

# Five inroads to Realtors & Clients

Read the following article.

**5 inroads to FSBOs**

Home owners who use a real estate professional tend to sell their homes for about 16 percent more than those who don't use one, according to 2005 statistics from the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®. And that's a great way to show your value once you find FSBOs.

Source: Realtor magazine, March 2007

- 1. Use a team approach.** Form a FSBO referral network, composed of a lender, a home inspector, an attorney, handymen, and any other professionals you believe appropriate. The team can refer unrepresented sellers to other members of the group and help identify FSBOs you might not have otherwise come across. Also, to find FSBOs, check out FSBO Web sites, particularly those that offer free listings, and *PennySaver*-style magazines.
- 2. Become a valuable resource.** Offer FSBOs advice on the home selling process and become an asset and resource to them so that they'll turn to you whenever they need help. REALTOR® Magazine Online ([REALTOR.org/realormag](http://REALTOR.org/realormag)) offers printable Handouts for Consumers, with tips ranging from marketing a home to generating buyers. In reaching out to FSBOs, be careful of running afoul of phone antisolicitation laws and the CAN-SPAM Act. You can contact FSBOs by phone only if you have a buyer who's interested in their property or they aren't on the national do-not-call list. And you can e-mail them as long as you adhere to the rules for commercial e-mail. (See "CAN-SPAM: What the law requires," page 31.) Check with your state for specific guidelines.
- 3. Earn a commission in other ways.** The more services you provide, the more business you earn—regardless of whether you get the listing. If FSBOs are relocating, offer to refer them to a salesperson in their new town and collect a referral fee from that salesperson. FSBOs may also want your representation when they buy a new home, or they may be willing to pay you as a consultant for certain phases in the selling process. In addition, FSBOs' acquaintances or family, or even their buyer who needs to sell first, can be a source of leads.
- 4. Don't make promises you can't keep.** Don't try to get the listing with bold promises that you can sell their property quickly or that you have a buyer lined up when you don't. Build their trust and show them you're different from practitioners who go for the hard sell.
- 5. Be persistent.** Continue to make contact with FSBOs even when you don't generate response from them at the beginning. Keep a database of FSBOs you contact; that way, you can easily monitor their properties' status and tailor your message to how long those properties have been on the market. For example, if a property has been on the market for four weeks, you might send a letter saying, "Some of the properties that were exclusively listed by me at about the same time you offered your property for sale are now sold and in escrow." Then offer them contact information on some of the professionals in your network who can assist them as they sell their home. That shows them you will continue to be a resource and are available if—or when—they need help. Soon they might be the ones contacting you.

Here's how I would change it for home inspectors:

Realtors who have a lot of resources tend to do more business than those who don't. Of course, Realtors who have a lot of resources tend to have been in business longer than those who don't, but that doesn't have to be if they will sit down and create a team of Power Partners.

Home inspectors can do the same when they are marketing to Realtors. The job of home inspectors is to find problems, but showing that one can be part of the solution to those problems can be very valuable.

- 1. Use a team approach.** Form a home inspector referral network, comprised of a plumber, an electrician, a heating and cooling technician, a roofing contractor, a structural engineer, a chimney sweep, a general handyman, and any other professionals you believe appropriate (perhaps a garage door installer, a door and window installer, etc.). Now when you get asked if you know someone who can do the repairs, you can answer "Yes." After all, who likes to hear "no"?
- 2. Become a valuable resource.** Offer Realtors and prospective Clients advice on maintaining a home so that they'll turn to you whenever they need help with something related to real estate. I have a huge library of articles that I can provide, and the fact that I might believe something and actually have a third-party article that backs up my opinion is valuable marketing.
- 3. Earn money with other services.** The more services you provide, the more business you earn. Let's say that someone needed a home inspection, termite inspection, septic and well water testing, and a pool inspection. You do home inspections while your major competitor provides everything the Client needs. One-stop shopping will win almost every time.
- 4. Don't make promises you can't keep.** The promise that I hear most often is from home inspectors who promise that a home inspection will take a certain amount of time, leading the Clients and Realtors to make plans for immediately following the home inspection based on the promise. When the inspection goes overtime, for whatever reason, Clients and Realtors leave with a bad view of the inspector. I tell my Clients that "It generally takes about 1½ hours for every 1,000 square feet, longer if I have to make a lot of notes." In actuality, it takes me about 1¼ hours for every 1,000 square feet, but that extra 15 minutes per 1,000 square feet is a good hedge. If I finish on time, everyone's happy, happier if I finish earlier.
- 5. Be persistent and consistent.** It's been proven time and again that people are creatures of habit. In fact, many business magazines regularly report that about 80% of workers don't like their jobs but stay because they know what their job entails, know how to do it, and know that they'll pick up a regular paycheck for a regular amount each week or month. If you create a pattern of persistency and consistency in your marketing, your inspection protocols, your report writing, and how you talk and act, you'll win a lot of business. Once you get that business, keep in touch with them each month, either through a voice mail, an email, or a postcard or letter. Make sure that your monthly contact piece is something helpful, like a reminder to change batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, a reminder to change air filters, etc. This is where your library of articles comes in handy.

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