesting listing or a video clip of your interview with the local TV station are good examples. Mostly focus on things that can help people, like a reminder of street-sweeping day so that they can move their car and avoid a ticket.

Go for the quality. When you cold-call, you play a numbers game in which you try to get five leads for every 100 calls. Rather than go for the quantity, and risk alienating people, go for the quality. Get outside, meet people, and form

relationships that your new contacts will value. "Get out in the world with your antennae up and a smile on your face," Allan says.

Do Not Call' Refresher

- As of Jan. 1, 2005, telemarketers and sellers, including real estate practitioners, are required to search the do-not-call registry at least once every 31 days and drop from their call lists the phone numbers of registered consumers.
- The law allows calls to "existing customers," defined as people with whom you've done business in the last 18 months.
- You can call FSBOs on the list only if you have a buyer for their home, not to solicit their listing.
- There is a safe harbor for inadvertently calling someone on the list if your company has written procedures on calling, provides training on do-not-call regulations, has accessed the national registry within the last three months, and maintains a company-specific list of numbers not to call.

REALTOR.ORG