



# Agent Survival

Ten powerful survival and success strategies in a sink or swim market

by Natalie Danielson

PROFESSIONAL *Direction* INC

13148 Holmes Pt Dr. N.E., Kirkland, WA 98034

email: [clockhours@gmail.com](mailto:clockhours@gmail.com)

[www.clockhours.com](http://www.clockhours.com)

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## Agent Survival Curriculum

Session Hours	Major Topics	Method of Presentation
1 1/2 hour	Introduction The dessert seems dry as a bone Positive Trends	Lecture Discussion Read
2 2 hours	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Decide if you are IN or if you are OUT</li> <li>2. Decide where you are going</li> <li>3. Build your Fan Club</li> <li>4. Don't be a secre agent</li> <li>5. Communicate with your fans</li> <li>6. Develop Power Partners</li> <li>7. Avoid these Mistakes</li> <li>8. Keep growing! Keep meeting people1</li> <li>9. Time Management an Oxymoron</li> <li>10. Take it one day at a time</li> </ol>	Lecture Discussion Read Go online
3 1/2 hour	How are you going to step forward and get that momentum going? Questions to ask yourself.	Answer questions Go online search

# Agent Survival

Did the bubble burst? The real estate market has taken quite a turn across the country this past year. Mortgage meltdown, foreclosures, climbing interest rates, gas prices through the roof, and inflation around the corner has hurt the entire real estate market. Yes, the bubble just blew up.

For the several years after the turn of the century, real estate agents have had an active market that rivaled few in the country. Multiple offers on properties, bidding wars, rising property values and a strong economy drove the real estate market. Financing was so easy to obtain, qualifying could be done in no time, rates were single digit, and creative financing programs made it possible for almost every buyer to get a mortgage.

As the market came to almost a dead halt, real estate agents have been struggling to keep hanging on. About a third of the real estate agents left the business as we head into the years 2011. Income just dried up for most of the agents left.

We have been scraping the bottom in the year 2011. There are all kinds of doom and gloom predictions, still, on the news, internet and from politicians and economists. The trillion dollar national debt, rising oil prices, and the budget cuts everywhere affect everyone. But, what we do see in the Northwest is that properties are starting to sell, prices are inching upwards, and financing becoming a bit more available. The fear of rising interest rates will get buyers out shopping. The shadow inventory from the banks will affect the market keeping prices down hurting sellers but giving buyers more opportunities. Short sales will close a bit quicker. First time home buyers have been saving. Move up buyers with equity can't wait any longer when they see what they can trade up to. Investors have been holding back waiting until they think the bottom is here. This is an extremely exciting time to be in the real estate industry!

But, the market is still slow and real estate agents are still in survival mode. This three clockhour course will focus on survival and success strategies for this changing market.

## Course Objectives

As a result of taking this class the agent shall be able to:

1. Identify what is happening in the market today
2. Understand positive trends that we will see in the future
3. Look at 10 ways to keep putting one foot in front of the other
4. Know that spending money will not bring business
5. Work smarter than ever by identifying what needs to be done to survive and succeed

# The Desert seems dry as a bone

It doesn't matter how successful you are in the real estate business... there are times every real estate agent has been in the desert and seriously thirsty. It is not just when the market is down. Trying to decide how to survive in the industry when clients are scarce becomes overwhelming. Wondering every day how to stay positive when the burning sun seems to be sucking all life out of real estate. Sitting at the desk just hoping for a drop of water... just one client to keep that motivation going and the bills paid.

From 2008-2010, the real estate market was in flux. It seemed like a desert. The news was constantly negative, the interest rates seem to continue to rise, and properties were not selling. The market was full of foreclosures, homeowners were upside down on their mortgage, and bank owned properties kept prices down. People were losing their jobs with no hope of getting another. Property values were plummeting.

As a real estate agent it can seem very lonely even as you look around at all the other agents. You can stand around the office chatting with other agents about the bleak market. And then in walks a smug real estate agent who starts making copies of a million dollar sale. The desert seems even more parched.

When national statistics are quoted they seldom reflect the market in our local area. The Puget Sound real estate market is relatively strong in the Greater Seattle area due to the active economy, large port and international commerce, and the variety of major corporations located in the northwest. In addition, there is a large military, respected higher education and unmatched medical facilities all with good employment rates. And, the entrepreneur spirit in the Northwest is very strong with people either on contract with the bigger corporations or creating their own business. All of this affects the real estate market, but we still have an economy that will bounce back.

National statistics quoting housing starts, median prices and closed sales as they pertain to the Northwest are as accurate as the national weather prediction is accurate for Seattle. So, no matter what you might hear from an economist, politician, or meteorologist, remember that they are not looking at our particular market.

As we head into the next decade, the market appears to be scraping the bottom and slowly inching upwards. If you haven't lost 30-60% of the value of your assets in the past few years, you probably didn't have any. Many echo boomers have good jobs and don't have an inkling as to how their parents generation saw equity disappear from homes.

Property prices are still low due to the number of short sales and foreclosures dominating the listings. The shadow inventory from the lenders will continue to filter into the market. This leaves many homeowners with little to no equity in their home. As the market inches upward you will see properties start to sell. Interest rates will start to climb due to national issues like debt and oil prices.

- Echo boomers in their 20's and 30's are ripe and ready to buy if they have decent jobs, decent credit and some source of down payment. They have been warned by others about the real estate market and have been hesitant. First time buyer programs might start to attract buyers in the near future.
- Investors have been waiting for the bottom to start making future investments in real estate that will pencil out and soon produce income. With house prices low and rental rates climbing, as we hit the bottom investors will start buying low end properties.
- Move up buyers watched as equity disappeared from their home. Those with plans to move up who have not refinanced in the past 6 years probably have some little equity in the property. As they realize what they can buy to move up, they will start to give up on the notion that the house will have to go back up in value to move. They may have delayed a move for years and are ready!
- Single people, especially single women, are a strong force in the market as it becomes more active. They can afford a home when they could not do so only a few years ago!

Bottom line for the real estate industry: There are always properties for sale. There are always buyers. Real estate agents are making money in the best and in the worst of times. The strongest influence on the income of a real estate agent is the attitude, ability to ride market waves, and motivation.

### *Discussion*

What statistics have you read in the paper, online, emails?

Name three headlines you have read recently.

What do you see for the future real estate market in the Northwest?

How do you think the prospective consumers interpret the statistics?

Personally, how does the news affect you on a daily basis?

Have you ever felt in the "desert" when the market was good?

Are you facing personal issues with a loss of equity, income, health insurance?

Are you looking now at the prospects that are out there?

# Positive Trends

The market will always go up and it will always come down just like a roller coaster. Only, the market never stops. No matter where the market is sitting it is not stationary and it will move constantly. No one, no matter who they are, knows what we will see in the future. But, one thing is for sure, that there is always a market. There are positive trends that will come out of a slow down market. Identifying these trends and focusing on the positive aspects of a market is far more beneficial than focusing on bad news.

## *Discussion*

- What kind of positive trends do you think we will see in the next year or two?
- How will the lenders adjust?
- What will happen with interest rates?
- How will this market benefit investors?
- How will this market benefit first time buyers?
- What will sellers expect from agents?
- How will this market affect competition among agents?
- How will the tools you use change the way you do business?

## **Mortgage Financing**

Mortgage interest rates will stay near historic lows, many experts predict. The Federal Reserve has lowered the prime rate. Mortgage rates still remain low. Mortgage lenders have been hit with huge losses due to the sub- prime meltdown and the slower market with fewer new sales. Lenders are looking to build good mortgage business. FHA loans will come back into favor with lower interest rates, higher mortgage amounts, lower down payments and risk based pricing. The government takeover of FNMA and FHLMC will help save the mortgage industry but the actual effect is yet to be seen. The mortgage industry will have more regulation to eliminate the rampant fraud that caused so many banks to fail.

## **Saved money in equity**

Mortgage lenders will be requiring down payments as the market recovers. This will help get equity back into newly purchased properties. Buyers will have to qualify for loans. It will take several years, but sellers with little equity bordering foreclosure will then build equity. Home owners will become more conservative and evaluate more carefully refinance options. Even I have a savings account! People will be saving money!

## **Building inventory with listings**

Success in the real estate industry has focused on having listings that will successfully sell. As inventory grows in the tighter market, listings that are priced competitively will sell faster. Overpriced listings are a waste of time and energy.

### **Niche markets**

There will be more niche markets. The fastest growing market will be focusing on homeowners in trouble, default and foreclosure. Investors may come back into the market when the bottom of the market is perceived.

### **Larger inventory for buyers**

The buyers will have a greater inventory to choose from. Instead of standing in line for a property, the sellers will have listings that are staged and in good condition along with competitive pricing to encourage showings. Sellers will be competing with banks owned properties that are not in as good of shape.

### **Competition in the industry**

Different real estate corporate business models have emerged in this new century. The hottest issues facing real estate agents are commission schedules and menu of services. The limited service model companies charging discount commissions or fees for services are giving real estate agents in more traditional companies some hot competition. Some of the real estate companies are going in the other direction with stricter full commissions and giving real estate agents all kinds of “free benefits” in exchange for high commission splits. Real estate agents are more clear than ever as to their agency responsibilities and marketing strategies when working with sellers.

### **Government Programs**

The greatest boost in our real estate market in 2010 was the the buyers tax credit. As it crawled to a close I heard gasps in real estate offices wishing they knew more people that could have taken advantage of the program. But, as the market starts to return, you will see more programs benefiting borrowers.

### **Transactions will become paperless**

Piles of paper will become bytes on a cloud accessible from any internet device. In other words, you will write contracts on a tablet, have clients sign the computer screen, transmit the documents up to the internet to a cloud accessible to all parties. This is happening NOW!

### **Social Networking**

Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and other social networking sites will affect the way we market property and communicate with clients. The old phone books and bulk mail will be replaced with social networking.

### **All Content Available**

The internet will hold all content. Libraries will have to change their focus because all information and books will be available on your phone. Real estate agents just before the turn of the century were in control to the access of all the information on properties for sale. All property information will be available to all consumers without walls. Filtering and finding information will be the challenge of the future.

# 1. Decide if you are IN or OUT

Are you sitting on the fence trying to decide? How do you feel about your career when you get up in the morning? Are you energetic and enthused, anxious to get your day started, and looking forward to the challenges it will bring? Or, do you feel that lump of dread forming in the pit of your stomach before you have even finished your morning coffee? Does your family support you?

“Choose a job you love and you will never have to work a day in your life.” – Confucius

“Do what you love and the money will follow.” Marsha Sinetar

We all make choices – good and bad – in our lives to ensure our daily survival. However, so much of our lives are spent working that we really should be doing something we love, not just something that pays the bills. Granted, paying the bills is important, but toiling away in a job that you dislike only leads to frustration, resentment, and anger.

Worse yet, some people move past anger and become apathetic. It may begin as feelings of apathy toward the job, but eventually it will carry over into other areas of life, affecting family relationships and friendships.

In the real estate industry, agents are typically paid strictly on commission. Choosing this as a way of life can be so rewarding and successful. But, living with that risk of no income can lead to feelings of a lack of self confidence. In addition, it can directly impact relationships with the insecurity of no regular paycheck.

In a real estate market that is seeing a downturn, many agents start to question whether to stick it out or move on to another position. When this indecision kicks in, so does the lack of motivation. This creates a downward spiral which can be so hard to turn around. You need to balance the need for income with the love of your career. It is importance to have a balance. But, no matter how hard you work, you might be struggling to keep your head above water. Don't blame others or the market. Blaming has a tendency to put the focus on someplace else so that you become a victim. Instead it can be more powerful to take 100% responsibility for your life and your career. Make choices that work for you.

The news never stops. Twenty four hours a day there is “news.” So much of it is negative. It is very easy to get sucked into the belief that the “sky is falling” when you listen to the news on television. If the clouds haven't crashed to the ground yet, the commentators are predicting when they will tumble. The blame game is very active with fingers pointed toward government, banks, credit companies, etc. Stay away from negative energy or predictions about the state of the market. There is always a market.

But, many agents have been victim to the market. Real estate agents have found themselves struggling with mortgages in arrears, the house is upside down, or their investments have collapsed. There can be feelings of shame associated with financial collapse especially when it is in your own career industry.

“Whatever the mind can conceive and believe; it can achieve.” Napoleon Hill

Do you just dismiss that quote? Do you have that voice in you that says that the reason you are not where you want to be because of the real estate and mortgage market? Who do you want to blame? Where will that get you?

To compound the confusion and stress for real estate agents, real estate firms are closing, changing or dropping franchises, changing commission splits and fees, merging, and in flux. Some agents have been caught in more than one office change in less than one year. Office changes are not always creating negative impact. There can be positive effects that affect the agents. But, changing to another office will not necessarily change your business even if there is a better commission split or more support.

Decide, today, whether you are in or out of the business. If you are wrestling with the decisions to be “in or out” of the business, then talk to a counselor or a third party who you feel you can confide in. Discuss the decision. If you decide you are out, then move forward without guilt. You might want to keep your license inactive with the Dept of Licensing.

You can be successful in this market. There are prospective real estate clients that are looking for your help right NOW to purchase or sell real estate. People want to work with people that are successful and that have a strong belief in the real estate market!

With the uncertainty of the future always looming, a buyer, seller, investor and your family all want to believe that any adjustment will eventually work for them in a positive way.

If you decide that you are going to be a successful real estate agent, then go do it today. Whatever you decide or think will happen... most likely will happen. Have faith, passion and a good sense of humor.

### *Discussion*

Who is to blame for the problems in the market?

Do you take total responsibility for your own business?

What are actions items that are critical to success in this market?

Write down THREE items that are critical to your success in this business..

What do you HAVE to do to not only survive .... But succeed...

What is getting in your way?

## 2. Decide where are you going?

In order to know where you are going you need to have a plan of action. Think of a plan like a road map. It doesn't have to follow any particular format. Focus on where you are going and what you are going to do when you get there. What do you really want? In books and other quotes we have all heard.. "If you don't know where you are going, how will you know when you are there?"

Sometimes what we want is a way to get through the day. There is pain and frustration and we can't see beyond our computer screen. We can't see beyond today. Stop. That will never get you out of the driveway! If you can't see more than a foot or two beyond your headlights, then how can you even pull out? Look up and create a road map for where you are headed.

What you have to remember in real estate is that there are people out there right this very moment that need YOU! They need to talk with you about the market, about their investments, about their mortgage, about their future in real estate! So your plan to reach them is very important.

A great book on business planning is the "One Page Business Plan." Don't get elaborate or dig into financials. What is your mission? What do you want to accomplish this week, this month, and this year? You can have a goal of a certain amount of listings... but in order to make that goal you need to have to make a certain amount of contacts. The plan to get in front of prospective contacts is the most important aspect of any business/marketing plan.

If you want to know what your future business will look like, then look at your past business. We have a tendency to attract the same type of business that we are comfortable with. It is similar to dating... We have a tendency to date the same type of guy/woman. So, what do your past customers have in common? What type of properties have you sold? Who has sent you referrals?

What type of business and clients are you attracting.... And why? This is the time to do that and look at you client base.

What common traits, background and motivation do your customers share with you?

Do you attract losers like flies?

Are your buyers typically first timers?

Do you work mostly with those getting divorced?

Are most of your clients in financial trouble?

Do you have mostly wealthy clients?

Do you work with investors?

Are many of your buyers trying to get something for nothing?

Are your listings selling? Are they typically overpriced?

Do you work with buyers for more than 30 days?

Do you like the buyers you work with?  
Do your sellers complain all the time?  
Are your clients potential walking lawsuits?

Make a list of your past clients and look at what you like and don't like about that list. How can you attract better prospects?

Identify and seek out your best customers. Look at who you have had as clients and identify those that you would work with again.

Look at a plan for how you are going to build your business. How did you build it in the past? How can you build business focusing on the best type of clients you have had and that you want to include. Your plan should include:

- Type of property you are focusing on
- Type of customers and transactions
- Marketing plan
- Branding that you want to build
- Your team including affiliates from banks, title, escrow
- Evaluate the company benefits and pay structure
- Budget for yearly expenses.

### *Discussion*

- Do you have a written plan of action?
- Are you struggling with writing a plan because it may not work?
- Do you find yourself avoiding listing appointments because you do not want overpriced listings?
- Do you know what you want to accomplish this week?
- Do you actually picture yourself being successful?
- When was the last time you thought of yourself as successful?

### 3. Build your fan club

You have the most powerful lead generation program in your industry right there on your computer. Your sphere of influence or “fan club,” including your family, friends, past clients and members of clubs should all be listed in a database. It is important to spend time constantly updating and building that database. In this social media world, there is the perception that success is dependent on the number of contacts. Instead, your business is dependent on the quality of the contacts and how you interact with them. That list of people that you are associated with is the key to 80% of all your future real estate business. If there is anything you need to do regularly it is to update and expand on this list. Though it seems so basic that your fan club is important, few agents have one. About 20% of the real estate agents have an up to date, accurate database that is used regularly. Most of the top producing agents have a good database that brings them referral and return business. Are you somewhere in the middle?

You do not need and should avoid the urge to spend money on any special software for your database. Spending hundreds and sometimes up to thousands of dollars for programs that promise follow up emails, tracking, and more is often a waste. Set up your database in simple programs you probably already have on your computer including: Outlook, Excel, or your email address book. If you are setting it up from scratch, start with 25 names. In a heartbeat you can list that number of people in your life. Then double it. Your goal should be between 200 to 500 names on your fan list. Put everyone into one or more categories from chamber, church, neighbor, friend, family, classmate, etc. Building categories can help you build your list. Using the 80/20 rule as a guideline, about 20% of those on your fan club “need” you in the near future for some real estate information.

Build your fan club constantly. Ask people for permission to add their name. If you ask people if they want to be on you database.. They may hesitate and just outright say “no.” But, if you ask the same people to be in your “Fan Club” you may find a whole different attitude. Sometimes it is how you frame your question.

Run to your computer right now and check out your database or fan club.

#### *Discussion*

Who is in your fan club?

How many people do you have listed?

Do you have their email addresses?

Do you keep your database up to date? When was the last time you added names?

What are the reasons that you don't have a good database?

Do you see a benefit to having a database that includes people you keep in touch with?

How can you delegate some of the work on your database?

## 4. Don't be a Secret Agent

How accessible are you to potential, current clients, family and friends? Do you want people to be able to find you? You may have changed companies or your office has moved to another location. What if one of your past clients has decided to sell their house? What if your current buyer client drives by a home that she likes and wants to email you from her PDA? Can she find you? Can Mom find you?

If a past client, friend or even a family member wanted to find your phone number, your address, the real estate company you work for, the company address or website... how would they do that? Most likely they would go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com). Almost 90% of all searches on the internet take place on Google.com.

Ok, then ...go to Google and "Google yourself." Do what is often referred to as an "ego search." Search for your name, nick name and your maiden name. If you are Natalie Danielson and you search your name in Goolge.com there could be millions of people that show in the results. What shows up? What about when you plug your own name into Google. Do any of those links go to you?

Search your real estate company and then search for yourself on that company website. It is amazing how many agents don't have photos or even email addresses and phone numbers on the corporate website! I think only about 20-30% of the real estate agents even have the corporate page current.

There is no phone directory for cell phone numbers. There is no complete directory of real estate agents. There is no directory for websites. So, it is important that you are able to be found on the internet.

Many agents have a pile of excuses for not being connected online. But, none of the excuses hold water! This is a new world and it is imperative that you get yourself profiles and get "found!"

Start getting your profile up on key sites for FREE

Google	Start first by putting up a “profile” on Google. There you can include your photo, contact information and the links to websites and blogs. Google is probably the first place that prospective clients will go to find you.
Corporate site	Go to your corporate site and make sure that you have an updated photo and bio including contact information.
LinkedIn.com	This is like your resume online. You are walked through how to post your profile, links and photos. Then you can create links with others that you know.
ActiveRain.com	This is an online community of real estate agents. A profile and basic use of the site is free. For some reason, ActiveRain gives you very good “Google Juice” which is what I refer to like vitamins to get you to the top of the search engine.
Realtor.com	Well, this is a no brainer... have a profile.
Zillow.com	Your company gives Zillow the feed of the listings. Set up a profile with picture and contact information. Then go to each of your listings and make sure that you are showing as the listing agent.
Facebook.com	Facebook could possibly be compared to enhanced white pages. Put a profile on Facebook using your real name and contact information. It is against the terms of service to put up more than one profile. You can also set up a Facebook Page for your business or hobby after you have a profile.
Youtube.com	This is the world’s second largest search engine and it is owned by Google. Video is a very powerful tool that you can use.
Plaxo.com	This site is becoming very popular for your contacts.

Social networking is a powerful way to connect them throughout the world. Sites like bring people together giving them opportunity to connect. Combine these with instant messaging and you have a whole world out there communicating over that computer screen.

We all need to join the party of social networking. It is an amazing and fast way to connect with people.

### *Discussion*

How do you stand in the world of technology?

Do you have a blog? Read any blogs?

Do you have an RSS feed? Ever heard of them?

Are you on Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, or Active Rain? Any others?

What is your excuse? Is it a good one?

## 5. Communicate with your Fans

What really IS important is that you take the online relationships and bring them offline. It is the relationships that you create and build that will help your business grow.

Now that you have an online presence and a growing database, it is imperative that you start being a correspondent online. Oh, every real estate agent dreams of answering a ringing phone or finding an email with a request to list a million dollar house priced competitively with a large commission. But, that is a dream unless your marketing and presence online creates that.

When I registered on Zillow.com to correct the information that the site had about my house, I was signed up for automatic email messages. On a regular basis, Zillow.com sends me an email about how much the value of my house goes up or down. Regardless how accurate that number may be, I still read the email and click on the link. When my kids set up a blog with photos of my new grandbaby, I click right away to see the updates.

Are you sending emails out to your clients? Do you have a blog that your clients read? How are you connecting with people on a regular basis?

A blog is just another name for a website with the newest technology. Blogging could be compared to being a columnist. You can easily make your thoughts available to hundreds and maybe thousands of people. This can get you more exposure than you could ever dream of getting by throwing a photo of a listing in a Homes type magazine. Here you can put your personality right on the page. A blog is a website that has newer more interactive technology. You can have a blog that is about real estate, about a neighborhood, about local events, knitting or fishing, or your rambling thoughts. You can have more than one blog. A blog can include writing, photos, video, charts, links, and more.

You can start a blog for free in a matter of minutes from a number of sites. Wordpress.com, tumblr.com, posterous.com, and blogger.com are some of the most common free sites. Eventually you can choose a name and register it on GoDaddy.com or NetworkSolutions.com, find hosting and pay for a custom blog. But, it is best to start free. Do not get sold on subscription blogs with someone else writing and sending links. They are then sent out to you list, your facebook account, twitter and other sites. It is not authentic.

In the future, all information will be on the internet. Right now there is more content online than any library in town. There is no lack of information. For all the people that question the accuracy, are not aware of the millions of people that are right there to correct inaccuracies. So what people need is not more information. Your fans are looking for how you filter the information. They want to know what you find interesting and appropriate to share. They want you to be authentic. Don't send them a recipe for a dinner you have never cooked unless you are asking them to make it for you!

Blogging is important because you can create a conversation online or one that connects offline about what you are passionate about. It could be real estate, your neighborhood, a hobby, sports, fishing, crafts, photography or books. You can have more than one blog.

Once you sell someone a house or if they are just not in the market, they will not go to your website to read about real estate. But, they will read information on the market through your eyes. They will follow an interesting blog about their town. They might be fascinated about some extracurricular activities that you engage in.

In order to have readers for your blog, it is important to promote it. Make sure that you have links on every email signature. Add blog address to business cards. Make a QR code with the link to your blog on your listing flyers. You need to bring the readers to your blog (website.)

Take it offline! You have all these connections that you build online. It is important to get to know people offline. Make appointments with your fans for coffee or lunch on a regular basis. You could decide that once a week you will meet belly to belly with a person on your database. Pick up the phone and call them.

### *Discussion*

How many of your fans have you met with personally in the past quarter?

How many of your fans have you just picked up the phone to call.

How many of your fans do you connect with online?

Do you have a blog started or have ideas?

Have you sent out an email to at least 20% of your fans in the past month?

Are you taking your relationships offline?

## 6. Develop Power Partners

The real estate industry is not the only industry that is struggling right now. Every person in the country is affected by the mortgage meltdown, the lowering of house values and the outrageous gas prices.

Take time to look at who in your sphere can be considered a “power partner.” Meet with them. Discuss where you can intersect and build relationships. Don’t moan about the market but be excited about the possibilities.

Call a meeting and include lenders, title reps, insurance agents, management consultants, printers, outside sales people, movers, stock brokers, contractors, and more. Every week, plan a coffee meeting with others in our industry. They have information that could be of benefit to your career. They may have information for your blog, to share with your clients, and that can help you market yourself. They may know about the competition, the market statistics, and the direction of the market or access to financing. They may be able to help you with a transaction, a problem with a cloud on title, or the ability for your clients to get financing.

So many real estate agents expect these affiliates to call on them and pay for marketing. But the tables are turned. Now, it is important to connect with those other survivors in the industry and work together. Though they, like you, are also looking to build their business, many agents avoid others in the industry to avoid having to deal with a sales pitch. But, inviting someone to coffee to discuss the market changes the energy. Don’t look to them for referrals but for information.

### *Discussion*

Do you have a group of power partners that you work with?

Can you see yourself putting together a group?

Do you spend time with others in the industry or do you see them as in sales?

When are you going to start scheduling to meet with others in the industry?

## 7. Avoid these Mistakes

When business is slow and the news covers only depressing real estate statistics, there are many agents that are struggling. In a panic many agents make mistakes that cost them dearly.

### **Purchasing leads**

Lead generation seldom works. A company that creates leads and then sells them to real estate agents is in the business of selling names. Their success is in proportion to the number of agents that PAY for the leads. Some lead generation programs sell leads to agents with an exclusive agreement for a zip code, for example. But, unknown to the agent, the lead generation company may own other lead generation companies with different names selling the SAME leads “exclusively” to other real estate agents. Lead generation programs are meant to make money by selling the leads; not by the quality or success of the closing of those leads. There is no easy way to generate qualified prospects, buyers or sellers. You need to create your own leads. Get out there and hustle and communicate with people.

### **Spending money on hype... speakers and coaching**

The coaching and motivational speaking businesses are strong. They make profit off the promise of motivating agents to be more successful. It is the promise that generates income for the speakers/coaches and not the success that the agents might achieve. Some real estate agents spend more of their income on coaching than on their monthly mortgage. It is not to say that coaching doesn't “work.” But, the cost of coaching and the small degree of actual success is so small. Become your own coach. Find your inner motivation that is outside of making money. Find that passion that you have in this business.

### **Paying for Social Media**

It might just seem too difficult to post to Facebook, Twitter, or even write your blog, so there are companies capitalizing on that business. There are people that will write your posts as a “ghost writer” so that the readers will think you active on social media sites. Some real estate agents use the excuse that they don't have the time to post or to learn how to use these tools effectively. But, the market has just been through one of the biggest dips probably in the history of our country. Business slowed to a grinding halt. What are these real estate agents busy doing? Before we had the internet as a daily, even hourly, part of our lives we painfully wrote ads fitting each letter in a box on a paper form. We did market analysis reports in triple the time because the information had to load into the program without photos. We looked for properties in books by location. We drove to the office every day to work. Now we have tools that make our business much easier. But, like all the machines that filled houses in the 1950's to wash dishes, vacuum floors, wash/dry clothes, and cook our dinner... we had to learn to use them and shuffle the way we planned our day. Right now my clothes are washing, the dishwasher is on, and my dinner for tonight is in the freezer. My Grandmother could not say that. The social media of today is not the social media of tomorrow. The tools will change. You need to get used to them now so you are ready for the change. They are tools to help you build relationships with prospects. That can't happen by having a ghost writer. Get yourself on social media at least one hour every day.

### **Advertising expenses**

The money spent on advertising seldom brings a return worth the expense. If you are going to advertise, then target your prospects and spend very little or NO money. Spending money you don't have in hopes of paying for the ads is like gambling. We used to pay for small, almost postage size, ads in the homes type magazines. We had no ability to know if any person ever saw the picture or read the ad. There were circulation statistics, but they included piles of magazines in all the real estate offices, grocery stores and on the street in boxes. Never before in history have we had the ability to reach such a large number of consumers with absolutely no investment except time and creativity. Advertising has changed. If you do decide to spend money on advertising, make sure that you take control of the target and the costs. Today, you can directly target ads to groups of people and get reports on how many actually clicked on the ad. You can limit your spending to the amount of a daily latte. But, choose advertising only after you have used all the free tools readily available to you on the internet.

### **Blaming the market**

It is easy to blame all our problems in the real estate industry on the state of the market. But, in reality, properties are selling. STOP watching the news, reading negative reports, and focusing on the problems with the market. Don't worry about the national deficit or fear an earthquake. They are way beyond your control. Don't post articles about a failing market, about how much equity people lost or how interest rates are rising. Don't discuss the problems with this intangible "market" to blame. Create your own market for your business.

### **Feeling guilty and angry**

If you haven't lost equity, retirement, savings, investments... then you might have been living on a desert island. Everyone lost investments over the past few years! Absolutely everyone in the United States and in many other countries saw money disappear. You are not alone! So feeling bad, guilty, angry... doesn't help you move forward. It's a huge mistake to get caught up in negative feelings. When we get wrapped up in the negative aspects of the market we avoid talking to people. Just think... every one of your clients is wrestling with their investments, also. Don't be afraid to keep in touch. Some are buried in anger and denial, but there are a good 20% of your sphere that wants to talk to you today and not complain. So lose the attitude. Take advantage of the market ahead!

### **Get rich quick schemes**

There is no way to get rich quick in the real estate industry. Stay away from scheme trying to beat a bank by recording false paperwork to eliminate a mortgage, cash in on a once of a lifetime investment scheme,, or flop (yes, flop is flipping scheme) a short sale. Late night TV and the internet are full of schemes. I have yet to find anyone ever in my 30 year real estate career that made money quick in a scheme and is not wearing an orange jumpsuit!

### *Discussion*

What kinds of opportunities have come your way to spend money in hopes of making more?

What do you need to avoid in order to stay positive?

## 8. Keep Growing! Keep meeting People!

There has been no better time in your life to learn some new tricks even if you are an old dog. The amount of information available to you and the tools you can try are fascinating. There is often a feeling of “overload” when there is too much information thrown our way. Most of us were taught to wait until we read directions or are given the “OK” to start or press a button.

The Echo Boomer generation that follows the Baby Boomers did not learn the same way. They fight for the ability to press the button to start or “on” or be the first to press the button in an elevator. While we are scouring the box for the laptop or iPad or Flip Camera for the book of directions that we assume should be included, others have the new techie tool already fired up and ready to go.

So learning has changed. We follow questions today. We ask questions and have them answered. We read primarily new publications and news. And we follow learning paths from others in the form of links.

The television is going by the wayside. Turn off the tube and turn on your computer. Learn from links on Facebook, Twitter and other sites. We just veg in front of the TV but with the computer you can interact by writing comments, do further research, and jump to topics that you choose.

When I go to a movie in a theatre, on the way in the theatre and before the film starts, my daughter in her 20's will have done research on her cell phone about each of the actors in the movie and the location.

There are books everywhere. Now you can read a book on your cell phone, on a tablet, a kindle, your computer, or other tool. Because it is becoming so much easier to spread ideas and communicate, some of the best books will become independents like the “Indie” films that now win awards. The media and information is not controlled by a powerful few in a conglomerate.

Get out and join groups. Biznik is a fantastic organization where people teach what they know primarily for free. You can get lots of answers at seminars about social media, for example. Natalie took a Wordpress Blog class that kept my jaw dropping. Meetup.com always has events. There is the Chamber of Commerce, Art museums and all kinds of non-profits. Natalie is a volunteer tour guide for the Seattle Architecture Foundation. I also had the tour approved for clockhours for agents. People from all over the world come. Join Toastmasters and learn public speaking skills. Lead building groups are full of others that are entrepreneurs looking for more business.

For example, volunteer for Habitat for Humanity and help build a house. Whether or not you believe in “Karma,” the potential for good energy to come back is greater than most people think. There are so many non profit organizations that are in need of help in this economy. They are in need of funds and man/woman power. There is something that always comes back when we give.

There may be a way you can tie a volunteer opportunity or donations into an event that you can share with your fans.

### *Discussion*

Are you currently volunteering for a non profit organization?

What are you giving back to your community?

What are the reasons that you are volunteering?

Do you think that it is a waste of time?

Does it seem impossible to find the time?

What groups can you get involved in this month?

## 9. Time Management the Oxymoron

You can't manage time... but you can manage what you do with your time.

It seems socially acceptable today to respond to just about anyone "I am so busy!" This statement can be heard being repeated to real estate prospective buyers, home sellers, spouses, children, the doctor, brokers, ministers, law enforcement, bill collectors, department of licensing, and clockhour instructors.

"I am just too busy to get to that!"

"My schedule is full!"

"I'm sorry I didn't call back.... I was so busy."

"My car broke down and I was so busy."

"I know there was an offer on the property but I was busy with another client."

"I was just too busy to do an open house."

"Driving there takes too much time out of my busy day."

"I am too busy to get to the soccer game."

Yes, we all spend time doing things that are "non productive." We stand around and chat, make copies, go to coffee with friends. And, what would our day be like if we didn't?

- Chatting on the phone with friends
- Looking for files (only 20% of the papers on our desk we need)
- Organizing papers (80% of what we have we don't use!)
- Not delegating effectively
- Working on wrong things
- Attending meetings
- Chatting with other agents
- Making copies
- Avoid allowing others to waste your time

I love going to coffee with friends. I think it is an excellent opportunity to catch up and it even relieves stress during my day. So I try to make a point of doing it more often.

I do not like to listen to voice mail. I dread every time my phone lets me know that there is a message. So, my assistant listens to all the voice mail and emails me the list.

Know that 100% productivity and perfection is not an option. Why do we think it is important to work all the time? Those that work hard at time blocking forget that kids knees get scraped and home inspections fail miserably and home sellers get remorse. Decide how much time you want to work. In other countries it is common to work only 35 hours per week. You will make more money per hour if you work less hours more effectively.

If you want to make more money per hour.... Then work less hours! We have a tendency to think that if we kill ourselves by working all the time and we might make more money. But, instead we drag ourselves down and wear ourselves out.

Take care of yourself. It is important to focus on yourself and your family. Don't ever let your health go. Give yourself time to regroup. Find joy even in the most difficult of situations. There is a flower blooming right through the horrid fertilizer! Whatever is getting in the way you might think is horrible, but in fact it could be fertilizer!

Accept your shortcomings and challenges. Believe you can get done what you need to get done to reach your goals. Don't be afraid to say "no." but more importantly say "yes" to what you need to.

### *Discussion*

What are you "busy" doing? Have you said you are "busy?"

What do you do that "wastes time?"

What do you never get done?

Do you take time to market your business?

Do you work all the time?

Can you budget your time?

What gets in your way?

## 10. Take it one day at a Time with a Positive Attitude

You can only do so much right now... today. One foot in front of the other. Sometimes it can feel like your feet weigh 500 pounds when you are stressed about what to do next to create more business... but once the momentum starts you are moving.. just like a train!

You MUST be in touch with prospects TODAY... every day! YOU must get yourself as Tom Hopkins used to say... “belly to belly” with as many prospects every day. Look at your plan. Have you included how to market yourself and your business?

Marketing ideas to get you going...

- Target mailer to 200 rental houses for a 1 hour workshop at local library “stop paying your landlords mortgage!”
- Start a free blog on a hobby writing or showing pics every day this week. Then send an email to your sphere with a link.
- Have lunch or coffee with two people from your sphere/fan club this week. Stretch and call people you have not been in touch with.
- Plan an event. You can work with others. A recycling computer or a shredding event and invite your sphere/fan club.
- Volunteer for a local charity and meet new people.
- Go to the Chamber of commerce next meeting.
- Attend a Biznik.com free event and learn something.
- Carry 50 flower seeds packets with you with your card attached and pass out to everyone this week.
- Write a book in a few hours. Just type information in at blurb.com. For \$3 for a 40 page book... less than a latte!
- Teach a class at a senior center
- Create a monthly meeting at the local library on real estate topics.
- Start a “Top3” Blog. People love lists.. top 3 coffee shops, books you’ve read, movies, reasons to donate to Red Cross.

### *Discussion*

What are three things that you are going to do this week to get some momentum going?

What are three things that you picked up in the class that you might use?

How are you going to change the negative energy to positive?

# Resources

## Books to read

The Dip by Seth Godin  
Facinate: The 7 triggers by Sally Hogshead  
Crush It by Gary Vaynerchuk  
The Thank You Economy by Gary Vaynerchuk  
Sociable by Shane Gibson  
Trust Agents by Brogan/Smith  
Wise Words by Natalie Danielson

Go to <http://NatalieReviewsBooks.wordpress.com> for some great reading suggestions!

## Tools you need for your business

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Smart Phone...  | a cell phone with email and internet capacities. This is a MUST as soon as you can purchase one. The iPhone is still, and will continue to be one of the top selling phones. This is the phone your clients might have. You may have an app on the phone in the very near future. |
| Laptop computer | Many agents still have desktop computers. A laptop makes you more mobile for your business. You do not have to spend a large fortune on a laptop. Purchase the second lowest priced one in the store. Don't worry about memory as all memory will eventually be in the "cloud."   |
| iPad            | This is the best selling piece of technology invented. This is how you will complete your transactions in the future. Once you have a good laptop, then get an iPad. This IS mobile computing!  |

Take classes!



## Quiz for Agent Survival

Complete answers on this form. Mail or scan with evaluation to Professional Direction  
These answers are basically for you to evaluate your business. They are not shared and not stored in any way with Professional Direction. It is important to make sure the agent participated in the course material for clockhours.

1. Where do you think the blame lies with the collapse of our market? \_\_\_\_\_
2. List one positive trend and why it will impact our industry. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Name another positive trend and how it may impact your business. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Have you made a decision to be in or out... ? Are you on the fence? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Have you made a decision to change real estate firms or did your firm close or move? Has it effected your business? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Will you work on your business plan for the coming year? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Name three types of clients or business that you will focus on. \_\_\_\_\_
8. How do you measure your own success? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What software program do you for your database? \_\_\_\_\_
10. How many names do you want to have on your database? \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have them categorized? \_\_\_\_\_
11. What do you do to keep in touch with your sphere/database/ Fan club? \_\_\_\_\_

12. How many people with your name came up in a Google search of your name? \_\_\_\_\_
13. How many entries are there for you in google when you search your name? \_\_\_\_\_
14. Did you set up a Google Profile? \_\_\_\_\_
15. After setting up a Google Profile, did you see if it had an effect on where you came up when you searched your name again?
  - i. \_\_\_\_\_
16. Do you have a page on your corporate website? Is it current? \_\_\_\_\_
17. Do you have an ActiveRain.com profile? \_\_\_\_\_
18. Do you have a Zillow.com Profile? \_\_\_\_\_
19. Search your listings and make sure that you are the listing agent showing with your profile. \_\_\_\_\_
20. Can you find the house/condo/apt that you live in on Zillow? \_\_\_\_\_ Is the information accurate? \_\_\_\_\_
21. Do you have a Facebook.com account? \_\_\_\_\_ Are you building friends? \_\_\_\_\_
22. Do you have a Facebook.com page? \_\_\_\_\_ Have you clicked "like" to other pages? \_\_\_\_\_
23. Go search for three videos on Youtube.com that were done by real estate agents. Search "desperate agent" "Agent blog" etc.
24. Do you have a blog? \_\_\_\_\_
25. Do you read blogs? \_\_\_\_\_ Name one blog that you read. \_\_\_\_\_
26. Are you planning to meet with a title rep and lender in the next week? \_\_\_\_\_
27. What do you think is the biggest mistake that real estate agents make in a down market? \_\_\_\_\_
  - i. \_\_\_\_\_
28. What is the last book or article on technology and/or real estate that you have read? \_\_\_\_\_
29. How are you planning to build your sphere? \_\_\_\_\_

30. Are you too busy for more business? \_\_\_\_\_

31. List three ideas you took away from this class First idea \_\_\_\_\_

32. Second Idea \_\_\_\_\_

33. Third idea \_\_\_\_\_

34. Do you have a positive attitude about the future real estate market and economy? \_\_\_\_\_

35. Why do you think the market is going up or down? \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date Completed \_\_\_\_\_

**You must attach to the Evaluation along with tuition to get clockhours. Thanks, Natalie Danielson, Professional Direction**



# Mandatory Evaluation

Did you read the material in the booklet on this date? YES / NO  
 Did you complete the quiz and attach answer sheet? YES / NO  
 Did you enclose Tuition (\$3 for 3 clockhours) YES / NO  
 Did you fill out and sign this form? YES / NO

Paid by Check or Visa/MC # \_\_\_\_\_ exp \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_ print clearly PayPal avail on website soon.

Why did you choose to take this course? Topic? Time? Cost? Ease? Other?

A "clock hour" is 50 minutes. This 3 hour class should take about 2 hrs 30 min. How long did it take to complete the course? \_\_\_\_\_

No Yes

Will the material you learned improve your performance?					
Were the course materials easy to follow?					
Were the course materials relevant to your profession?					
Were your objectives met by attending the class?					

What are 3 things that you learned from the course?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Agent Survival

Print Name CLEARLY	Signature	Company
Address	City Zip Code	Phone
	Email	
License Renewal Date		Date class taken

*Thanks for taking this class! I really appreciate the agents that take clockhours from my school! I am always working on my classes and writing new ones!*

**Professional Direction, 13148 Holmes Pt Dr NE, Kirkland, WA 98034 email: clockhours@gmail.com**

**www.clockhours.com**