

# Show Prospective Clients You're Different

When you promote yourself, are you focusing too much on your own accomplishments and not enough on your customers' goals?

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When it comes to convincing buyers and sellers that you're their best choice, you really have only two options. You can sell your accomplishments or you can sell the benefits that your prospective clients will receive from working with you.

The former, if overdone, can be a big mistake. Yet too often, real estate practitioners offer a laundry list of personal attributes when asked "Why should I hire you?" They spend most of the time discussing past successes, years of experience, membership in the Million Dollar Club, number of homes sold, and other achievements that may or may not matter to a client.

They also talk about their marketing services, ads, and Web sites. These are important, of course, but are also merely features of their service. Many even describe the hits, unique visitors, or ranking of their Web site—which is the equivalent of speaking a foreign language to most sellers.

The far more effective approach is to help clients understand exactly how they'll benefit from working with you. Your sales production or years in the business definitely speak to your status in the industry, but prospects need to hear more customized language about what you can do for their specific situation.

Are they looking for a smooth, headache-free transaction? Are they in a time crunch to sell their home? Do they want to know that you'll do everything you can to get the best price? By focusing on their needs, you'll be able to show your value.

## What Do Clients Want From You?

There are many questions that you can ask yourself to help formulate a good answer for why someone should hire you. To determine if you're doing enough to set yourself apart from the competition in the customers' eyes, consider the following questions:

- **What is it that I do?** You must know what you do and be able to articulate that in a compelling way to your prospects and customers in order to acquire and keep clients. Explain how you go about finding potential buyers, or what you do to help the seller prepare for an open house. When working with buyers, talk about the home-search process and how you work with customers to create a check list for each property.
- **What skills and services make me unique?** You have a tough job of trying to promote your business in an industry of more than 1.4 million individual competitors nationwide. How can you distinguish yourself? By emphasizing what's special about what you do. What are the skills, services, strategies, tactics, or market

philosophies that make you stand out? What are specific things that you do better than others? For example, do you have special knowledge of architecture? Do you have proven negotiation skills?

- **With the changes that are occurring in the real estate industry, what will make people think I am the best at what I do five to 10 years from now?** This is a question more for yourself than anyone else. But you need to answer it if you're going to help prospects understand why you're the best one to work with. Top performers build their business and strategy for the long run. They work to create competitive advantages that they can sustain for many years. That doesn't mean adjustments in strategy and tactics don't or won't occur. It means that these adjustments should be a matter of fine-tuning rather than wholesale changes. It also means core values and core purpose for their business are adhered to. Those bedrock beliefs don't change due to seasonality or market conditions.

### **Let's Get Honest About Honesty**

You have honesty and integrity, right? Let me share a story with you. When I was writing *Success As a Real Estate Agent for Dummies* (For Dummies, 2006), I had a couple of tussles with the technical editor the publisher hired to review the manuscript. Specifically, he was troubled by the fact that I didn't mention honesty and integrity as something to say when on a listing presentation or buyer interview. I excluded those qualities on purpose—I don't think they're a competitive advantage or a reason someone should hire a real estate salesperson.

Don't draw the wrong conclusion. Of course, I think honesty and integrity are paramount characteristics to being successful in real estate. But you wouldn't even be making a presentation to buyers or sellers if they didn't feel you had honesty and integrity. In my experience as an owner and operator of different businesses for more than 20 years, I developed a rule that has worked throughout my career: The more someone talks about his or her honesty and integrity, the lower the level of honesty and integrity that person possesses.

People who do business and live life with honesty and integrity don't go around talking about it. They just do it. If you want to talk about your honesty and integrity, go right ahead. Just be sure that you practice what you preach. Customers will judge you on your actions, and if you make false promises, you can kiss repeat business goodbye.

### **Be Different**

Show proof and real tangible benefits to the client about your services. Being the same as any other real estate professional gives the client no reason to hire you over that cheaper broker down the street, their uncle in the real estate business, or the referral they got from their boss.

If you are the same as everyone else, your value is reduced.

To be a top performer, you have to be different. The reason that Pavarotti, Michael Jordan, Lance Armstrong, Jack Welch, Jim Carrey, and Oprah are paid at the highest level in their fields is because they are different. They are their own brands. They can demonstrate why they are different and why they are worth the money.

Likewise, you need to show consumers why you're not just one of the herd. You need to prove your value. So start thinking about how you stand out from the rest. Once you can communicate that solidly to prospects, you'll find that it's always easy to answer that ever-important question: Why should I hire you?

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