



Tips for Staying in Touch without Spending a Fortune

Newsletters

One of the reasons newsletters work is that people actually read them, whereas flyers tend to land in the trash. People read newsletters because they believe they might find something useful in them. A newsletter can include an interesting document pertaining to real estate. Customers can see how to get more value from your services by reading about how customers are benefiting by using you as their agent. You can highlight a new service being offered or emphasize an existing service. Make sure you show your customers a reason that they “need” you. Newsletters can also include a coupon good for a product or service offered in your community. Be sure to ask the vendor to share in the cost of your newsletter. Any staffing changes or upcoming events can be highlighted, as well.

Your newsletter can be mailed or sent as an email to an opt-in email list. This means your customers have agreed to receive email from you. If you email your newsletter, remember to give it a title besides “May Newsletter.” Name it something like “Your Real Estate Review.” You want to grab your reader’s attention and get them to actually read the newsletter. If they just delete the e-mail without opening it, it does not help you at all.

Keep in mind, your goal is to keep your name fresh in your client’s mind. When they are in conversation with someone in the market for a real estate agent, your existing client is

the best advertisement for which you could ask. What has it cost you? Not T.V. airtime, which most small businesses cannot afford, or radio time, which may not always target the right audience for you. The cost of setting up a newsletter layout and publishing it on a bi-monthly or quarterly basis is much less, comparatively.

So, what are the steps to implementing your own newsletter? First you need to collect all your current and past customers’ email addresses using a newsletter request sheet. Next, you will want to create the foundation for your newsletter. Decide what the layout should be, what the newsletter should include, how often to publish and who will write it. Will it make sense to do it in house or outsource your newsletter?

You may find it will be much more productive to use a professional writing service. A professional writing service will help during the planning process for the newsletter, ensuring the layout suits your purpose and your target audience. The time saved in actually producing the newsletter can be spent concentrating on your business. The consistent, professional publication of your newsletter will help to enhance your business image. Your business will most likely see an increase in repeat business, add-on sales and referrals if you are consistent with your newsletter program.



Brochures

Brochures can give a good “snapshot” of your business. A brochure can include your logo, your contact information (address, phone/fax number, email address) or a map. The most important thing a brochure should contain is what the client can expect to get from you, not just a list of the things you can do.

According to Robert Middleton, author of “Infoguru Marketing Manual,” most brochures focus mainly on what a business does, rather than the problem the client has and how a business can solve it. No one is really interested in what a company does unless they believe that company can solve a problem they have, or the company creates a want or need in the customer.

Do not give in to the temptation to put every detail about your business in your brochure. Stick to the maxim, “less is more.” If the brochure is filled with writing and little white space, it is less likely to be read. Better to limit it to a few strong bullets about problems clients may be facing, accompanied by the solutions your company can provide. Good use of color and photographs can enhance brochures, but they are not necessary.

You can include a brochure to a client with regular correspondence. Or, you could hand one to a customer in your store or office. They may not be aware of all the solutions you

can offer. Again, they can be the source of a referral. Or they can be repeat customers, themselves.

Thank-you notes

The third tool we want to touch on briefly is a thank-you note. How often do you get anything handwritten in the mail these days? How about a handwritten note from a company you do business with? Imagine for a minute how one of your clients might feel looking through the mail and finding a note from you thanking them for a recent purchase or transaction. Do you think that would make a good impression on them? It would probably bring you to mind first the next time they or someone they know needs a real estate agent, would it not?

Satisfaction Questionnaires

Have you ever thought of using a satisfaction questionnaire to keep in touch with your clients? According to Businesstown.com, most unhappy customers will not complain directly to the business with which they are unhappy. Instead, they complain to everyone they know while taking their business to a competitor. To counteract this possibility, businesses are increasingly making follow-up calls or sending out satisfaction questionnaires after a sale is made. If there is a problem, it can be resolved immediately.

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Businesses who promptly follow-up and resolve customer complaints quickly are finding that those customers are more likely to do repeat business than the average customer who does not have a complaint.

Your questionnaire could be very simple and straightforward. Asking what good things happened during the transaction as well as what can be improved might give you surprising insight you might not otherwise have.

Make sure you are prepared to act on negative responses. Nothing would turn a customer sour faster than to complete a questionnaire voicing dissatisfaction, only to never be contacted by that company again.

You might consider several of these ideas to keep in touch with your clients, each of which is relatively inexpensive when compared to other forms of communication.

Newsletters can give updates on services, highlight new services or contain a coupon customers can use in your community. Brochures give a good summary of the solutions your business has to customers' problems. Thank-you notes are a nice personal touch to follow-up on a completed transaction. A thank-you note conveys to your client that you

value their business and them as an individual. Even handling customer complaints through questionnaires may help your bottom line.

In closing, we must mention that we cannot guarantee that by using any of these techniques, you will see an increase in your business. We do encourage you to implement at least one of them and track what your results are.

Make A Commitment: I will implement at least one of these ideas and track my results.

Deadline: _____