

Staying Warm in a Cooling Market **As the market shifts from sellers to buyers, here's how to keep the revenue flowing and stay positive.**

While I do see a leveling in the market with a shift from a seller's market to a buyer's market, if we look at this change in context (the last two years have been scorching) a cooling is natural. Nevertheless, it is a change, and to stay warm in a cooling market, you must adjust to keep revenue flowing. Here are some tips to do just that.

First. Know your scripts. When change hits real estate, consumers look to the experts for guidance. That's you, so do your homework.

Be prepared to explain in layman's terms what a buyer's market is, how it differs from the seller's market, why the market has shifted to a buyer's market and what to expect in such a market. And don't sugar-coat this. Tell them exactly like it is and that they can expect picky buyers. They'll thank you later and you'll keep your reputation intact.

Also, examine your listing presentation and adjust it accordingly with specifics that reflect the current market.

Best Scripts for the Changing Market: Read what Illinois REALTORS say to their clients for a market in transition.

Second. Know your numbers. What are the listing prices versus the selling prices in your market area? What's the average selling price? Is that up or down from the same period last year? What are the days on the market? What is the current supply of homes on the market?

This will lead to a price that fits the current market. If you have 10 showings and no offers, the market is telling you the home is overpriced. Remember, the more realistic the price, the better chance you have of a sale. Yes, it's only natural to want to sell for the highest price possible but over-pricing is a waste of time.

Third. Know your ABCs. Categorize your leads. "A" leads are ready to buy or sell now. "B" leads plan to buy or sell in the next month or two. And "C" leads might buy or sell in the next three to six months.

Five Tips for Staying Positive

Chances are good that if you're reading this—given the title—you're not feeling positive about today's real estate market.

Well, let me relieve some stress. The market has been abnormally strong over the last four years, so the market is not a down market, it's a traditional market, and anyone who's been in real estate more than four years knows this. The market is doing what it does naturally; it's adjusting itself.

So stop fretting about the market. If you're not as busy as you want to be, then go over to the phone and start making calls. But before you pick up that receiver, here are five things to do.

Adjust you're thinking.

This is a nice segue from the introduction. You choose how you feel. A traditional market doesn't make you feel any way; you make yourself feel the way you do. No one else, no event, nothing. It's you. Period. If you like books, grab a copy of *The Traveler's Gift* by Andy Andrews. He's a big fan of personal responsibility and he's about as motivational as they come. And visit my Web

It's easy to salivate over the "A" leads, especially in a slower market. But stay in touch with the B's and C's—they're your future business. And remember, the evidence is clear, the agent who returns calls first will most likely get the sale or listing. Adopt a sense of urgency and make it your goal to respond within 15 minutes to any lead.

Fourth. Strengthen your marketing arsenal with technology. Design a Web site that helps you prospect electronically with a "drip" e-mail system that automatically sends helpful e-mails to prospective buyers and sellers regularly. And consider an interactive voice response system (IVR). This technology captures phone numbers and even tracks how the person learned about you.

Fifth. Stage your listing properly. Recommend home improvement projects carefully to your sellers because returns on these improvements are relative. They're less likely to recoup top dollar on a new master suite or third full bathroom if they're the only one on their block doing it. They should improve the home relative to other homes nearby.

They can typically recover just about all their costs on a minor kitchen remodel, bathroom remodel and siding. Your client should first choose cost-effective cosmetic improvements like paint and replacing outdated light fixtures and floor coverings.

Yes, change can be tough. But if you stay focused, concentrate on the basics and stay informed on the market, you can weather the storm. Best of luck to you and stay warm!

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site for a free copy of an article I wrote titled "Fear or Confidence: Which Are You Choosing?" It may help you discover bad choices you might be making (www.CorcoranCoaching.com).

Get a plan. I've been in the real estate consulting game now for 15 years and it still amazes me that many agents simply don't operate like a business. The first item every business should have is a business plan. Without one, you're sailing rudderless.

Set small goals. No doubt, part of your business plan will have goals. Make sure they're realistic and small enough so that you can actually make headway with them. I often see starry-eyed agents who set these grandiose goals only to trip on them and fall into a big pile of discouragement.

Get an accountability partner. This may be a neighbor, a co-worker, a broker or a personal coach. But no matter who it is, this person is charged with making sure you're striving for and reaching your goals. An outside perspective is

essential.

Reassess your peer group. Take a look at who is around you in your daily life. Are they positive or negative? Helpful or hurtful? Toxic or healthy? It's been said you should fear an evil friend more than a beast because a beast can wound your body, but an evil friend can wound your mind. Keep positive people near you at all times and purge the rest.