

Management and sales tools for the residential real estate broker

Selling

Broker requires agents to knock on doors, and leads by example

George Chung describes himself as “old school.”

Just how traditional is he? The Los Angeles broker demands that each of his agents knock on dozens of doors a week. And he doesn't want to hear any excuses for not holding open houses, either.

“If an agent isn't either door-knocking, holding open houses or showing property, he isn't making any money,” Chung says.

Chung runs George Chung Realtors, a 12-agent firm. He typically recruits new agents and inculcates them with the importance of old-fashioned face-to-face prospecting.

Chung divides his market into farm areas that each agent works. But he doesn't send agents out empty-handed. Chung hires writers to produce content for a proprietary print newsletter that includes listings and information about property taxes and energy conservation.

“We've taken all the administrative preparation out of it,” Chung says. “All the agents have to do is take it to the field.”

Door-to-door soliciting might be the most dreaded tactic in sales, and Chung admits agents aren't always eager to tackle a task with a less-than-savory reputation.

“Sometimes I have to twist their arms,” Chung says with a laugh.

But Chung has a secret weapon: He knocks on doors himself, and he says the business he generates sets an example for his agents.

“If the broker himself doesn't believe in it and do it himself, I seriously doubt he's going to get his agents to do it,” he says.

And once an agent conquers his fear of rejection, door-knocking doesn't seem so bad.

“It's the easiest thing in the world,” Chung says. “It's harder to stay in the office and take care of all the headaches.”

While many say that homeowners simply won't answer for door-knockers, Chung says he hasn't run into that problem.

“I've heard many a comment like, ‘George, you're the only person I ever open my door to,’” he says. “I say, ‘Keep it that way.’”

Chung doesn't take a hard-sell approach during his door-knocking sessions. He's

Door-knocking 101

How George Chung handles door-knocking:

- Do it regularly. Agents should spend a couple hours a day knocking on doors.
- Define each agent's territory. To make sure leads go to the appropriate person, assign a neighborhood to each agent.
- Do it yourself. Don't expect agents to take a door-knocking mandate seriously if their fearless leader isn't willing to take his own medicine.

simply trying to make himself known. He repeatedly knocks on the same doors as a way to become memorable.

“What we’re relying on is that they become familiar with the agent and the newsletter, so when they’re ready to sell, they’ll remember the agent’s face,” Chung says.

Door-knocking fails to take hold at some brokerages because the agent who does the dirty work isn’t rewarded, he says.

Say an agent door-knocks at a house and the owner decides to sell. He calls the brokerage’s number and the agent on floor duty grabs the lead.

Chung gets around that problem by assigning each agent a specific geographic area. If a call comes in from that neighborhood, the lead is assigned to the agent who works that area.

“We know which agent door-knocked that street,” he says.

Chung is especially sensitive to giving


agents the business they’ve earned. He says too many brokers tolerate top-producers who poach clients from lower-producing agents.

“If somebody says so and so stole my buyer, we investigate it, and if we find out the agent lied to us, we hand their license back,” Chung says. “I’d rather go out of business than tolerate somebody in my office who’s stealing from other agents.”

Despite his love for door-knocking and open houses, Chung isn’t a complete throwback. He points to his presence on Realtor.com as evidence that he understands the importance of Internet marketing.

But he doubts that a new agent can succeed with Facebook, Twitter, and email campaigns alone.

“If they don’t do the door-knocking, I seriously doubt they’ll make it,” he says.

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