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How To Get A Virtual Marketing Edge



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Taking a new listing is always a bit of a double-edged sword. On one hand, you have new potential business; on the other, there are a ton of details to address while managing the listing through to its sale. Depending on how elaborate you are in supporting and marketing your listings, this can take up a major portion of your time. And the more listings you take, the more likely it is that details will fall through the cracks.

This do-it-yourself approach creates a major barrier to the number of new listings any practitioner can handle at one time. The good news for you, however, is that you are about to learn a strategy that will free you up to take as many listings as you want, give you total control over what needs to get done, and even offer an unbeatable competitive edge during your listing presentation. Sound too good to be true? Read on.

Systemize, Delegate, Automate

Listing marketing coordination (LMC) is the process of handling all aspects of marketing a new listing and keeping the seller informed up to and including the point of sale. Effective LMC consists of these three parts:

- Systemize.** Create a consistent set of steps and deadlines in template form that will be used to execute the LMC process.
- Delegate.** Have a listing marketing coordinator run the process for you.
- Automate.** Automate as many of the LMC functions as possible (i.e., automatic showing feedback, etc.).

To illustrate how these go together, the following is an example of how one of my students, Joan Prout of RE/MAX Villa, REALTORS®, in Jersey City, N.J., uses virtual assistant Carrie Gable of Palatine, Ill., to handle all of her LMC details:

Pre-Listing:

1. Prout gets a lead and sends Gable an e-mail with the name and address of the lead.
2. Gable adds the lead to her Top Producer account, along with the assigned campaign.
3. Gable goes into a previous listing on the MLS and grabs a photo of the building/home so that she can somewhat customize the documents.
4. Gable adds the photo and potential client's information onto the cover sheet of Prout's pre-listing package. Gable prints in color, binds the document, and

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sends via DHL to the potential client.

5. Prout makes the follow-up call to the potential client after she receives confirmation that the package was delivered.

6. Prout meets with the potential client.

Marketing Presentation:

Gable creates a PowerPoint marketing presentation for Prout to use during her initial meeting with prospects that outlines all the marketing activities that Prout offers to her sellers through her virtual assistant.

Actively Market the Listing:

Once Prout takes the listing, Gable implements the New Listing Checklist:

1. Enter the property in the Hudson County, Garden State, and New Jersey multiple listing services
2. Add property on www.JoanProut.com with multiple photos, links to showing request forms, disclosures, flyers, condo fees, pre-inspection reports, and any other pertinent information
3. Create a virtual tour
4. Design and send an e-mail to a database of 700+ prospective buyers
5. Send e-mail to the real estate professionals in two of the MLSs that Joan subscribes to
6. Produce color property flyers (Gable prints in-house and sends via DHL directly to sellers)
7. Fax a flyer to a list of 70 real estate offices
8. Write and place classified advertising
9. Send Prout a hotline script to record
10. Log onto Prout's computer via www.GoToMyPC.com and:
Add a new folder in Prout's In-Box for the listing
Add a rule to her Outlook e-mail software that will move all e-mails regarding the listing to a specified folder (by MLS number, address, tour number, REALTOR.com number, etc.)
Add a signature to her Outlook with copy and links to the property
11. Enhance listing on REALTOR.com with copy, photos, links, etc.
12. Enhance listing on www.REMAX-NJ.com company Web site
13. Create an ad for the New Jersey real estate section of www.Craigslist.com, a giant online bulletin board

Track Listing Marketing Activity:

Gable will e-mail or snail mail weekly reports to sellers with the following information:

REALTOR.com traffic
Virtual tour traffic
Web hits
REMAX-NJ.com traffic
Showing Feedback—gathered by phone
Hotline calls

Summary of Marketing Activities

It's exhausting just reading this list, isn't it?! Yet, nearly every item here is done for Prout by Gable, her virtual listing marketing coordinator. This frees up Prout to take as many listings as she wants while knowing that all the details will be handled expertly. Now that is what I call control! Yet, there is more...

Turning Drudgery Into a Competitive Weapon

Clearly, most other sales professionals don't have a prayer of competing with Prout for listings if they try to do it all themselves. Also, what kind of reaction do you think a prospective seller is going to have when they see that Prout has her own dedicated listing marketing coordinator who will execute a huge array of marketing activities and give them comprehensive reports on a weekly basis? With the help of her virtual assistant, Prout has effectively turned listing

grunt work into a powerful tool to beat out other listing agents and free up her time to do what she does best.

So what does this kind of support cost? According to Gable, typical listing marketing coordination packages executed by her team will run from \$150 to \$450 per listing, depending on your required list of tasks for each listing. Please note that the Prelisting and Marketing Presentation tasks are extra, and that each virtual assistant specializing in listing marketing coordination will have his or her own pricing schedule.

Is it worth it? If you ask Prout, I think you will know what the answer will be. As a real estate sales professional, you have two choices: you can either be a slave to your business, or you can have it serve you—which is it going to be for your business?

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