



## Ten Ways To Get A Jump On 2006

Now is the time of year that smart agents begin to plan for a more profitable next year. This allows them to start the new year with their strategies and plans in place, ready to be implemented. If you want to hit the ground running in January and position yourself for the best year you've ever had, here are the things you should do now:

1. Schedule time before the end of November to do your business planning for 2006. Set aside a full day. Put it in your calendar now. You may want to schedule a weekend away to do this or go to a formal business planning retreat.
2. Know your net worth and have an escape plan. The most powerful planning is done when there is a correlation between your life plan and your yearly plan. When do you intend to be financially independent or want to retire? What will you need to do in the coming year to get there as planned?
3. Gather all your numbers. Think net here, too. You obviously want to gather your gross, your number of transactions, and where they each came from. But you also want to know what your hourly worth is, how many vacation days you took, what your expenses were and what percentage of your business came from each of your marketing activities. For each dollar you save in expenses, you put \$1 back in your pocket. For each additional dollar you make in gross sales, you probably put only 20 cents in your pocket. Keep your eye on the net.
4. Do some R & D and then re-strategize where your marketing budget will be spent. Don't assume what worked in the past is the key to success in the future. Take a look at different models, such as a menu of services or a strategic plan for converting FSBO's. The expectations and needs of the consumer are changing rapidly. Are you positioned to be giving them the value and services they want? What new strategies could enhance your branding or reach within a new niche market?
5. Expand your strategic partners. The average person knows 200-250 people, and if even 10 percent of those are moving this year it is a big pool of possibility. The average business person may know two to three times that many. Find some angels who have the same high standard of doing business that you do that would want to exchange mutual referrals. Use the Team 100 -- it's like a dance card with people in 100 different job categories. Think each day about who you can send a referral to.
6. Plan your 2006 vacations and time off. The time to enjoy and put gas back in the gas tank can make the difference between having the energy and enthusiasm and getting burned out.
7. Plan your education and skills upgrades for 2006. What courses, designations, and skills would allow you to serve your clients at a higher level or to run your business more effectively? Plan to order the tapes, attend the seminars and enhance your skills. Raising your standards and level of service will give you more differentiation.



8. Get a buddy or a coach. Whether you choose a formal coaching relationship or ask another agent to be your accountability partner, having someone to bounce ideas off of, to share your dreams and vision with and to give you a kick in the rear when you need it can make the difference between being ordinary or extraordinary.
9. Do a technology audit. Assess what you have and what you are going to need in 2006. Have a plan and budget specifically for technology so you can avoid overspending or making purchases that aren't the best "next" investment for your dollars.
10. Plan to invest in real estate in 2006. Real estate is the path that 76 percent of the richest people in the country used to build their wealth. Are you taking advantage of your knowledge and opportunities? Did you know you could use IRA money to build your retirement? One smart agent had as his goal to work 10 years, buying an investment property each year and then retire with the cash flow that he acquired. If you aren't investing in your product, why not?

Take a look over this list and time frame for yourself when you will take the steps listed above and then you'll be ready to kick things into gear and enjoy the ride in 2006!