



## Agent Survival

# Moving Toward Success

Ten powerful survival and success strategies in a changing market

by Natalie Danielson

PROFESSIONAL *Direction* INC

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

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

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## Agent Survival . ..Moving toward Success Curriculum

Session Hours	Major Topics	Method of Presentation
1 1/2 hour	Introduction The dessert seems dry as a bone Positive Trends	Live Lecture and Discussion Correspondence Webinar
2 2 hours	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Decide if you are IN or if you are OUT</li> <li>2. Where are you going?</li> <li>3. Get your Fan Club organized</li> <li>4. Don't be a secret agent</li> <li>5. Communicate with your fans</li> <li>6. Develop Power Partners</li> <li>7. Avoid Mistakes</li> <li>8. Keep growing ... keep meeting people</li> <li>9. Time Management an Oxymoron</li> <li>10. One day at a time</li> </ol>	
3 1/2 hour	How are you going to step forward and get that momentum going?	

# Agent Survival ... Moving toward Success

The real estate market is “hot.” It has stayed active for many years. The interest rate hovers around 4% so that it is just assumed that the buyer will get a low single digit mortgage rate.

In 2007 the bubble burst. After an active market that had bidding wars, rising property values and a strong economy, the real estate market collapsed. 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.

As the market came to almost a dead halt, real estate agents struggled 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.

In about 2012- 2013, the real estate market and the economy bounced back. Buyers were waiting to buy, inventory was low, interest rates were affordable, and prices climbed!

We are living in a time of an active market. Just because it is strong, it doesn't mean that all real estate agents are selling homes and making a fortune. The statistics show that about 1/3 of the agents are new, 1/3 are on their way out, and 1/3 will stick around. But, the ones that stick around are not necessarily the ones that are the top producers.

This three clockhour course will focus on survival and success strategies for changing markets. It is passion, dedication and consistency that contributes to a real estate broker's success. It is the connections that a broker makes and keeps that help build business.

## 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

## Sometimes the Desert seems dry as a bone

It doesn't matter how successful you are or how busy the market is... 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. Our market is very strong.. growth is everywhere... jobs are becoming available... money is flowing.

If you didn't lose 30-60% of the value of your assets around 2008-2010, you probably didn't have any. Many echo boomers have good jobs and don't have an inkling as to how their parent's generation saw equity disappear from homes.

The market rebounded and for the past 5-6 years the Puget Sound area along with most of the state has seen record sales and rising prices.

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 lowered the prime rate. Mortgage rates still remain low. 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 has more regulation to eliminate the rampant fraud that caused so many banks to fail. But on the other hand, there is a relaxing of some regulation and more private financing available.

## **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 have to qualify for loans. It took several years, but sellers with little equity bordering foreclosure built up equity. Home owners will become more conservative and evaluate more carefully refinance options. People are 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. This can include investors, tiny homes, and more.

### **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**

As the real estate market builds, you will see more programs benefiting borrowers.

### **Transactions will become paperless**

Piles of paper have 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. I wrote this in 2008!) This has opened the door to different types of fraud. Keeping records has become easier. Communication and signing has changed as it used to require a tank of gas for each transaction!

### **Social Networking**

Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and other social networking sites affect the way we market property and communicate with clients. The old phone books and bulk mail has been 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. “Honey, did you sell a house today?” says a spouse who has no real understanding of the real estate business.

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.

*“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 close, change or drop franchises, and commission splits/fees change. 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. 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? Why are you attracting that business? Have you had several overpriced listings? Are your buyers not loyal? Do buyers need a gas mask before they walk into properties with your sign in front? This is the time to do that and look at your 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.

You CAN and should choose your business! You can choose properties that are on waterfront, buyers that are looking for 2<sup>nd</sup> homes, first time buyers or single family residences in your town. Go after the business that you want! Then decide how you will get it.

### *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. ONLY approximately 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 up your database 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.

Robin Dunbar did studies on how many people we socialize with. On the average, most people have about 150- 200 people in their sphere. Facebook users have an average of about 150 friends. In the UK in a study before social media, the average person sent out 153 Christmas cards. If you were to plan a wedding or a funeral, there would be about 15-200 people on your list that know your name. So, right now you have that many people in your sphere. Get them on your database.

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. Think about that. If you have a sphere of about 200 people, there are 40 of them that have real estate questions. Some of them might be looking to move to another house. There might be some that want to buy for the first time. They might have children they want to help buy a house. They might want a vacation property. They wonder how much their house is worth for retirement decisions. Yes, your sphere/fam club needs you!

Build your fan club constantly. You are always meeting new people that just love you! Make an active effort to get out into the community to get to know more people. Show interest in THEM. So many agents spend way too much time talking about themselves and how they sell real estate. It is more important to get to know other people to build connections.

Ask people for permission to add their name. If you ask people if they want to be on you “database” or “mailing list”.. 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 cell? 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](http://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 [Google.com](http://Google.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?

Do NOT pay for SEO. Create your own search engine optimization by getting yourself a presence online. You want people that KNOW your or are interviewing you as their broker, to find you on the internet.

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.
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. If you have a gmail address... then you have a youtube account!

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 or website? Read any blogs?

Are you on Facebook or LinkedIn? Or Instagram? Any others?

You should choose one or two social media platforms that you focus on.

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 post photos of my new grandbaby, I click right away to see the updates. People do read emails that pertain to them... that deal with their own world.*

Are you sending emails out to your clients? Do you have a blog or interesting Facebook page that your clients read? How are you connecting with people on a regular basis? It doesn't have to be all about real estate! Topics can include gardening, books read, being a sports fan or joining the gym. Posting links to articles about real estate or staging or economic trends is NOT really communicating with your fan base.

Sometimes the hardest part is trying to decide what to write if sending an email to clients. Often, real estate agents think that information needs to be on topics like; trends in the industry, ways to prepare a home for sale, or how to save for a down payment. Sending out an email to your fan base will get more attention if it is about; the last house you sold, how the market is changing and it is affecting value of properties, how the lock box works, and the number of pages of the last purchase and sale agreement you wrote. Consider making your communication more about your world in real estate and how it connects to your fan base. **THAT WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

Sending out bulk emails often requires an email program. Mailchimp.com is free to a certain point. Constantcontact.com is also good for a nominal fee. If you send out emails to a large list, your email program will not be happy. So, you need to have a bulk email program.

The best emails you can send are NOT canned ones that you purchase. Think of three topics that might be of interest. They could include:

How the real estate market is more active in the spring.

Three things a home inspector has found commonly in homes you have listed.

Three reasons why sellers are moving... out of state, down to smaller home?

How you love making your lawn look beautiful in the summer.

What beaches in the area are your favorites

Places that you dream or have visited.

The last few coffee shops you visited.

How your last listing sold for so much more than the Zestimate.

Make sure that any email you send has something personal about you or your life or your own real estate transactions.

If you don't send out emails every week then you might consider a blog and a link to that blog on emails and social media.

A blog is just another name for a website with the newest technology. It can also be a Facebook page that is interesting. 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, WIX, 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. Sometimes it can be so much easier to just browse through Facebook and chat with people online. It is much better to get to know people in real life.

You can make appointments with your fans for coffee or lunch on a regular basis. You can have a lunch at your favorite restaurant once every month or two and invite people. 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. You can send a gift every week to someone on your list. For example, if they just became a grandparent, send a onesie with a note of congrats. Total cost could be less than \$12. You can create an event for your client base. Do not spend gobs of money!

### *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

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. Mistakes to Avoid

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. Real estate agents will spend hundreds and thousands of dollars on speakers. For example: An agent might spend over \$100 for a full day with a speaker about Facebook and then spend money on products being sold. But, the same agent won't spend a day building their own Facebook presence and getting to know their friends on Facebook!!!!

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. If you choose to get a coach, then YOU must do the work!!! 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. 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. Links to articles is not considered "personal." Your fan base loves YOU. Get yourself on social media at least one hour every day.

Most importantly, use social media to get to know the people in your world!

## **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.*

Advertising has changed. 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.

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.

Absolutely everyone in the United States and in many other countries saw money disappear ten years ago. So feeling bad, guilty, angry... doesn't help you move forward. It's a huge mistake to get caught up in negative feelings. Even in the great market we have experienced, there are agents and consumers that say negative things about the market. 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 post articles about a failing market, about how much equity people lost or how interest rates are rising. Don't complain about the lack of inventory. Don't discuss the problems with this intangible "market" to blame.

Create your own market for your business. The real estate market will always see ups and downs. If you want to know about a changing market, take a look at the stock market for a month!

## **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. Lease purchase deals come and go. When the market is hot, there are people and companies that want to take advantage of first time buyers and lease purchase a house to them. Seldom do these transactions close. The buyer is often buried in fees and costs. 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!

Educate your clients to avoid fraud! The wire fraud that is happening is causing buyers to lose tens of thousands of dollars. Explain to your clients that wiring instructions for the funds to close should not be sent to an account without talking directly to the escrow closer.

### *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. Think about this... *Most of us were taught to wait until we read directions or are given the “OK” to start or press a button.* We had books to read on how to use Word on the computer and dozens of cookbooks.

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.

Every week I attend classes at the Apple store to learn more about my own technology. I was at a class at the Apple store to learn iMovie because I was teaching a video clockhour class later that week. The woman next to me said, “Oh, I am signed up for that video class!” I can always learn more... even if it is days before my next class.

Youtube has videos on how to do almost anything you can imagine in the world. Sometimes with technology moving so quickly it is easy to give up. But, the real estate industry itself demands that agents be very savvy and up to date on the latest trends. Look for agents that are doing video blogs, training videos on using videos, or find videos on how to make best use of sites such as LinkedIn. TED.com videos come in every variety and can give you some marketing ideas.

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. 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.

Take classes! There are fewer live classes than ever for real estate agents. Of course, Natalie and her team of instructors is teaching all over Washington State. YOU learn when you teach! Get certified to teach classes!

By getting out in the community doing things that you are passionate about, you will grow. You will also meet other people that will eventually be in your fan club! This is a great way to build your business and grow your knowledge base.

### *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

Time is so elusive. You cannot package it, hold it, save it, expand on it, ignore it, or create it.

**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 choose friends that I can learn from or help. I choose real estate agents and those that teach under my school.

Some people do not like to listen to voice mail. I dread every time my phone lets me know that there is a message. I try to call back or have the voice mails digitized and become emails.

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. One day at a Time

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?

## *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

Start with Why

Time and the Art of Living

Daring greatly by Brene Brown

Show your Work by Austen Kleon

The Dip by Seth Godin

Facinate: The 7 triggers by Sally Hogshead

Crush It and the latest... Crushing It by Gary Vaynerchuk

The Thank You Economy by Gary Vaynerchuk

Sociable by Shane Gibson

Enchantment by Guy Kawasaki

Don't eat lunch Alone

Trust Agents by Brogan/Smith

Wise Words by Natalie Danielson

## 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 /Tablet 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

# Agent Success and Survival

Complete answers on this form. Mail or scan with evaluation to Professional Direction

This quiz is more for you to analyze your own business. I am not concerned about the answers being right or wrong... It is for your own information and to show you have read the course material.

1. List two positive trends in our industry \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where do you think the blame lies with the collapse of our market? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How will this market affect first time buyers? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What will sellers expect from agents? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How will this market affect competition among agents? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Have you made a decision to be "in" or "out" of the business? Are you on the fence? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Are your listings selling? Are they typically overpriced? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Do you work with buyers for more than 30 days? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Do you have a Business Plan written down? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Where did your business come from in the past? . \_\_\_\_\_
11. Do you see a trend with your business? Are your clients/properties similar to those in the past? \_\_\_\_\_
12. When was the last time you thought of yourself as successful? Was it your income that made you feel successful? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Do you know where you are going? Do you picture your business in the next 3-5 years? \_\_\_\_\_

14. What are three types of properties or transactions have you focused on. \_\_\_\_\_
15. Do you have a database? \_\_\_\_\_
16. Do you have a goal for the number in your sphere/fan club? \_\_\_\_\_
17. Using the 80/20 rule as a guideline... about \_\_\_\_\_ of your fans \_\_\_\_\_ need you.
18. In a heartbeat, most people can list \_\_\_\_\_ names of people in their life.
19. Google yourself. What comes up on the first page of Google? \_\_\_\_\_
20. Are you able to find contact information for yourself on Google? \_\_\_\_\_
21. Search the city you primarily sell real estate in. Search for sale in that area on Google. What do you find? \_\_\_\_\_
22. Can you find your profile on Zillow? \_\_\_\_\_
23. List three social media sites you are active on. \_\_\_\_\_
24. Search real estate agents on YouTube in your city and see who pops up. \_\_\_\_\_
25. Go to Zillow and claim your own house so that Zillow will send you updates. \_\_\_\_\_
26. In the future, all \_\_\_\_\_ will be on the internet.
27. Name three ways you can keep in touch with your fans. \_\_\_\_\_
28. What is an example of a bulk mailing program that you can use to send out emails? \_\_\_\_\_
29. What is an example of a topic you could write in an email to your fan club? \_\_\_\_\_
30. Name one piece of information that you might gain from having coffee with a title rep. \_\_\_\_\_
31. Do you have "Power Partners?" \_\_\_\_\_

32. Lead generation \_\_\_\_\_ works.
33. Name three programs/products / companies propose that they will increase your business for a sum of money.  
\_\_\_\_\_
34. How can volunteering help build your business? \_\_\_\_\_
35. You can't \_\_\_\_\_ time.
36. What is the biggest time wasting thing that you do? \_\_\_\_\_
37. It seems socially acceptable to respond to people “ \_\_\_\_\_ ”
38. Know that \_\_\_\_\_ productivity and perfection is not an option.
39. If you want to make more money per hour then.. \_\_\_\_\_
40. Have you been briefed on the wire transfer fraud by a title company? If not, get to know it. \_\_\_\_\_

You must attach this to the evaluation and return to Professional Direction with tuition to get clockhours.



## 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 pay Tuition? Pay on secure website. YES / NO  
 Did you fill out and sign this form? YES / NO

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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Were the course materials easy to follow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Were the course materials relevant to your profession?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Were your objectives met by attending the class?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What are 3 things that you learned from the course?

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

## Agent Survival and Success

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](mailto:clockhours@gmail.com)**

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